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2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups

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2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS

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Executive Summary

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study is an assessment conducted pursuant to the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, Section 532. The *2015 SAGR* is part of an assessment cycle at the Military Service Academies (MSAs) starting in 2005 that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups: the surveys provide valid statistical information about incidence rates and students' perception on a host of issues; the focus groups provide deeper insights into the dynamics behind the numbers. Together they help Academy leaders and Service policy makers assess the effectiveness of programs and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, each type of assessment informs the other. For example, survey results are used to identify topics for deeper discussion during the focus groups and the focus groups identify new topics and questions to be asked on the surveys.

This focus group study assesses students' perception of issues related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other gender-related topics at the Department of Defense (DoD) Military Service Academies (MSAs) (U.S. Military Academy [USMA], the U.S. Naval Academy [USNA], the U.S. Air Force Academy [USAFA]), as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA). Themes provided in this report are qualitative in nature and cannot be generalized to the full population of MSA students. Themes should be considered as the attitudes and opinions of focus group participants only and not the opinions of all MSA students, faculty, and staff.

Focus Group Methodology

The DMDC research team conducted 40 focus groups of cadets, midshipmen, faculty, and staff across all Academies (30 focus groups for DoD MSAs), scheduled in 90-minute sessions at each Academy. In total, researchers collected comments from 247 Academy students and 112 faculty, coaches and activity leaders, and military cadre. Focus groups were held in closed-door conference rooms or classrooms on each Academy campus. Participation in the focus groups was voluntary.

Data from the focus groups were analyzed qualitatively to identify major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions.[1] For each theme, supporting comments from the focus group participants are included. Analysts used a combination of topical coding and repeated reviews to gather specific comments that supported the emerging themes. Where students and personnel differed in their opinions on a topic, both perspectives are presented in separate findings. Although focus group findings cannot be generalized to all students and personnel at each of the Academies, findings serve as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by Academy officials as they review their programs.

[1] NVivo by QSR International Pty Ltd., Version 10, 2012. To analyze and categorize topics, the qualitative data analysis software package, NVivo was used to code language in the transcripts into thematic nodes. NVivo is a grouping and validation tool which provides comprehensive coverage of topics for summaries of findings.

Summary of *2015 SAGR* Themes

The *2015 SAGR* was conducted to understand how policies and programs addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment affect and support the cadets and midshipmen. The perspectives of the cadets and midshipmen are invaluable in assessing how well the MSAs are doing and identifying areas where they could improve. The perspectives of the staff members who interact daily with the cadets and midshipmen are likewise invaluable in understanding the social dynamics at the MSAs and how best to continue to shape the safest environment. This section summarizes the main themes heard across MSAs. Academy-specific themes are reviewed in the full report.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

Across all Academies, students and faculty and staff alike indicated continued progress and improvement in how the Academies prevent, respond, and educate students about sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gender-related behaviors. In past years, focus groups participants have indicated an increase in the number of trainings and briefings on the topic. This year, participants indicated that the quality of these training and discussions has improved. Emphasis on the Academy's expectations of students to treat each other with dignity and respect and why this is important in terms of their future as military officers have made an impact. Participants indicated that they are not only more aware of these issues, they are more likely to intervene if they witness these behaviors in order to protect each other and uphold the values of the Academy and the military. This increased sense of responsibility is a shift from prior years.

In addition, focus group participants shared positive feedback about the peer-based programs at each respective Academy. While many of these programs have been in existence for some time, participants indicated that there is increasing respect for these programs as their reputation has advanced and students understand their benefit in providing peer-support on unwanted gender-related behaviors.

Reporting

Data has consistently shown that sexual assault and sexual harassment is an underreported crime. The Academies have a stated interest in ensuring that any student who experiences these behaviors is provided a safe venue for reporting. To provide this, MSAs have different types of reporting options, provide various resources, and encourage reporting in education and trainings. Despite this, the majority of sexual assault survivors still do not report their experiences to the Academy. The *2015 SAGR* asked participants about why this is and how the Academy might remove barriers to reporting.

Cadets and midshipmen indicated continued improvements in the Academy's encouragement of reporting, education on how to report, and the resources available. While they unanimously indicated that the permanent party Academy leadership consistently encourages reporting, some felt that within the cadet/midshipmen leadership level, this encouragement wanes a bit and it would be helpful to hear sincere encouragement and support from this level of leadership.

Participants echoed prior survey data on why a survivor might not report, with specific emphasis on the impact of reporting on a student's reputation and career. The Academy is a highly

competitive environment and any negative perception against someone can have consequences in how they are perceived by others. Cadets and midshipmen consistently indicated that someone would weigh the benefits of reporting sexual assault or sexual harassment against the perceived impact on their reputation and standing. In addition, participants verbalized a fear that the Academy may take action against the survivor if they had violated Academy policy during the event (e.g., underage drinking).

While improvements have been made in providing an environment more supportive of the survivor, participants did indicate that there may be victim blaming (particularly assumptions that the survivor may have lied) and "taking sides" which may be perceived as retaliatory to the survivor as peers withdraw from them either in support of the alleged offender or out of concern of how to behave around the survivor considering the event that occurred. Participants suggested that education about repeat offenders would be an effective incentive to encourage reporting as survivors may not recognize that in the absence of a report, the offender may reoffend against them or against others.

Retaliation

In the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*), results indicated that about 41% of survivors who reported a sexual assault experienced some form of perceived retaliation.[2] The focus group facilitators read the DoD definitions of retaliation to participants, and then led a discussion about its occurrence.

Focus group participants noted that the Academy has improved education and awareness about retaliation. Most participants did not feel professional retaliation/reprisal was common and believed that permanent party leadership would not likely retaliate if a cadet or midshipman came to them to report an incident and would instead provide a supportive framework by which to move forward with a report. Participants did recognize that social retaliation, in the form of ostracism and maltreatment, might occur. However, they often indicated that these behaviors–while potentially perceived as retaliatory–might reflect uncertainty and/or fear about how to treat a survivor. There was a stated fear that if someone accused a fellow cadet/midshipman of an offense, they might also accuse others in the future. In addition, other students might back away from survivors or become less involved. All of these behaviors can result in perceived ostracism and participants felt this would be difficult for the Academy to address and prevent.

Focus group participants were mixed in their understanding about whether to report retaliation, how they would report it, and to whom.

Social Media

Comments from earlier surveys, as well as focus group comments from active duty members, highlighted aspects of social media that are sometimes used to make inappropriate comments about others (often harassing or sexist) and to retaliate against someone for reporting sexual assault (cyber bullying, spreading rumors, chastising someone for reporting a friend, making false accusations about the veracity of a report). Of particular impact at the Academies is Yik Yak, an anonymous, geo-located forum smartphone application. Based on feedback from cadets

[2] DMDC, 2014.

and midshipmen on the widespread use of Yik Yak, the *2015 SAGR* focus group facilitators asked specifically about the use of this application.

Focus group participants indicated that the protection of anonymity draws some people to applications such as Yik Yak for posting comments they would likely not express in person or post on sites such as Facebook. While not as common as other types of complaints, using anonymous social media sites to post sexist remarks or remarks about a sexual assault survivor, often questioning the validity of a report, were suggested by some participants. However, participants indicated that Academy leadership has begun to take a more proactive stance on social media with emphasis on appropriate behaviors as well as education on how these comments negatively reflect on the Academy at large. These discussions were valuable to participants and they indicated more self-policing of posts whereby negative posts are "down voted" or removed by students themselves.

Perceptions of Leadership

A question on the *2014 SAGR* survey asked cadets and midshipmen to rate the extent to which various leaders made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Overall, the survey found the highest marks for Academy senior leadership, followed by military staff who interact frequently with cadets and midshipmen. While, overall, ratings were high across all Academy personnel, lower ratings were generally given for civilian faculty and athletic staff. Focus group participants were given those results and asked to reflect on why some levels of leadership were rated higher than others.

Cadets and midshipmen consistently indicated that faculty and staff members take sexual assault seriously. The relative order of the ratings may reflect to some degree the role of the staff members. Focus group participants said they expect senior leaders to set the priorities and emphasize prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Participants indicated that they do not expect other staff members (faculty or athletics) to discuss sexual assault as much.

While virtually all staff members indicated they knew that sexual assault prevention is a top priority, not all staff members sense a specific role for themselves. Faculty and staff participants commented that the emphasis varies by academic or athletic department. Faculty members are expected to meet curricula standards and adding discussions of sexual assault can be challenging. Other staff members indicated they did not feel prepared to discuss such topics.

In general, the degree to which cadets and midshipmen interact with faculty and staff may reflect the relative order of ratings. For example, unless one is a varsity or club athlete, there is not much interaction with athletic staff during a physical education class. Similarly, cadets and midshipmen interact less often with faculty than their military leadership (TACs, AOCs, Company officers, etc.). Cadets and midshipmen also indicated that the ratings of their leaders might reflect the degree to which they have a personal relationship with them and feel comfortable discussing very sensitive issues.

Cadets and midshipmen gave mixed perspectives on the ratings of their cadet/midshipman leaders. Some indicated that once a cadet/midshipman is in a leadership position, they expect them to take issues seriously and reflect the emphasis the Academy places on sexual assault and

sexual harassment. Others felt that their cadet/midshipman leaders either have other priorities that diminish the emphasis they place on these issues or do not really have much authority or the skills to deal with issues.

Athletic Teams

Based on data and handwritten comments in the *2014 SAGR* survey, as well as recent examples in the press of misbehavior of some athletes and teams, focus group participants were asked to share their perceptions of athletes and teams with regard to sexual assault and sexual harassment. While each MSA offers a number of club sports and intramural teams, the majority of comments on this topic focused on the Division I athletes and teams.[3]

Some students and faculty and staff were not in agreement about this topic and themes reflect these varied opinions. Many students and faculty and staff felt athletes and athletic staff are under more scrutiny and therefore held to higher standards than other members of the Academy both in terms of academics and behaviors, including unwanted gender related behaviors. Violations of sexual assault policies are more visible and therefore they are held more accountable for their behaviors. In addition, some felt athletic staff take issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment seriously and encourage appropriate behaviors among their athletes.

However, some students and faculty and staff indicated that athletes tended to feel more entitled and are held to lower standards than other students, which may carry over to unwanted gender-related behaviors within teams and/or against other students. In addition, they perceived that the culture within some of the teams included rituals and traditions that might perpetuate unwanted behaviors, particularly as it related to "horseplay" in the locker room. There was a perception from some participants that there tends to be a "group think" dynamic within teams where people, especially lowerclassmen, participate in activities out of expectation and effort to fit in.

While participants were in disagreement about the perceived culture among athletic teams, they agreed that there are many outstanding leaders among Division I athletes where the qualities that make a person an outstanding athlete carry over to their conduct as cadets and midshipmen. In addition, students and faculty and staff pointed out that the improper behavior of one athlete tends to be generalized to an entire team and this may impact perceptions. For example, when a Division I athlete misbehaves, people tend to identify that person within the context of the team, whereas they would not do so based on that person's affiliation with any other group or activity. Cadet and midshipmen focus group participants also noted that there are non-athletes who misbehave, so inappropriate behaviors are not exclusive to athletes.

Academy Culture

Focus group participants were asked to discuss their understanding of the culture at their Academy with respect to sexual assault and sexual harassment–the shared understanding of priorities, why improper behaviors occur, and how to foster a culture to reduce/eliminate improper behaviors.

[3] The three DoD Academies are Division I as classified by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) while USCGA is Division III.

Cadets and midshipmen indicated they feel safer from sexual assault at their Academy than they believe they would be if they attended a civilian college or university. They cited the numerous programs and resources available as reasons they would feel safer, especially the emphasis on bystander intervention. They also noted that there is a strong bond among peers where they watch out for each other to intervene when they see a risky situation unfolding. Cadets and midshipmen indicated that this sense of responsibility for each other is ingrained in them through their training and the emphasis exhibited by leadership on preventing sexual assault. They do not perceive either the resources or the interpersonal unity to be as apparent at other colleges/universities.

While not a specific topic for discussion, comments were made during focus group sessions that both indicated the presence of victim blaming and the potential repercussions of this rhetoric. This sentiment is supported by data from the *2014 SAGR* where the majority of MSA students indicated that they perceive victim blaming occurring at the Academy to some extent. Some focus group participants made statements that the majority of reports made to the Academy are "false reports" whereby the accuser was lying about the assault. Often this was based on a misunderstanding of why sexual assault cases do not always lead to official action or criminal punishments. Though this perception of victim blaming was heard within the groups, cadets and midshipmen also identified these misperceptions as a specific barrier to reporting, stating that someone who reports might be blamed or not be believed and this would subsequently subject them to scrutiny. Similarly, in discussions about retaliation, cadets and midshipmen often cited the belief that a survivor was perceived as lying as a justification for retaliatory behaviors. For example, peers may ostracize the survivor for fear of also being unjustly reported or may openly engage in harassment or maltreatment of the survivor to punish them because they believe the victim is lying about a fellow cadet/midshipmen. Cadets at USAFA mentioned increased training on this topic and the benefit of such discussions.

Upperclass cadets and midshipmen commented on the changes they have observed over the past few years. A number of focus group participants said their companies/squadrons are much less tolerant of inappropriate comments and jokes than they would have been two years ago. Peers are more likely to speak up when someone is out of line with a comment or behaviors. Participants credited the ongoing emphasis and rhetoric by Academy leadership as impacting this change.

Table of Contents

Page

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Data Collection Methodology 1
Focus Group Methodology 2
Selection of Participants 2
Development of Questions 3
Conducting the Focus Groups 4
Analysis Methodology 5
Categorization of Topics 5
Organization of Findings 5

Chapter 2: U.S. Military Academy Cadets 7

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment 7
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey 7
Reasons for decrease in USC rates 8
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men 11
The perceived role of alcohol in USC 13
Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates 15
Discussion of sexist behavior rates 17
Reporting 17
Awareness of the number of official reports 18
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 19
Reasons why someone would not report 20
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report 25
Reasons why someone would report 26
How the Academy can encourage reporting 27
Retaliation 28
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 28
Examples of perceived retaliation 31
Ostracism as retaliation 33
Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation 33
Reporting retaliation 34
Leadership awareness of retaliation 36
Suggestions to reduce retaliation 37
Social Media 38
General use of social media 38
Use of Yik Yak 39
Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy 44
Monitoring social media sites 45
Academy response to social media 46

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Perceptions of Leadership 47
Discussion of confidence in leadership 47
Athletic Teams 51
Standards and conduct of athletes 52
General perception of athletes and sexual assault 56
Recruitment for athletic purposes 57
Opinions about athletic staff 59
Culture 61
General comments about Academy culture and gender relations 61
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 65
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors 68
Role of peer programs 69
Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed 71
Training and Education 74
General discussion of training and sexual assault 74
Recommended improvements to training 78

Chapter 3: U.S. Military Academy Faculty and Staff 83

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment 83
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey 83
Reasons for decrease in USC rates 84
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men 86
The perceived role of alcohol in USC 86
Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates 88
Discussion of sexist behavior rates 90
Reporting 90
Awareness of the number of official reports 90
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 91
Reasons why someone would not report 92
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report 93
Reasons why someone would report 94
How the Academy can encourage reporting 94
Retaliation 95
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 95
Examples of perceived retaliation 96
Ostracism as retaliation 97
Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation 97
Reporting retaliation 97
Leadership awareness of retaliation 98

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Suggestions to reduce retaliation 98
Social Media 99
General use of social media 99
Use of Yik Yak 100
Monitoring social media sites 101
Perceptions of Leadership 102
Discussion of confidence in leadership 103
Perceptions of seriousness 104
Athletic Teams 105
Standards and conduct of athletes 105
Recruitment for athletic purposes 106
Opinions about athletic staff 107
Culture 108
General comments about Academy culture and gender relations 108
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 110
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors 111
Role of peer programs 112
Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed 112
Training and Education 113
General discussion of training and sexual assault 113
Recommended improvements to training 115

Chapter 4: U.S. Naval Academy Midshipmen 117

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment 117
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey 117
Reasons for decrease in USC rates 118
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men 120
Changes noted by upperclassmen 122
The perceived role of alcohol in USC 123
Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates 127
Discussion of sexist behavior rates 128
Reporting 128
Awareness of the number of official reports 128
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 130
Reasons why someone would not report 132
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report 136
Reasons why someone would report 137
How the Academy can encourage reporting 138
Retaliation 140

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 141
Examples of perceived retaliation....143
Ostracism as retaliation....145
Victim blaming as a driver of retaliation 146
Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation....146
Reporting retaliation 147
Leadership awareness of retaliation....148
Suggestions to reduce retaliation 149
Social Media 151
General use of social media 151
Use of Yik Yak 153
Monitoring social media sites 157
General comments on social media 159
Perceptions of Leadership....160
Discussion of confidence in leadership....161
Athletic Teams 167
Standards and conduct of athletes....167
Culture....171
General comments about Academy culture and gender relations....171
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 172
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors 174
Role of peer programs....176
Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed....176
Training and Education....177
General discussion of training and sexual assault....177
Recommended improvements to training 180

Chapter 5: U.S. Naval Academy Faculty and Staff 185

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment....185
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey....185
Reasons for decrease in USC rates 186
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men....188
The perceived role of alcohol in USC....190
Reporting....190
Awareness of the number of official reports....191
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 192
Reasons why someone would not report 193
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report....195
Reasons why someone would report....196

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

How the Academy can encourage reporting 197
Retaliation 199
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 199
Examples of perceived retaliation 200
Reporting retaliation 201
Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation 201
Leadership awareness of retaliation 202
Social Media 203
General use of social media 204
Use of Yik Yak 204
Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy 207
Monitoring social media sites 208
Perceptions of Leadership 208
Discussion of confidence in leadership 209
Athletic Teams 212
Standards and conduct of athletes 212
Culture 215
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 215
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors 217
Role of peer programs 218
Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed 218
Training and Education 219
General discussion of training and sexual assault 219

Chapter 6: U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets 221

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment 221
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey 221
Discussion of USC rates 222
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men 225
The perceived role of alcohol in USC 228
Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates 232
Discussion of sexist behavior rates 235
Reporting 237
Awareness of the number of official reports 237
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 238
Reasons why someone would not report 239
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report 244
Reasons why someone would report 245
How the Academy can encourage reporting 246

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Retaliation 248
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 249
Examples of perceived retaliation 252
Aware of prohibitions against retaliation 254
Reporting retaliation 254
Leadership awareness of retaliation 255
Suggestions to reduce retaliation 255
Social Media 256
General use of social media 256
Use of Yik Yak 256
Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy 259
Monitoring social media sites 260
Perceptions of Leadership 262
Discussion of confidence in leadership 262
Athletic Teams 265
Standards and conduct of athletes 265
General perception of athletes and sexual assault 269
Opportunities for improvement 271
Opinions about athletic staff 273
Culture 274
General comments about Academy culture and gender relations 275
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 276
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors 278
Role of peer programs 281
Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed 282
Training and Education 285
General discussion of training and sexual assault 285
Recommended improvements to training 287

Chapter 7: U.S. Air Force Academy Faculty and Staff 295

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment 295
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey 295
Discussion of USC rates 296
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men 297
The perceived role of alcohol in USC 298
Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates 299
Discussion of sexist behavior rates 301
Reporting 302
Awareness of the number of official reports 302

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 302
Reasons why someone would not report 303
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report 306
Reasons why someone would report 306
How the Academy can encourage reporting 307
Retaliation 308
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 309
Examples of perceived retaliation 310
Reporting retaliation 310
Suggestions to reduce retaliation 311
Social Media 312
General use of social media 312
Use of Yik Yak 313
Monitoring social media sites 315
Perceptions of Leadership 315
Discussion of confidence in leadership 315
Athletic Teams 316
Standards and conduct of athletes 316
Opinions about athletic staff and recruitment 319
Culture 320
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 320
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors 321
Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed 321
Training and Education 323
General discussion of training and sexual assault 323
Recommended improvements to training 324

Chapter 8: U.S. Coast Guard Academy Cadets 329

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment 329
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey 329
Reasons for decrease in USC rates 330
Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men 331
Changes noted over the years by upperclass cadets 334
The perceived role of alcohol in USC 335
Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates 338
Discussion of sexist behavior rates 338
Reporting 339
Awareness of the number of official reports 339
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting 341

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Reasons why someone would report....343
How the Academy can encourage reporting....345
Retaliation....346
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy....347
Examples of perceived retaliation....350
Ostracism as retaliation....350
Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation....351
Reporting retaliation....352
Leadership awareness of retaliation....352
Suggestions to reduce retaliation....353
Social Media....354
General use of social media....354
Use of Yik Yak....355
Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy....357
Monitoring social media sites....358
Suggestions for using social media to provide resources....359
Perceptions of Leadership....360
Discussion of confidence in leadership....360
Athletic Teams....364
Standards and conduct of athletes....365
Culture....366
General comments about Academy culture and gender relations....366
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault....368
Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors....370
Ways that culture can be changed to improve the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed at the Academy....371
Role of peer programs....373
Training and Education....373
General discussion of training and sexual assault....374
Recommended improvements to training....377

Chapter 9: U.S. Coast Guard Academy Faculty and Staff....381

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment....381
Familiarity with USC incidence rates from *2014 SAGR* survey....381
Reasons for decrease in USC rates for women....382
Experiences of behaviors associated with USC for men....383
The perceived role of alcohol in USC....384
Reporting....385
Awareness of the number of official reports....386
Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting....386

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

Reasons why someone would not report 387
Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report.....389
Reasons why someone would report.....390
Retaliation.....390
Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy 391
Examples of perceived retaliation.....392
Reporting retaliation 393
Suggestions to reduce retaliation 394
Social Media 394
General use of social media 394
Use of Yik Yak 396
Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy.....397
Monitoring social media sites 397
Suggestions for using social media to provide resources 398
Perceptions of Leadership.....400
Discussion of confidence in leadership.....400
Athletic Teams 404
Standards and conduct of athletes.....404
General perception of athletes and sexual assault.....405
Culture.....405
General attitude among students about the focus on sexual assault 406
Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault 407
Role of peer programs.....409
Training and Education.....409
General discussion of training and sexual assault.....410
Recommended improvements to training 411

Chapter 10: Discussion 413

Common themes 413
Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment.....414
Reporting.....415
Retaliation.....417
Social Media. 418
Perceptions of Leadership.....419
Athletic Teams.....421
Culture.....422
Training.....426
Conclusion 427

Table of Contents (Continued)

Page

References 429

Appendixes

A. Cadet/Midshipman Focus Group Guide 431

B. Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Focus Group Guide 443

C. USMA Cadet Handout 455

D. USMA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout 465

E. USNA Midshipmen Handout 475

F. USNA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout 485

G. USAFA Cadet Handout 495

H. USAFA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout 505

I. USCGA Cadet Handout 515

J. USCGA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout 525

K. Frequently Asked Questions 535

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Military Service Academies strive to provide a safe educational and leadership development environment for their students. Working with their Service Headquarters and the Department of Defense (DoD) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), the Academies have implemented programs to reduce sexual harassment and unwanted sexual contact/sexual assault, and to provide reporting and victim care procedures. Recurring evaluation of these programs is helpful for developing process improvements aimed at reducing instances of sexual harassment and sexual assault and enhancing victim care.

One source of information for evaluating these programs and for assessing the gender relations environment at the Academies involves quantifiable feedback from students through a representative survey. Another source of information involves qualitative feedback from students through focus groups with a moderator who is trained to facilitate discussion on these topics. This report presents findings from the *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study. This introductory chapter provides background on why this study was conducted, a description of the focus group methodology, analysis methods, limitations, and a brief overview of subsequent chapters.

Section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 codified an assessment cycle at the Academies that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups. The first assessment in this series was conducted in 2004 by the DoD Inspector General (IG). Responsibility for subsequent assessments was transferred to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) beginning in 2005. This requirement applies to the DoD Military Service Academies (MSAs): U.S. Military Academy (USMA), U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). DMDC conducted surveys at these MSAs in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 and focus groups in 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2015. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA), the only Federal MSA within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is not required to participate in the assessments codified by Title 10 of the United States Code. However, USCGA officials requested they be included, beginning in 2008, in order to evaluate and improve their programs addressing sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Data Collection Methodology

The Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC) within DMDC follows standard, scientific methods that are widely used in the survey industry for data collections across a variety of domains. The program for assessments at the MSAs is unique in that two different methodologies are used in a complimentary, alternating cycle of surveys and focus group assessments. Each type of assessment provides distinct insights into gender issues: the surveys provide valid statistical information about incidence rates and students' perception on a host of issues; the focus groups provide deeper insights into the dynamics behind the numbers. Together they help Academy leaders and Service policy makers assess the effectiveness of programs and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, each type of assessment informs the other. For

example, survey results are used to identify topics for deeper discussion during the focus groups and the focus groups identify new topics and questions to be asked on the surveys.

During the survey years, RSSC uses scientific, state of the art statistical techniques to draw conclusions from a census of the MSA student populations. A cornerstone of RSSC's methodology is the use of complex weighting procedures to ensure accuracy of estimations to the full student population at each MSA. The use of scientific sampling and weighting methods to construct population estimates are the same methods used by all federal statistical agencies (e.g., the Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics), private survey organizations (e.g., RAND, Westat, and RTI), and well-known polling organizations (e.g., Gallup, Pew, and Roper).

Focus Group Methodology

Unlike other research methods that employ statistical sampling and extrapolation of findings to the larger population, focus groups follow a qualitative research approach to collect subjective details from participants on a limited number of topics. The methodology for the 2015 focus groups was replicated for each session at each Academy. Although the results cannot be generalized to the population of the Service Academies, they provide insights into issues and ideas for further consideration. Procedures for selecting participants, developing the questions, and analyzing the data are described below. The focus group procedures were reviewed by a DoD Human Subjects Protection Officer as part of the DoD survey approval and licensing process.[4]

Selection of Participants

Participation in the 2015 focus groups was voluntary. Participants were selected at random at each Service Academy and offered the opportunity to participate. To select participants, each Service Academy first supplied RSSC a roster of all cadets or midshipmen.[5] RSSC randomized the list of students within clusters defined by gender and class year. The rosters were then returned to each respective Academy and it was the responsibility of each Academy to use their randomized list to identify the first twelve students who were available (e.g., did not have a class scheduled during the focus group) to attend the focus group appropriate for their gender and class year. Students were contacted by their Academy and asked if they would voluntarily participate in the focus group. Additional students were selected from the randomized lists as necessary to achieve a minimum of ten students committed to attending. In some cases, students who agreed to participate did not show up at the scheduled session. For that reason, session sizes varied. For mixed-gender focus groups, similar procedures were used, selecting an equal number of junior and senior men and women to achieve sessions of approximately 10 students.

For the sessions of faculty, coaches and activity leaders, and military cadre, Academy officials advertised the sessions through the most appropriate forum for their Academy and solicited volunteers until they received eight to ten participants committed to each session.

[4] The *2015 SAGR* focus groups were conducted under Report Control Symbol (RCS): DD-P&R(AR) 2198, Expiration: 03/28/18, issued by Washington Headquarters Service.
[5] The roster excluded foreign national students, as well as exchange students.

Development of Questions

To begin the collaborative effort of developing focus group questions, RSSC analysts drafted potential questions by reviewing comments and findings from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) and reviewing topics of interest during the release of the *2014 SAGR*.[6] Analysts identified follow-up topics that might clarify or expand upon findings from the previous year's survey. A list of preliminary questions was generated and provided to SAPRO, as well as to the DoD Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO) and to each MSA. A revised set of questions incorporating comments from SAPRO, ODMEO, and the MSAs was compiled and then returned to each for final revisions. Eleven question areas with detailed sub-questions (probing questions) were presented to both student focus group participants and Academy personnel. The questions were tailored to each group but asked about similar topics. The focus group protocol for students is included in Appendix A with the student handouts in Appendices C, E, G, and I. The focus group protocol for Academy personnel is included in Appendix B with the Academy personnel handouts in Appendices D, F, H, and J. The topics addressed were:

1. Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment—general discussion of the incidence rates for men and women from the *2014 SAGR* survey and specific discussion of the behaviors experienced by men.

2. Reporting—general discussion of reporting, leadership emphasis on reporting, reasons why someone would or would not report, and multiple experiences of sexual assault and reporting.

3. Retaliation—familiarity with the policies regarding retaliation for reporting sexual assault, how retaliation might look at the Academy, and ways to reduce retaliation.

4. Social Media—general discussion of the use of social media at the Academy and specific roles of social media in retaliation for reporting sexual assault.

5. Perceptions of Leadership—opinions about the degree to which leaders make honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment and whether leaders react appropriately and lead by example.

6. Athletic Teams—general discussion of perceptions about standards and conduct for some teams or individual.

7. Academy Culture—general attitude among students about the focus on sexual assault at the Academy, ways to change the culture regarding attitudes toward sexual assault, and the role of the peer program in sexual assault.

8. Preventing Sexual Assault—general discussion of programs and resources the Academy has put in place for prevention of sexual assault.

[6] *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey: Overview Report* (Report No. 2014-016); (DMDC 2014).

9. Training and Education on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention—general discussion of training educational activities received in the past year, perception of their training in reducing sexual assault, examples of most effective training, and recommendations for improvement.

10. Role of Alcohol in Sexual Assault—general discussion of alcohol involvement in sexual assault and specific use alcohol to facilitate having sex with someone.

11. Additional Recommendations—general discussion of steps to address sexual assault and sexual harassment. The groups ended with "What did we not ask that we should have?" [7]

Conducting the Focus Groups

For the *2015 SAGR*, RSSC conducted 40 focus groups, scheduled in 90-minute sessions at each Academy. Student focus groups were conducted by gender and class year with one mixed-gender session. RSSC conducted 28 focus groups of students across all three DoD Service Academies and USCGA: 7 groups at USMA including 62 cadets, 7 groups at USNA including 68 cadets, 7 groups at USAFA including 66 cadets, and 7 groups USCGA including 51 cadets. In total, RSSC collected comments from 247 Academy students. In addition, three focus groups were conducted at each Academy for faculty, coaches and activity leaders, and military cadre. At the DoD Academies the majority of athletic staff are government contractors so only active duty military, DoD civilian employees, and Officer Representatives/Officers in Charge (OR/OIC) were included. In total, comments from these groups represent the attitudes and opinions of 112 faculty, coaches and activity leaders, and military cadre (31 at USMA, 23 at USNA, 40 at USAFA, and 18 at USCGA). Focus groups were held in closed-door conference rooms or classrooms on each Academy campus.

RSSC employed moderated focus groups with trained focus group facilitators leading single- or dual-moderated sessions. Facilitators followed a structured, approved, script to ensure topics were covered in an adequate amount of time and conversations were appropriately contained. A male facilitator led the male focus groups and a female facilitator led the female focus groups. A male and female facilitator alternated in leading the sessions of Academy staff members. RSSC provided a female recorder who used a stenographic machine to transcribe all comments from participants and the facilitator. No audio or video recording was made of any focus group session.

All focus group sessions were governed by a number of ground rules, most notably that they were all non-attribution sessions. Participants were advised of the purpose for the recorder, and they were informed that their names were not recorded and their comments would not be attributed back to them. Participants were encouraged to provide information generally but not to specify personal experiences, names, or other identifying details. They were also advised not to share information learned within the focus groups after the session was concluded.

[7] The focus groups concluded with an open invitation to express any other thoughts regarding gender-related issues at the Academy and any additional recommendations for ways the Academy could reduce sexual assault and sexual harassment. Unless unique in context, these recommendations are not reported separately; rather they are integrated with other discussion points on similar topics.

Analysis Methodology

Data from the focus groups were analyzed qualitatively for major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions. The order of presentation in this report does not imply that any one theme is more important than any other. For each theme, supporting comments from the focus group participants are included. The supporting comments do not include every comment made on a particular theme; rather they illustrate the theme in the words of the participants.

The results in this study are based on qualitative analysis—findings cannot be generalized to all students at each of the Academies. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by Academy officials as they review their programs. Findings may also be viewed as a general perspective on participants' views of sexual harassment and sexual assault at their Academies, but they do not portray a statistical report on incidence rates or performance of response and prevention programs. That information is provided by the *SAGR* survey conducted in alternating years with the focus groups.

Categorization of Topics

Focus group analysts reviewed transcripts to identify major themes. To analyze and categorize topics, the qualitative data analysis software package produced by QSR International, NVivo—a grouping and validation tool which provides comprehensive coverage of topics for summaries of findings—was used.[8] NVivo was used to code language in the transcripts into thematic nodes. Each thematic node represented a pre-determined question or topic discussed in the protocol. After initial coding, a second analyst coded the transcripts to ensure all coding was reliable. Once all language from the transcripts was coded into nodes, individual nodes were exported into separate documents. These nodes were then filtered further to identify and quickly capture the details within each thematic topic. Once specific topics were culled, representative quotations were pulled and added to the report to validate the theme. Where focus group participants differed in their opinions on a topic, both perspectives are presented in separate findings.

Organization of Findings

Findings are presented in separate chapters for students and Academy personnel for each Academy. Within chapters, the major themes are presented with specific findings and supporting comments from the participants. Major themes are grouped according the sections in the focus group protocols with two exceptions. The themes for the groups Preventing Sexual Assault and Use of Alcohol are integrated within the other sections and not reported separately. Each comment supporting a theme identifies the gender of the student or the affiliation of Academy personnel (Faculty, Military, or Athletic). Caution must be exercised in reviewing these findings—comments should not be viewed as representative of all other participants. Finally, although many of the themes are similar across the four Academies, each Academy should be viewed separately. No attempt was made to compare or generalize across Academies.

[8] NVivo by QSR International Pty Ltd., Version 10, 2012.

Chapter 2:
U.S. Military Academy Cadets

Seven cadet focus group sessions were conducted at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) from April 27-29, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. There was one session each for men and women held for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors and seniors combined. A single mixed-gender session of juniors and seniors was also held. Each session had between 7 and 12 participants. A total of 62 cadets participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the cadets the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix C, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USMA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rate for women decreased from 2012 (noting that the incidence rate for women at USMA was statistically lower from 2012 to 2014 and the incidence rate for men remained unchanged), and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Cadets were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Cadets further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some cadets indicated they had heard results of the survey while some had not.**
  - *"I think we have numbers thrown at us pretty regularly, I'm not sure which ones lead to this."* (Male)
  - *"There was one brief, I think the Superintendent's brief, they were highlighting what's been going on like this year compared to last year and they had sexual assault cases and like grade failures and stuff."* (Male)
  - *"I think also the Superintendent had a brief that it was his number one priority, that he put up on a slide in front of the entire class."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the USC rates were about what they expected.**
  - *"For the men, it seems right on. There's not much of that here that I can speak to."* (Male)

- *"I don't know if I would know an exact number, but I definitely, in just looking at the trend and seeing that it went down, it doesn't surprise me, especially given the amount of stress put on it."* (Male)

- *"I've never really experienced this so it looks like it would be about right from what I've seen, but it is a drop."* (Female)

- **Some cadets gave mixed opinions on whether the USC rates should have been higher or lower.**

  - *"I expected it to be lower, to be honest."* (Male)

  - *"I would have thought it would have been higher."* (Female)

  - *"I would have thought more. Only because it's such a wide range of acts that it could have been."* (Male)

Reasons for decrease in USC rates

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated that the Cadets Against Sexual Harassment and Assault (CASHA) program has positively influenced the culture with regard to awareness of sexual assault.**

  - *"CASHA kicked off in 2012. That was a new thing when we were plebes [freshmen]. I think there's a big culture difference from when I was a plebe until now. Mainly just that we have mandatory classes on it every once in awhile for different SHARP briefs or CASHA briefs, there seems to be an increased awareness."* (Female)

  - *"CASHA reps do all of the training and have really taken on that role and they're the policer. If anything, even in little stuff, just in comments, I know the person in my company was always the one to jump on it and approach people about it, why they said something the way they said it. Even on the littlest levels. So there's some responsibility associated with it."* (Female)

- **Some upperclass cadets discussed policy changes that might have influenced the decrease in USC rates.**

  - *"For the firsties [seniors], it was our plebe year that they instituted the door locking policy. When we were plebes they started having us lock our doors at night. Our plebe year had unprecedented levels of sexual assault, sexual harassment at the Academy. I think that made it more serious for a lot of people. I'm not sure the physical barrier of having the door locked stopped people from entering rooms and doing things, but I think as plebes to know that that's what was necessary, that was a big wake up call to a lot of people that this was a problem and it really was not okay what we were doing."* (Female)

- *"Increased presence patrols and the Q, the person sitting in the hallway, has a more active role in occasionally getting up and like looking more than just sitting there."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that increased awareness and attention to these types of behaviors might have caused the decreased USC rates on the survey.**
  - *"I think overall just SHARP education at the Academy has definitely increased, so I think people's awareness of it and understanding of what sexual contact and unwanted sexual contact is has definitely increased."* (Male)
  - *"Probably the campaigns, 'It's On Us' campaign. Whether or not you agree or disagree with it, it definitely raised awareness for it."* (Male)
  - *"That is when they launched the whole number one priority of the Army in 2012, that's when it really got brought to attention."* (Male)
  - *"I remember my plebe year, a firstie told me that we've had more SHARP briefings of that nature in that one year than she had the whole time at the Academy. So definitely an increased attention on SHARP and just awareness of it and that they are looking out for it and things like that may have been a factor."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the rates of USC might have decreased because the number of women at the Academy is higher now and might influence future decrease in USC rates.**[9]
  - *"So they increased the rate here from I think 14 percent overall to well over 18 percent, in the class of 2018 we had 22 percent of women enter."* (Female)
  - *"I think our class has the most females West Point has ever had."* (Female)
  - *"I would actually predict the rate of unwanted touching or sexual contact to go down as the ratio of women increases here. It seems like that this might be a constant, more of a constant group of perpetrators and as you increase the number of people here, there's only a fix amount of instances that are to address those."* (Male)
  - *"Also have to take into account the Academy's objective to increase the amount of women at the Academy, there will be more ratio of girls to guys than there has been in the past, so that may be a factor."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated the USC rates for women would be about the same or lower on the next survey.**
  - *"At least this low or lower probably."* (Female)

[9] Cadets were correct in stating that in 2014 there were more women at USMA (717) than in 2012 (703), but the proportions of women in the total cadet population were similar (15.6% women in 2014 versus 15.8% women in 2012), because there were also more men enrolled in 2014 (3,869) than in 2012 (3,743).

- *"It will be lower [on the next survey] because if you talk to some of the guys, they're getting more self-conscious of what they're saying to us. They even discuss it. They wouldn't say half the stuff they said before."* (Male)

- *"I think it may go down but I don't think it will be as drastic as it was from 2012 to 2014."* (Male)

- *"I think for men it will probably stay about the same and women hopefully decrease."* (Male)

- *"I'd like to say that they'll be lower, but I think they'll stay the same for the simple fact that I have dealt with a lot of this and I've seen a lot of things happen here. Sometimes it's not necessarily how much communication you can give somebody, but the character of that person. And there are some culture points here that do not necessarily lend themselves to these things happening, but they don't help to stop it."* (Female)

- *"I think it will flat line. You also have to realize stuff like this is just going to happen because we're dealing with kids who are from the ages of 18 to 24 and good decisions aren't always made."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the increased discussion of the topic might contribute to a further decrease in USC rates for women.**

  - *"I know in our CASHA session we talk about it, that as that program gets better and better and as they keep improving it. I personally prefer the CASHA sessions to the wide briefs because it provides for discussion and actually talking about these things. It might go down [USC rates], I can't really project that, but I definitely think it will help as far as increasing awareness and people actually thinking about the issue."* (Female)

  - *"I think [the USC rates will decrease] both because people are more aware of the reporting process and people are more aware of what's happening."* (Female)

  - *"A bigger deal all around. If there's an issue, whether it's SHARP or anything else, I know the Academy focuses in on it. So we have a lot of SHARP training. I had participated in a two-day summit here and the 'It's On Us' campaign, they gave out shirts and really got behind it. I don't know if it actually changed people's perception about it but just thinking if you were like a predator or something, you see that everybody is now focused in on it so makes you alert."* (Male)

- **Some female cadets indicated they would not expect the USC rates for men to decrease much in the future.**

  - *"You can work as hard as you want to fix these problems, but it's never ever going to just go away completely. And because that rate's so low I think it's just going to stay constant. I don't see really any change that's going to deviate from that."* (Female)

- *"A lot of the guys here can be immature at times and they don't know who's uncomfortable with what they are doing all the time. So I don't see the rate going that much lower than it already is."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that knowing there are programs in place to deal with issues helps deter sexual assault.**

  - *"I think all the education of it. There's a fear factor involved because there's a whole organization set in place for it now, so it's a very big deterrent."* (Male)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[10]

- **Some male cadets indicated that "locker room behaviors" were not common behaviors for men at the Academy to experience.**

  - *"Locker room type behavior, I don't know of any situations where that could happen."* (Male)

  - *"I haven't seen that at West Point. Especially in the locker rooms, you don't have any time for any of that, especially when you have to go from class to class. If you are going from Arvin to Thayer, you don't have time to be messing around. You have to get changed and get to class."* (Male)

  - *"It's not exactly a huge problem at West Point because there's not a lot of time when you have a lot of people going to take showers at the same time. And when there are, there's too many people in there to be messing around because everyone is like 'Get out of my way, I'm trying to get a shower.'"* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they believe the percentages of inappropriate behaviors will decrease for men in the future.**

  - *"The class of 2015 was the last class to enter with a Beast [plebe summer program] where hazing was somewhat allowed. They've since changed all of the rules and regulations for the class of 2016, 2017, 2018 because they had a kid, completely unrelated to this, die of heat stroke. So they changed everything. So you'll see the numbers completely decrease in initiation, horseplay, all of that will probably go down further."* (Female)

- **Some male cadets indicated that whether behaviors are viewed as inappropriate depends on the person.**

  - *"I think maybe it comes down to different guys are okay with different things. If I am playing in a sports game and one of my buddies makes a good play and I make a good play and I get a smack on the butt, for me that's fine. I don't care, I'm just*

[10]See Appendix C, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USMA Men" for the details shared with participants.

getting a pat on the back, but maybe someone else would think that's unwanted sexual contact." (Male)

- *"I think there are a higher percentage of males who are okay with more lenient touching or something that maybe a female would consider sexual harassment. For the most part males don't consider it sexual harassment or assault."* (Male)

- *"Being on a sports team, I can understand some of the horseplay or hazing, but never have I witnessed it where it was anything sexually charged or related in that manner at all. At the same time I'm sure there's always somebody who doesn't agree or interprets it a different way."* (Male)

- **Some male cadets indicated that most people would cease inappropriate behaviors if asked.**

  - *"The risks are so high that you're not going to mess around with that."* (Male)

  - *"If it happened, like a guy-on-guy case, and if a guy feels uncomfortable with that, they are most likely to say something. If you harass a female, they may hold it in. With a guy if I feel uncomfortable I would say 'Hey, chill out' or something like that. I feel like this is a hypermasculine environment also."* (Male)

- **Some cadets also indicated that men might just ignore the behaviors or not feel comfortable coming forward to complain.**

  - *"With guys it's almost like you just brush it off even if you did feel uncomfortable. Maybe if you didn't feel comfortable telling that person no, depending how familiar you are with them, maybe let it slide, but then report it on the survey if you didn't want to address it right then and there."* (Male)

  - *"I think it takes a lot of courage to come up and tell people that you feel uncomfortable about somebody doing something to you from a male perspective."* (Female)

- **Some male cadets did not think hazing or locker room behaviors warrant action.**

  - *"I don't think it's significant enough for any type of action, to be honest."* (Male)

  - *"I feel like there's always going to be. Just like the nature of college, like initiation. Like the freshmen on a team, always going to be some kind of unwanted stuff, but maybe not to this extent, but always going to be there."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that teasing behaviors might be viewed by some as sexual harassment.**

  - *"I think it would be more harassment. One team has been combating a division or a conflict between plebes and upperclassmen. The upperclassmen will tease them a lot and try to make like it's just more brotherly love and just tough love kind of thing.*

But some individuals said you have to snap out of it because it's getting to a point of it's a hostile working environment. They don't feel that they're able to express themselves fully because the upperclassmen are so overwhelming. I could see calling it sexual harassment maybe because of that overwhelming nature." (Female)

- *"When you are on a team it's not necessarily rank based. The plebes don't really have to say sir or sergeant to them, it's more like it's a more casual environment. I could see the overwhelming behavior, it's not hazing, but it's just teasing. I could definitely see them doing something stupid like that."* (Female)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[11]

- **Some cadets indicated they believe alcohol plays a major role in USC.**
  - *"Alcohol is usually involved when all stupid things happen. It's not just West Point, it's every college in America."* (Female)
  - *"Most of the cadets use alcohol as a release from stress or overindulge in it when they get a chance. And if they don't get the opportunity to do it that much, they don't understand their limit. So that discrepancy caused some bad decisions."* (Male)
  - *"When it is used it's not really used in moderation. It's a confined constrained environment, it's a high stress environment, so when people do go they go hard. It's not really a moderate drinking culture at all."* (Female)
- **Some cadets thought the percentage of incidents involving alcohol in USC would have been higher.**[12]
  - *"I would think it would be more than 50 percent [for women]."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that when alcohol is involved with USC, the drinking typically starts off campus and inappropriate behaviors then occur when people return.**
  - *"If there are sexual assault instances, almost none of them originate on the campus or with condoned alcohol usage."* (Male)
  - *"I don't see people getting out of hand on post. I think off post it's a different situation. I think on post people are responsible."* (Female)
  - *"Most of the time, at least what I think of, is you go down to Highland Falls or something, go drinking and then come back here and then stuff goes on because you're drunk."* (Male)

[11] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.
[12] Per the *2014 SAGR* survey, 42% of women and 53% of men who responded that they experienced USC indicated alcohol was involved in the incident with the greatest effect on them.

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated the emphasis on use of alcohol has changed over the years.**
  - *"It's gone from extreme to extreme. Just an absolutely dry campus. It started out with we had everything from hard liquor and shots down at the on campus bar to everything completely dry to only beer to a lot of stuff."* (Male)
  - *"There's been a change in some of the alcohol policies at West Point since when we were plebes. And the rules were a lot less strict and they did away with hard alcohol for a while and since then they've eased back into allowing liquor as opposed to just beer at the Firstie Club."* (Male)
  - *"I think, if anything, we improved the use of alcohol since our plebe year. What I remember they would come back so smashed that they couldn't even freakin' get to their door. That's how I remembered my company when I was a plebe. And then yuk year [sophomore] was no different, people would be stumbling around. I think the more stuff that like happened is results to alcohol. I think we've done a lot better since then. We've been more aware of the use of it from the training we got. I think the ones that stick out the most were the ones that just go off post and they do whatever they wanted, then they come back."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy stresses responsible use of alcohol, while others cadets indicated more could be done.**
  - *"Right now you have to have 21st birthday training. You have to have a card if you are going to drink. If I go down to the Firstie [Club], even though I'm a firstie [senior], I can't drink if I don't have a card."* (Male)
  - *"I don't know if there's a right answer. It's pretty tough to deal with alcohol consumption and trying to relate it, but I think they've taken steps in the right direction at least."* (Male)
  - *"We have wine tastings and whiskey tastings. The yearlings [sophomores] here can come. I feel like they're trying to let the lower classes drink if they're 21. I think they're trying."* (Male)
  - *"I just always emphasize personal responsibility even though you're intoxicated. We talk a lot about what it is to be drunk while driving and all these other circumstances. There's not a whole lot of emphasis on personal responsibility, it's more informal than an actually formalized point."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated not everyone takes the emphasis on alcohol use seriously.**
  - *"Just a check the box. You have to do this to drink, go through the motions. To me it feels like just a scare tactic, beyond the whole breathalyzer. When I did it the Breathalyzer was optional. Come train, listen to some stories about NCOs or officers who have people in their units that have alcohol incidents that ruin their career. It felt like it's meant to scare you out of drinking and do something stupid."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that if anyone tried to get another classmate drunk in order to take advantage of them, someone would step in.**
  - *"Honestly I couldn't [see someone purposely getting someone else drunk to take advantage of them]. I personally haven't seen that happen here. From my experience I feel like cadets are more so likely to look out for one another while drinking with each other, but that's my own personal experience."* (Male)
  - *"The only thing I heard was other colleges come here and drinking with upperclassmen and they try to do that with us. But you'll see people step in from our Academy and don't do that."* (Female)
  - *"We live in such close proximity to each other. If somebody is drunk beyond their control, you are going to be like one of the hundred something people you interact with, will make sure that they get back to their room all right."* (Male)
  - *"A lot of education has targeted that kind of scenario. There's been like a lot of encouraging of taking care of your buddies while drunk. If somebody is too drunk, immediately everybody's friends is get them back, get them back right away. Whether it's somebody about to be taken advantage of or somebody about to take advantage of someone, I do think there's a lot of encouraging to not allow that to happen. Especially among the firsties [seniors], there's a very large attitude of 'Hey, let's not mess up now.'"* (Female)
  - *"When I've been around West Pointers in general they tend to want to take care of each other more than anything else. So no one is really aggressive when they drink, when people drink in groups here."* (Female)

Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates[13]

- **Some cadets indicated that training and emphasis on the types of behaviors included in sexual harassment might account for the increase in rates.**
  - *"I don't know if this is true or not, but I know at some of the briefs there were some things classified as sexual harassment that I wouldn't have ever thought was sexual harassment. It might have something to do with it, like being educated and realizing that something I might have shrugged off and like actually, it's not cool, you may put it on the survey. I know it was a lot wider than I thought."* (Female)
  - *"I think through the SHARP program people are more educated just about what sexual harassment is compared to when I first got to West Point. What I thought sexual harassment was, the definition is definitely changed for me. So I think people are becoming more knowledgeable and more aware and can identify those instances more now than they could then."* (Male)

[13] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 55% of women experienced perceived sexual harassment (6 percentage points higher than 2012) and 12% of men experienced perceived sexual harassment (4 percentage points higher than 2012).

- *"[Regarding the increase in rates among men] I think that before you can talk about the other behaviors that were experienced, if that's considered sexual harassment, maybe more guys were just uncomfortable with that and they didn't know that actually counts as like sexual harassment. Now we are having CASHA briefings, we go walking through the scenarios in the briefs about what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual assault. Maybe people are just more knowledgeable this could actually be sexual harassment or assault."* (Female)

- **Some cadets disagreed that rates of perceived sexual harassment increased due to the attention on sexual assault.**
  - *"I don't think most things can be attributed to a lack of knowledge overall because it's impossible to live here without hearing about it really. So I don't know that more information is necessarily always the solution or the lack of it is an issue."* (Male)
  - *"I think these discussions, these monthly meetings, people are starting to define what sexual harassment is in those meetings, people are starting to broaden the definitions of them. I think it's a good idea, but I don't think people are going short of sexual assault, but using sexual harassment instead."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they were not sure if the continued emphasis would lower rates of perceived sexual harassment in the future.**
  - *"It will depend. The plebes here didn't see that rugby incident, so as the new classes come in; actually, it might go up and down. Because our experience and the cows' [juniors'] experiences is probably way different than the plebes experience with sexual harassment. It may even stay down further because they're coming in. I think assault will stay down but harassment, I don't know, it might depend on the culture of the class. If the Superintendent really pushes sexual harassment, it depends."* (Male)
  - *"I think that the more education we have, the more aware you are and then the more it might stick in your minds. That may be why it might actually be the same or even less [in the future]. But people are remembering, it's sticking with them."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the increasing proportion of women at the Academy might have influenced the increase in rates of perceived sexual harassment in the future**
  - *"They are trying to increase the number of women, so maybe not so much the number of sexual harassment cases, maybe the number of women observing those cases has increased so it could be something to do with that perhaps."* (Female)
  - *"I think also larger increase in the amount of female cadets might also have something to do with it."* (Male)

Discussion of sexist behavior rates[14]

- **Some cadets indicated that the more recent focus on the role of women in combat positions might have resulted in more sexist comments.**
  - *"From experience I know a lot of guys are starting to feel more like women don't belong, because I'll hear all the time, especially with teams that involve both sectors. I've heard guys say there are limitations on our team and every team has limitations and they're called females. Or women are too emotional to handle combat arms. It's stuff like that. Even though I know men who are just as emotionally complicated as women."* (Female)
  - *"Because of the nature of our profession and always dominated by males, people are getting really touchy about the thought of women actually doing things that we wouldn't normally do in the past."* (Female)
  - *"I think the Corps, maybe the Army as well, is sometimes resistant to change. And so now with the integration of females into all branches, especially in combat arms, I think that's caused maybe an increase in sexist behavior, language. Because some people don't necessarily agree with the integration of women into those roles and when they don't agree with it, then they're more likely to voice, maybe a drastic measure, more likely to voice it."* (Male)
  - *"I think it can be attributed to some of the changes going on in the Army right now in terms of women being accepted into combat role."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they did not necessarily see a relationship between sexist behavior and sexual assault.**
  - *"It's kind of a big jump. The sexist comments you hear around here are more how do you deal with physical test standards and leadership position distribution than anything else."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like all the scholarly studies say that, if it's tolerated you can say whatever, then you'll be able to do whatever. But I think we draw a pretty firm line because, for the most part, we all speak freely about how we feel to each other and to a group, but we draw a pretty stiff line here. It's not going to lead to any kind of touching. It's not meant to accomplish any kind of progression towards a goal of having sex with someone or whatever."* (Male)

Reporting

Cadets were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix C, Figure 3 "Number of

[14] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 92% of women perceived experiencing sexist behavior (1 percentage point higher than 2012) and 45% of men perceived experiencing sexist behavior (12 percentage points higher than 2012).

Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Cadets discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Cadets were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more cadets to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with cadets providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some cadets indicated they had heard about official reports.**
  - *"I think I heard it before, just didn't know the exact number off the top of my head."* (Male)
  - *"We've probably been briefed on it before. I don't remember if I remember the exact numbers."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the number of reports were higher than they expected.**
  - *"I think the sexual assault number is higher than I thought it would be."* (Male)
  - *"I thought it was three or four, which is still too high, but nine is a lot."* (Male)
  - *"I don't know if anyone agrees with me but it seems a little bit high."* (Female)
  - *"I still feel like it's a lot. I guess that's not right considering the rate but I just feel like there really aren't that many opportunities for this stuff to happen. The barracks, everybody is living really close to each other and so I feel like it would be really hard to try to target someone and sexually assault."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the number of reports were in line with their expectations.**
  - *"Seems about right to me. It's a slow system, people are still getting used to it. I feel as more people get more comfortable the numbers will be increasing. I've seen stats before that were lower. So seeing it slowly increase, it makes sense."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they were surprised that there were more unrestricted reports than restricted reports.**
  - *"I'm surprised there were more unrestricted than restricted. Well, I mean while the culture has gotten better it's still probably pretty hard to report that. It surprises me that more people would give all of the details like names and everything."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated they were surprised at the relatively low rate of reporting sexual harassment.**
  - *"I don't think the formal complaints for sexual harassment, I don't think that's accurate at all. I think that number is going to go up. We're going to see the increase in people taking it seriously and actually report things and say something because less than five is not accurate."* (Female)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some cadets indicated that reporting sexual assault is a high priority at the Academy.**
  - *"And I think they made it very clear that this is coming down from the big Army and then they kind of blew it up even more here. Every company has a CASHA person that you should be able to feel comfortable talking to, you have a TAC, you have this whole chain of command."* (Female)
  - *"I think the Corps very much embraces the idea of preventing sexual assault and harassment. If there was somebody that anybody saw that committed an egregious, non-accident-like SHARP offense, it would get reported even if the victim was not going to report it. If somebody saw sexual assault or rape, it would get reported and there's absolutely no tolerance on that. I firmly believe that."* (Male)
  - *"First year we came here, it was probably the second thing we received besides welcome to West Point, here's how to report sexual assault. If you go on the USMA web page, it's also on our home page. They post posters everywhere in the barracks."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that reporting sexual assault is a top priority of leadership.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)
  - *"Yes."* (Female)
  - *"Every time you get a brief from everybody, their top priority is SHARP one hundred percent of the time, always."* (Female)
  - *"Your Commandant, your lieutenants, your captains, your TACs, your NCOs, your brigade training officers. I think I named everybody. Everybody's priority is SHARP."* (Female)
  - *"CASHA representatives have classes on it. The first brief we received. They give you a little card that you have to carry around during basic training. The first semester I had a sensing session with him, with the Superintendent on this topic [reporting]."* (Male)

- *"Through our CASHA discussions, it's always definitely one of the things that's harped on the most. But then usually the people that they make their representative that you would go to report to, they are very comfortable people that you feel safe talking to. Or even if you don't want to talk to that person, there's enough like upperclassmen, I think that everybody has some kind of upperclassmen connection that they can talk to and will help them find what they need."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that individual leaders may vary in their enthusiasm for encouraging reporting, despite a very clear, supportive organizational policy.**
  - *"If you went straight to the Commandant, he'd probably be like all right, how many people did you skip to get here, but he would definitely take you seriously. You need to go talk to this person, then he would probably e-mail your TAC and say why did this person skip 15 levels of command to get here."* (Female)
  - *"Senior leaders do [encourage reporting], but I think as you go down the chain I think it decreases."* (Female)
  - *"I think formally just about every person in a leadership position is going to say what they are obligated to say via their position, but the way you communicate it, the way you deal with people, caring about their personal issues, that can make all the difference in the world and the way someone really feels if they encourage you. So it depends on how you define encourage."* (Female)
  - *"I have no doubt it would be taken seriously if I said something, but I don't know if encourage is right. I think people, they want you to know that they're available and there but they don't want to create a problem that's not there either. I know everything, any aspect of Academy life you're encouraged to handle at the lowest level. You go to your team leader and you're supposed to talk to your roommate first and then go up from there. I think it's the same thing. But I know for sure if I talked to anyone at any level they would take it seriously. If I went to my TAC or my team leader, doesn't matter who it is, they would do whatever they needed to do."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated they preferred hearing about reporting from cadets.**
  - *"They try to leave it cadet run, that's the whole purpose of the Academy. I would rather hear it from a cadet, someone I can relate to, than somebody who is distant from me."* (Male)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some cadets indicated that fear of victim blaming from peers might serve as a deterrent to reporting.**
  - *"I know there's a stigma that goes along with this because we put so much emphasis on the prevention of sexual harassment, and so whenever somebody does report it a lot of times there's some people who feel like maybe, she's maybe lying or trying to*

get out of some sort of trouble or trying to not take responsibility for her actions or something, and so that may lead some females to not, speaking specifically of females, to not report." (Male)

- *"I think there's also a fear of victim blaming, especially like number five said, there's a gray area. That's always been one of the biggest things with reporting any kind of sexual assault, is the fear that you're going to be blamed."* (Male)

- *"Sides are going to be taken. And the real story is going to be exaggerated or blown out of proportion based off just what other people have heard and you just don't want to be the target of that. In a small school like this, it's easy to figure out who it was. And sometimes that is worse than what happened to you because cadets, whether people want to believe it or not, can be relentless and just brutal. It depends on how the story was relayed by mouth. Because if it's exaggerated and a person is made to believe that it wasn't worth reporting or something like that, then they're going to talk bad about them."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated a strong expectation to demonstrate responsibility, which can conflict with expectations regarding reporting sexual assault.**

  - *"And I think part of that goes to we're always told to keep it on the lowest level, don't jump the chain of command. I think that hinders the reporting process because you are always told that you don't exactly want to go up to someone and talk about it because you feel you're stepping outside the bounds of what's been set."* (Male)

  - *"Here at the Academy if there's anything that bonds us together as a Corps of cadets is that we all go through this stuff together and we're here to help each other out, and we're not here to kick someone out."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that intense response to a report of sexual assault might deter some people from reporting.**

  - *"I feel that's also one of the problems with how emphasized CASHA is, is that everything becomes a big deal. So if something does happen and whatever happens has to be a big deal because CASHA is such a big deal. So maybe putting in steps between reporting, you still report, but steps between the extreme."* (Male)

  - *"It's not worth the fuss of a formal complaint."* (Female)

  - *"Yes [it is drastic to report USC]."* (Male)

  - *"Because the problem with the system is that for no matter the scale of like the issue, you have to go through the same process."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that people consider the impact of someone's career in deciding whether to report something.**
  - *"West Point's policy is a pretty strict no tolerance. So if someone is found of anything, conducted an unwanted sexual contact, they're in a lot of trouble. And that's kind of a two edged sword. On the one hand it prevents a lot of it from happening, but on the other hand when it does happen I think a lot of the females might say yes, it happened to me but it's not worth ruining this guy's life so they don't want to report it, they know this kid is going to be kicked out of West Point, it's going to be a huge problem. And they think that that punishment is probably not warranted so they don't report it."* (Male)
  - *"In some of these cases the people are very close to each other, may have been friends or acquaintances or had crushes on each other or something, so maybe you don't want to report it because you are afraid of what might happen to the other person. Yes, something bad happened to me and it hurt me a lot but I still don't want to see this person's career go up in flames."* (Female)
  - *"Because the costs are so enormous. Here if you get brought up, if you actually got charged from leadership, our number one priority is to mitigate harassment or assault, and that's another reason why people don't want to report, I don't want to ruin their career because if I ruin their career it just has enormous consequences in theory. And sometimes it doesn't have any consequences at all because you can't get it through."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that people might refrain from reporting sexual assault for fear they would be punished for a collateral offense, although there are policies that protect them.**
  - *"It depends in what order the things happen most of the time. If you are found to have been drinking in the barracks and then you report a sexual assault or harassment, the drinking in the barracks punishment is still going to stick because you can't use sexual harassment or assault as a way to escape punishment. But I think if it happens in the opposite order, I was sexually assaulted or harassed and then it comes up that alcohol was involved, you'll probably get in trouble."* (Male)
  - *"I think one of the reasons why it's not getting reported is the person that's the victim was maybe doing something unrelated that they knew was wrong. So I feel that underage drinking or drinking in the barracks, if they know that they were wrong in some way, even if it didn't cause the sexual assault or harassment, if it just as a fact of the case come out, some kind of investigation, then they would be able to get in trouble with that too. They might be just like let's just let this go because I don't want to get in trouble."* (Male)
  - *"Usually they separate. If it's a plebe that got raped but they were drinking, they don't want to be like she is not going to report it because they were drinking."* (Male)

- *"A lot of cases that happen a lot of times it starts with a regular violation, like you're in someone's room and not supposed to be or drinking and underage. If you're at risk for getting in trouble, then it's not worth it to report it. Yeah, it would maybe do justice for the other person, but you're going to get in trouble too and there are a lot of repercussions at hand if you report."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that punishment for collateral misconduct is secondary to stopping someone from assaulting others.**
  - *"Well, I don't know if I see it [emphasizing punishment over helping survivors] as a bad priority. I feel if there is someone out there that is hurting people, the number one priority I feel like would be getting that person. I understand that the individual who's hurt definitely should be aided whenever possible, but that individual shouldn't have any place. I feel like the number one priority should definitely be identifying who those individuals are because you don't want them in your organization."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that people might deal with unwanted behaviors at their level rather than make a report.**
  - *"I feel like 99 percent of cadets, if you say that bothers me, stop that, they'll stop that."* (Male)
  - *"And up here you have people saying I'll handle this on my own, go talk to the person themselves and say 'Hey, cut it out.' I know that happens."* (Male)
  - *"That's the other thing with dealing on the lowest level and not ruining the life. Just coming up to the guy and saying hey, you can't do that. Don't say that kind of thing. That's not okay. And I feel like that does, that does have an impact on lowering the incidents."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might not report for fear of having it reflected in their record that they had a bad experience.**
  - *"And even if you're the victim, the reporter rather than the person who is being reported on, it's still going on your record. So there's a stigmatism attached, regardless of whether it's founded or not, you have a SHARP incident regardless of which side of the equation you're on, you've reported it. And also here at the Academy, although everything is considered confidential, its need to know and that includes your entire cadet chain of command. It doesn't matter what level of leadership you start at when you talk to someone, it's going to go all the way through your chain of command. That's at least five or six cadets that are going to know that you had a SHARP case and this is what's going on. I'm not really sure they need to know. I guess here at the Academy the idea is cadet leadership and cadet mentorship and that's something that those cadets need to learn as leaders. But it's also an incredibly personal issue that would involve a bunch of your classmates, superiors, subordinates."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that people might not report for fear of retaliation.**[15]
  - *"Also a fear of retaliation in a lot of cases. Even if it's just like a social, people would move away from you because they know something happened, that they don't want to say something, have it come out wrong and be reported."* (Female)
  - *"They feel if they report it they may be isolated. People want to avoid you, whether you are the victim or the person that reported it?"* (Female)
  - *"I think you expect to be treated differently afterwards. I'm not really sure sexual assault, but I know I'm looking at a narrower view of sexual assault. I don't think there's any guy or girl at the Academy that would ever hold it against somebody if they reported that they had been raped or attempted rape. But sexual assault is like a really broad category and I think because of that there's definitely always going to be a stigma for turning somebody in for something, whether that's breaking a regulation, drinking under age, being out of the room after taps or any kind of I think unwanted sexual contact or sexual harassment, there's always going to be a stigma against that. And I don't think it has anything to do with what's being reported, it's just more reporting a peer."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that prior experience with reporting procedures might deter someone from reporting in the future.**
  - *"[Described a cadet who] had to go down to the police station and give an interview and give a witness statement about one of these and it just seemed like a huge hassle for an already traumatic event."* (Female)
  - *"[Described a cadet who] ended up dropping every allegation because it was jumping through so many hoops to get something done, don't have the time to do this. There are way too many hoops to jump through for someone trying to report something, involved in various sworn statements, which is very, very time consuming."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that people might not report sexual assault because they fear they will end up suffering for making the report.**
  - *"I feel like, at least with my experience, if that sexual assault was so like intense and absolutely the most horrible thing, like classic rape that you see, that would be worth it because you would be like I'm going to get him and he's going to go down. The only issue is if you are going to get that guy down, you're going to take yourself with him. It's literally just jumping off the cliff while grabbing him. You don't know what the ramifications are. I don't trust what's going to happen afterwards, who's going to know what happened. And that's a big thing for me is if something happened I probably would not report."* (Female)
  - *"They're scared."* (Male)

[15] Note that the next section of the report provides additional details on issues of retaliation.

- **Some cadets described other reasons for not reporting.**
  - *"I think everybody is here with the intent of graduating. And I know from friends' experiences, they reported and because of all the trips to the hospital, and talking to JAG and all the people you have to meet with, all the things that you have to list with a report, she ended up failing all of her classes. So she wasn't going to class because she had so many places she had to be during the hours that we're all in class. So if you value graduating on time and like finishing out what you came here to do, you kind of have to pick one or the other almost, which doesn't seem very fair."* (Female)
  - *"That's another reason why people don't report things because they don't want to be seen as a high risk person for their friends to hang out with. That's a bad stereotype that we have. 'Yeah, I'm not going to report something if all of my friends are scared to hang out with me because they think I'm a high risk person.'"* (Male)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some cadets indicated that greater knowledge of multiple-incident, same-perpetrator USC statistics would increase the likelihood of reporting.**
  - *"I think it would."* (Male)
  - *"Yes."* (Female)
  - *"Definitely. Probably to do something to stop it makes sense."* (Female)
  - *"I think if we saw these statistics it would help everyone if something happened for even the first time, knowing that these statistics are so like significant, that maybe even though it just happened for the first time, it may not be significant in our minds, that because these are so high that we might think it will happen again, to someone else or even to ourselves, it will encourage us to report that."* (Female)
  - *"I think this is highly indicative of not addressing [an unwanted behavior]. Tell somebody if they do something that makes you feel uncomfortable instead of meekly brush it off and this number would go down. Guaranteed."* (Male)
  - *"If someone assaulted you and you're hesitant about doing it [reporting], but then you find out that this person has assaulted twenty other people and you actually have an opportunity for him to be punished or her, any situation, then you're much more willing to do it just to help other people in the future."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that while they have heard the multiple-incident, same-perpetrator USC statistics, that knowledge might not increase the likelihood of reporting.**
  - *"I feel it should be, but it's not reality. If someone has you in a situation, then there's more of a psychological aspect that goes into it and now you fear this person. If something was happening to me and I was already scared to report it as it is and then*

something happened again, I wouldn't be able to handle that. That's just how I would feel about it. It's an awkward situation as it is. It's a pride thing, you don't want to admit it happened to you." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that underreporting of sexual assault enables repeat offenders.**
  - *"Especially if it's not reported then the person feels like they're getting away with it. I feel like it gives way to the same offender situation."* (Male)
- **Some cadets offered a perspective on multiple-offender versus single repeat-offender cases.**
  - *"So analyzing this multiple offense data. One thing that comes to mind, most of the cases for multiple offenses has the same offenders, what about those that have different offenders? What's happening to that girl, she's being harassed by two different people. The only thing I can think of in social circles, he said/she said. They're staying in the same social circle that has the same culture and it can be a vicious cycle. People they surround themselves with, they're okay with it, they're not, so they're not going to report it."* (Male)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some cadets indicated they believe reporting is the best way to deal with the incident.**
  - *"Continuing fear. If you thought it wouldn't end any other way."* (Female)
  - *"I'll be happy to take that bastard down with me."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they might report USC if they felt it would prevent others from being victimized later.**
  - *"Also whoever did it to you I'm assuming, I think we're all assuming it's going to be another cadet, you'd report it just because that cadet is eventually going to be in charge of other soldiers and they're going to be responsible for other soldiers. If those soldiers report to them they have to deal with that issue as well. So you want everybody who is going to be in a leadership position in the future, which we all will be, to be someone whose soldiers can trust them with issues like this. And obviously someone who commits sexual assault is not someone whose soldiers can trust them."* (Female)
  - *"So maybe it happened to you, but you might be able to stop it from happening to somebody else."* (Female)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some cadets suggested support from peer leadership would increase reporting.**
  - *"If it was coming from cadets themselves, like those statistics [confidence in leadership] say that cadet leaders it's obviously not as high as Academy senior leaders. I think if you know that your classmates and your peers are on your side encouraging you to report and that they're there for you, I think it makes a huge difference."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that minimizing victim blaming would help encourage people to report sexual assault.**
  - *"I don't know how tangible this is, but try to mitigate the opportunity for victim blaming, he said/she said. Because I think especially at like the company TAC level, it's really hard to separate these instances. Automatically you want to approach the person, you want to accuse them, so and so said you did this. Why did you do it? Did you do it? And it immediately puts the other person on defense and sort of breeds the opportunity for that environment, that's what I witnessed. If there's a different way, like throughout the process, that you try and mitigate the he said/she said and eliminates the opportunity for the accused to counter accuse immediately."* (Male)
- **Some cadets suggested that making the reporting process easier would encourage reporting.**
  - *"Is there an anonymous reporting thing? There are the phone lines you can call. Is there an Army version of that? I feel like that's the first thing someone would do would be that, and then the person would try to convince them to talk to someone else, and then talk to someone else and then the process would begin. Because going to someone that you potentially know and telling them would be terrifying."* (Male)
  - *"We have the CASHA program, which was started by a cadet who graduated last year, and there are reps in every company. But the CASHA reps are not restricted reporting sites. So I feel like if there was some way to make some cadets at least restricted reporting sites, that would be valuable because like I think we look at the statistics of how many reports are restricted or unrestricted, but most important it should be if somebody feels like they've been attacked or harassed that they are getting the help they need. And it seems there's a lot of focus on catching the bad people instead of helping the hurt people. And I don't know, feels like a bad priority."* (Female)
  - *"Streamline the process so it doesn't take as much time and feel like a burden on your life to do it."* (Female)
  - *"Well, the problem with the hospital visits and that kind of stuff, it's only open to 1600 and we all have class. We might have hours off, but we have class until then. If you want to go, unless you are going into the emergency room, like the cadet clinic is*

only open for that long. In that case I would say there's not really that much, if she has to go to the hospital, that can be avoided. And most people get off work around 1600 too. So most of those things happen during our day. [So just having more facilities open and available] or different hours, being more accommodating I guess." (Female)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
>
> 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a cadet would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated that ostracism is more common at the Academy than professional retaliation.**
  - *"Social."* (Multiple Females)
  - *"Calling people out on Yik Yak."* (Female)
  - *"I'd say slander just from what I saw with the one case that we dealt with."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that both forms of retaliation, ostracism and professional, occur at the Academy.**
  - *"[Multiple head nods affirming both types of retaliation occur.]"* (Multiple Females)
  - *"More so the social than the professional. The TACs are usually older and they dealt with the case most likely so they actually have the background information on what happened and how serious it was, whereas cadets don't necessarily know everything that happens."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated their leadership would be supportive in cases where cadets reported sexual misconduct and would not demonstrate professional retaliation.**
  - *"The TAC, if you report something, they are going to go out of their way to protect you and stuff like that. I've never heard of a TAC retaliating against a cadet for reporting something. Most of the time the TACs have no idea what is going on and now that they finally do, they want to do something about it."* (Male)
- **Some cadets felt that ostracism might occur in situations where there is victim blaming and/or doubt the accusation is serious or severe.**
  - *"Especially if there's an attitude, like he's a really good guy, there's no way he or she did that kind of thing."* (Female)
  - *"I could also see it being slander in the fact that if a person had like one night over spring break had a one night stand with somebody and then was assaulted and people were like 'Well, she sleeps around with people so how can that be assault because she probably was fine with this.' I've seen it go both ways. They've been ignored and also been slanderized."* (Female)
  - *"They don't believe something actually happened. Given someone's personality they might think 'Oh, she reported it because she wanted attention. Oh, I don't know, she reported for some other reason other than it actually happened, it affected her.' Which is absurd, but it definitely does happen because, guys and girls, they just don't take it seriously the way they should."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that ostracism would be difficult to prove.**
  - *"How can you really prove that after the fact? It's harder to prove or harder to pinpoint."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated it would be difficult to reduce ostracism.**
  - *"There's literally no way to change the social [retaliation]. There's no official avenue to change the social retaliation aspect."* (Male)
  - *"I don't exactly know how to address it. I don't either."* (Male)

- *"Yes. You're never going to avoid that. This is a social setting and everyone has their friends. If you get someone in trouble, their friends are not going to like that. Yes. That's absolutely understandable."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that cadets pick sides in cases based on loyalty towards friends who are under investigation (although not yet been found guilty of) sexual misconduct.**
  - *"A big part of the culture here is every time we hear about a sexual assault or a sexual harassment case within the Corps, pretty much everyone picks a side and then just bashes the other person, like calling them a liar, calling them crazy basically. I think it's pretty much every time I've seen it."* (Female)
  - *"The thing is it takes a really long time to do the investigation. It can be weeks to months before someone is found guilty. And in that time frame if the person is not found guilty, his friends should support him until he's found guilty. And in that time period someone might feel like they're being thrown under the bus. But that time period I think is very important because it could be weeks or months. And in that time, yeah, I understand his friends are supporting him, he hasn't been found guilty yet."* (Male)
  - *"If someone accuses your friend of doing something, even if you don't have all of the facts, you are probably going to take their side and that's going to cause problems with the other issues."* (Female)

- **Some female cadets indicated that their male peers are more reserved in making statements that could be taken as retaliation due to the increased sexual assault and sexual harassment training.**
  - *"I think they're cognizant that it's not appropriate. I would say it's not afraid of being reported as harassment, that's extreme, just they realize it's not the time or the place to make those comments."* (Female)
  - *"I have seen that they have been more careful and thoughtful of how they've phrased things. It's still within the realm of the joke and I understand the joke but it wasn't intentional. So I think the training has worked in that aspect, that they've been aware to think before they say something that's considered locker room talk."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that retaliation would be similar for males and females.**
  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Females)

- **Some female cadets indicated that retaliation would be worse for males compared to females.**
  - *"Definitely worse."* (Female)

- *"Especially if you had something like on that one charge in the locker room and some guy reports that, he's the guy that takes everything too seriously, I think the ostracism would be worse in that case. Because you can't do anything around this guy, they will SHARP you."* (Female)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated that people might perceive an action as retaliation when in fact what was being done was something that was intended to help them.**
  - *"It could be perceived as retaliation, but for me I was taught during Beast that when you do unrestricted reporting and the person is in the same company as you, they will move you just to protect you and separate you in a more personal fashion. So if that happened to me and I was moved to a different company, I wouldn't see it as retaliation but some other people might."* (Male)
  - *"I think towards the idea of clear intent. There's a lot of things that happen here, just push through and just do it, but we have no idea why we're doing it, it's not clear intent. I feel like that could help you, here's clear intent, we're doing this to help you. So they wouldn't actually be I don't want to but we're doing it to help you."* (Male)
  - *"That would probably be the biggest one, switching their company. And I think on the other end too, when the person moves into the new company, they already have that stigmatism about them. Even people don't know what they did but they know that they got moved because they did something bad and they got moved, which also causes problems with rooms, especially with girls where you only have four girls in the same class, in the same company, you already have your roommate and you have to move everything around and people get frustrated. And then if they don't know all the details you just start ragging on that person saying maybe more than if they had just stayed where they were."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that transfers work best when the survivor is part of the decision process.**
  - *"If you wanted to transfer, why would that be retaliatory? Like if the cadet didn't ask to be transferred, but had reported an incident and, okay, I can see that. I feel that would be communication because the officials, like 'This is to help you so you don't have to deal with seeing this person every day.' I feel like that would be a breakdown in communication. I've never heard of anything like that before."* (Female)
  - *"I've heard of that. I've heard of incidents within company and they'll ask the people if that happened, they'll ask them do you want to stay in company or do you want the other person to leave, and normally it's the other person that will leave."* (Female)

- *"[Describing a situation] Everybody knew what was going on so she didn't feel comfortable around those people because they maybe treated her different. But when she came to our company no one knew the whole situation so she fit in fine."* (Male)

- **Some comments by cadets indicated confusion as to what behaviors constitute retaliation.**

  - *"I just don't think ignoring somebody is retaliation. I mean there are a lot of factors that can play into somebody ignoring you. Maybe it's just you're a friend of the suspect and maybe you're afraid of how the victim is going to react if you try and interact with them or whatever. So I don't think ignoring somebody is necessarily retaliation. I think retaliation is more along the lines of you maybe verbally threatening that person or just being rude to that person, then that's clearly retaliation at that point. But ignoring somebody I don't think is."* (Male)

- **Some cadets believed actions taken for other behaviors by a survivor, such as underage drinking, could be perceived as retaliation.**

  - *"Well, we actually officially do that at the Academy. If you report something like sexual assault or harassment and alcohol was involved, your privileges are immediately revoked until the case has been thoroughly investigated. That's absolutely institutionalized, you are barred from favorable actions like pass. We just went over that earlier, if alcohol was involved and you were sexually assaulted or raped, you shouldn't be barred from a favorable action like pass, but you are."* (Male)

- **Some cadets reported being seen as a "snitch" as an example of perceived retaliation.**

  - *"It all comes down to you don't want to be a snitch and you don't want to be retaliated against. So if you can handle something at your level, go challenge someone and tell them 'Dude, stop it,' they're cool, but if they don't, you are going to tell on somebody, and not that sexual harassment and sexual assault, they made a simple mistake, but that line of thought."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that people might begin to avoid someone who reported a fellow cadet for fear they might be also be reported for some action or statement.**

  - *"If somebody reports a SHARP case and it's easy to see that others may view them as a high risk person to interact with, but what if they're overly sensitive and I do something and now I'm accused of a SHARP violation. It's self preservation technique. You don't want to really interact with high risk sort of people."* (Male)

  - *"Self preservation."* (Male)

- *"If they're the type of person who has already proven that they would report something instead of just dealing with it at the lowest level or handling it in a different way, that supports the fact that they are going to do it again."* (Male)

Ostracism as retaliation

- **Some cadets provided examples of ostracism and shunning.**
  - *"The most often thing that we would see is people being ostracized pretty much. It's worse than being ignored."* (Male)
  - *"It's not just like being shunned so much as also being cast out I want to say. It's not like they're just not being talked to or anything, you are being pushed away. And I feel that's the way it happens."* (Male)
  - *"That people just don't talk to you. No, they're pretty much not part of the Corps anymore but you are."* (Male)
  - *"People don't want to hang out with you."* (Female)
  - *"The people that report, they're ostracized as well as the people that are being reported on. Everyone stays away from them. Oh, we didn't know what you did so we're going to stick over here because we don't want to get in trouble with you or anything."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that slander as a form of retaliation could occur against someone who reported sexual assault.**
  - *"That would look more realistically at the Academy, slandering people behind their backs in such a manner that it destroys their public image within the company. I've seen that happen. And it's a lot more vicious than we're not going to talk to the guy."* (Male)
  - *"I know for a fact I could name off just about everyone who's reported a SHARP case this year. There's nothing here at all that's confidential. Something I learned the hard way. So we can name them. I'm not going to. I'm saying the fact that we as the Corps know who's reported and who hasn't. I'm not sure that's the best thing. And that in itself is its own ostracism where people make fun of it and synonymous with the Benedict Arnold."* (Female)
  - *"People not believing you. Double blame thing again, saying it's your fault or whatever."* (Female)

Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation

- **A few cadets indicated they were aware that retaliation can be reported.**
  - *"Yes"* (Multiple Males)

- **Other cadets indicated they were not aware that retaliation can be reported.**
  - *"[Multiple head nods indicating they did not know if the policy that retaliation can be reported]"* (Multiple Females)
  - *"I didn't know there was a regulation [prohibiting retaliation]. Obviously you don't want the person to be ostracized. I didn't know there was a regulation."* (Female)
  - *"We're never told there's a regulation against it."* (Male)
  - *"I thought it was more implied, but makes sense."* (Female)
  - *"I would say that it's commonly understood that you should not do that, but I'm unaware of any sort of punishment formally associated with that."* (Female)
  - *"We didn't know that but I feel like it's just understood."* (Male)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated they would report retaliation to their Tactical Officer (TAC).**
  - *"The way you do it you have to go directly to the TAC."* (Male)
  - *"TACs definitely."* (Male)
  - *"TACs definitely, chain of command I'm almost sure but it really depends on who's directly involved."* (Male)
  - *"I would talk to my TAC."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they would report retaliation within the cadet chain of command to resolve the issue among themselves.**
  - *"Depending on the situation. As a firstie I feel like I would go to the cadet leadership honestly and try to handle it at a cadet level because I think cadets are pretty good at working things out together."* (Male)
  - *"Especially when it's serious things like this [working with the cadet chain of command]."* (Female)
  - *"I also think as far as to prevent ostracizing, I think the cadets are a lot more likely to listen to a peer of theirs than a TAC saying 'Hey, you need to stop doing whatever you are doing.' I think more likely listen to each other."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated there would be reluctance to report retaliation against a fellow cadet as they would not want to get caught in the middle of the two parties.**
  - *"It's pretty understandable when there are two parties engaged in a conflict like that that they're not going to talk. I don't think anybody is dumb enough to step in and try to push them both together."* (Male)
  - *"You can't tell someone to stop disliking this person. People are allowed to have their opinions, whether or not someone is a good guy or bad guy, you can't change that."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the level of leadership that the incident was reported to determines the number of people who will be aware of the incident.**
  - *"I also think that who you report to here is very important because where in the level of leadership you decide to take your case determines who they feel they need to tell. Say you report it to the SHARP guy or you felt comfortable going to your RTO [Regimental Tactical Officer]or whatever, they're going to decide well, this cadet is in company X5 and I really think their TAC officer should know. So that RTO is going to go and tell that cadet's TAC and maybe that cadet didn't feel comfortable telling their TAC, but as senior leader telling his subordinate that he thinks that his officer should know. That's something that definitely happens here. They're trying to be helpful but more people end up knowing than what was intended."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated the difficulty in reporting ostracism.**
  - *"I'm not sure there's a way to handle ostracization. How do you tell people you have to be this person's friend?"* (Male)
  - *"If we just decide not to talk to someone, how can you be like 'Oh, you guys aren't talking to her for that reason so I'm going to punish you.'"* (Male)
  - *"Anyone who is going to ostracize someone will not do so in a manner that they know they can get caught. Even if it's there and it's verbal and a he said/she said type stuff, I really don't know how to prove this."* (Male)
  - *"There are ways to say it's happening, but even if it's happening what are you going to do about it?"* (Male)
  - *"They [leadership] would check up on you but I don't know if they would act unless there's proof. Extreme case. Yes, would have to be pretty extreme."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated people might not report ostracism because they cannot prove it resulted from their making a report of sexual assault.**
  - *"Complain so and so is ignoring me. Really? They could be ignoring you for another reason."* (Male)

- *"This is an environment where you have your groups and stuff. So if I am not talking to you, it's just I don't talk to you. Yeah, we speak but it's more like you can't really prove it on a social aspect, you can't say oh, they don't talk to me because of what happened. No, you're not my friend."* (Male)

- *"How can you identify it and how do you stop it? You are going to tell your company go hang out with them? Maybe I just don't like them, I don't know. How do you even play that game?"* (Female)

Leadership awareness of retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated that staff members also make comments about cases of sexual assault.**

  - *"I'm not sure if it's intentional retaliation, it's just that they gossip just as much as the cadets."* (Female)

  - *"The staff are just as bad."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the cadet chain of command can contribute to rumor spreading.**

  - *"Yik Yak definitely throws things out there. And there are some people on there that will say 'Hey, you shouldn't throw names up there or initials, it doesn't matter what it is, you shouldn't put someone's name up there because it's bad.' People talk here, especially because we all live so close together. Something happens you are going to tell your roommate, your roommate is going to tell probably your chain of command. Somebody in your chain of command, like the team leaders, when they are talking about something or one of their friends, they're going to tell someone, 'Guess what I heard,' and then every single person knows."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that staff members are aware of retaliatory behaviors by observing social media.**

  - *"They know what's going on. They're on Yik Yak too."* (Female)

  - *"Even the instructors, TACs, NCOs, they all look at Yik Yak and they see it all too."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that if leadership, depending on the individual leader, saw retaliation occurring, they would take steps to prevent it.**

  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Males and Females)

  - *"Definitely."* (Male)

  - *"Yes. My TAC officer, we had an incident where a girl's name was being thrown around on Yik Yak. And he talked to some of the other cadets within our company to*

make sure it wasn't us who were discussing that or if we knew where the actual source was coming from, like who was saying it. So he had a meeting with us to figure out who was saying all of this stuff about someone. So he could cut it off right there because he knew it was inappropriate, I thought that was really good. Not all of us but some are kind of too scared to say something to each other and don't want to bring it up at all. I thought it was good that he was trying to hone down on it." (Female)

- *"I'd say it was an intercompany issue, like they'd probably handle it, if it was a TAC officer, within their company."* (Male)
- *"I feel at least our TAC is really into having impromptu leadership discussions on our behaviors, so I think it's like TAC dependent and what kind of leadership."* (Female)
- *"It's really company dependent. Some TACs will do their best to prevent a situation and tell people they can trust their leadership and some are completely hands off. And most people, unless they are told otherwise or unless they're provoked, they don't want to talk to their chain of command about anything. So they'll just talk to their peers and they won't go anywhere because their peers won't do anything about it. It's not that they don't care but because they can't, they can't do anything to help and so the TACs are kind of useless in that situation."* (Female)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated actions that could be taken by cadets themselves to help prevent retaliation.**
  - *"Just cadets policing each other up is most effective."* (Female)
  - *"I think if you encouraged your cadet leadership to use not only chain of command but also influences outside of the chain of command. So maybe if one member of senior leadership in your company isn't great friends with everyone but they're pretty good friends with him and pretty good friends with him and they're pretty good friends with everybody else, using the peer to peer network, not just like chain of command."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that sharing information about incidents could be used to help reduce retaliation.**
  - *"I do feel that something that could be used to address this ostracism is getting information out. Because what happens in a lot of cases, they'll be like 'Oh, we can't let any information out, we have to keep it all hushed up.'"* (Male)
  - *"You could just talk to your TAC about it. You don't need to necessarily report anything but I feel like it should be brought to someone's attention, especially if you are feeling belittled by it. Because cadet's psychological feelings and stuff like that here are also big, where we care about them. And at the beginning of the year we*

had this huge suicide prevention thing about how everybody is a part of the team, you all matter, your feelings are important and stuff like that. I feel like that needs to be taken into account because we've had several instances where cadets are holding in all of these kinds of feelings and they attempt suicide. So I feel like it needs to be talked about, especially if you feel belittled." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that protecting privacy could be used to help reduce retaliation from reporting.**
  - *"Give context to both sides."* (Male)
  - *"When that happens it's usually rumors that get spread on social media."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like that is important to protect the privacy of the people, but it also gets cadets talking about the case. And when cadets talk about the case they get imaginations about things, and cadets will make up things that didn't happen and it will kind of force one person to be the villain and one person to be he was wronged by her, she was wronged by him, while getting all the facts out there would make it more balanced."* (Male)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, cadets were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among cadets and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Cadets were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some cadets indicated that social media is used for general complaining/retaliation.**
  - *"It can be used as retaliation for anything. We got extended AI [Additional Instruction] last week and everybody is on there completely annihilating the COM [Commandant], the BTO [Brigade Tactical Officer], the Sergeant Major, just because they could. And it didn't even come from their office, which was even better. So they'll annihilate senior leaders just as easily as cadets and won't get a board."* (Female)
  - *"Definitely."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that social media is used less now for retaliation as posts can be tracked.**
  - *"I don't think it's used very much. It's too easy to track it."* (Male)
  - *"It used to, not anymore. We've been so educated and so tuned in to be careful of what we say, we filter everything we say."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that social media is used to spread rumors.**
  - *"As long as it's in the Corps you're going to get a rumor mill. On Yik Yak it's crazy. So instead of just your company hearing it, everyone on Yik Yak hears what you are saying."* (Female)
  - *"It's a vehicle for rumors to spread, for things to get out. Especially if people don't know the facts or they are looking for the facts and there's no way they can get the actual facts, they'll ask about the facts on social media. Someone may have the facts and obviously someone will be like here's what happened, and they don't really know what happened either."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated the anonymity of social media contributes to sexist comments.**
  - *"I think anonymous different forms of postings have become very popular. And when you're anonymous it's easier to be a jerk towards other people. Yik Yak, on that forum you'll have someone asking for advice. Well, you've already thought about it so you're a wimp or you're weak. And there are a lot of negative things on there. But I think people wouldn't say it to the other person's face, they just have that anonymous block in front of them so I can say whatever I want."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they would not say anything maliciously on Facebook or Twitter due to the lack of anonymity.**
  - *"No, not anything that has our name."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that, while some people are offended by comments on social media, others indicated that it is a part of how this generation communicates.**
  - *"I think we're split. Some people are really offended by everything that they see and some people understand that social media is going to change with the generation, going to have to change with it, and it's not a personal attack, it's just 19 year old kids venting. And they might not be being smart about it, but it's just how you view it and there are two completely different sides on that."* (Female)

Use of Yik Yak[16]

- **Some cadets indicated that a large portion of students use Yik Yak, while others indicated that it is losing popularity.**
  - *"Yik Yak is a huge problem."* (Male)

[16] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately a five-mile radius.

- *"Yes. 95 percent of cadets have it."* (Male)
- *"I think it's seen its best days. I think it's on the down. I know I personally deleted it a couple of weeks ago."* (Male)
- *"I want to say that people were obsessed with it when it first came out, it was a huge thing and everybody was talking about it all the time. And I feel it's almost lost that power. People can still post, but I feel enough people realize that it can be so negative and so cynical. My friends and I have deleted it because it makes you feel annoyed even more so than the normal rules. Just hearing how many people are having a really shitty day, it's not necessary. So I think it's not as powerful or it won't be as powerful as it has been in the past year just because it's lost the initial shock."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the main draw of Yik Yak is the anonymity.**
  - *"I think the anonymity. Nobody is bold enough to say anything about it any other place."* (Male)
  - *"I think the thing about Yik Yak is obviously it's anonymous and you get people talking about be careful what you put on social media, your boss can look you up later. But the fact that Yik Yak is anonymous makes it an entirely different animal from other social mediums. You approach things with an entirely different thought process. Sometimes you are just looking to get a reaction, may or may not be what you believe about things. And people I think use that as an excuse about what's said on Yik Yak, just looking for that reaction."* (Female)
  - *"And one of the big problems with West Point and social media, when it comes to that a lot of people use a certain social media that's anonymous. So that causes a big problem because you can post whatever you want on there and no one will know if it's true or not. And with something like that all it takes is one angry person to post something completely untrue and start spreading rumors."* (Male)
  - *"And it's an anonymous forum. We know not to post these things on Facebook where they can link a name or a Twitter handle to it. But if I'm on Yik Yak, I could write whatever I want and I'm not going to get caught. I could say anything."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that Yik Yak is more likely to be used for retaliation.**
  - *"Yik Yak is a tough one. But Facebook, I don't think too much retaliation on Facebook."* (Male)
  - *"Yik Yak is anonymous, so someone can post something about someone and potentially not be repercussions."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that cadets will self-police each other's posts and "down vote" Yik Yak posts regarding retaliation.**[17]
  - *"I think it can be, but people shoot it down as soon as it's up. If you post initials or too much of a name, they'll shoot it down. The Corps will say 'No, that's wrong.'"* (Female)
  - *"And a lot of times if it's a comment or something that could be perceived as sexual harassment, a lot of times it gets down voted and it gets deleted. Policing ourselves."* (Male)
  - *"There's a group of cadets, she's spearheading with all of the brigade leadership, it's a cadet policing thing of Yik Yak where if people get called up by name on Yik Yak, then everybody down votes it. There's a campaign, if there is any people getting called out by name or clearly a reference to them, it's clearly known by all that it's a particular person, then there is a group of cadets who, I think it's the beginning stages of formation, who actively will go down vote it so it gets removed."* (Female)
  - *"It ends up being pretty self-regulating. There's a big enough population on Yik Yak that doesn't want people's names or super awful things written because they realize other people can see it, so it's usually pretty self-regulating I think. You don't see really terrible things up there for very long."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they did not think the Academy could remove posts or ban sites, while others think they can.**
  - *"I don't know if there's something they can do. It's not like Yik Yak is owned by the Corps, it's its own separate entity."* (Male)
  - *"You can ban Yik Yak. I know I don't have it anymore because I really find it downright upsetting sometimes. But I was on it in the city once and I guess I pulled it up too close to a grade school and sorry, you are in too close proximity to a banned location."* (Female)
  - *"It can only be banned at high schools because of cyber bullying. And because it's a college and we're adults they can't like legally ban it. It's weird."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they believe that although Yik Yak is anonymous, posts can be traced.**
  - *"Yik Yak is technically anonymous, but there are definitely ways to trace it and they will get you if you do something bad enough. And Yik Yak was shut down because it got to the point where it was so bad that it was causing huge problems within the Corps. They actually took it down, you couldn't have it at all because names were being used, things that should not have been said ever, not even to people like in person on Yik Yak."* (Female)

[17] Registered users can vote on posts. If enough negative votes are received, a post is deleted.

- *"It's not fully anonymous. I know a cadet who can track people down through Yik Yak."* (Male)

- *"It can be done very easy with the right equipment."* (Male)

- *"They have made statements that if comments are severe enough, obviously they can be taken down or recorded or taken off by other users of the site if they are offended or something like that. But also there are people here who are able to find the IP number and trace it back to a device or a computer if it's being used on iPads, which I know a lot of people here, that's the way they use it. It just hasn't gotten to that severity that it needs to be taken to that level."* (Female)

- *"And the thing about Yik Yak too, even though it's anonymous, you're still posting from your phone and all of us have to put our cell phone numbers in global. So if you do something really stupid, they can pull it. They actually shut down Yik Yak last year. They pulled phone numbers of everybody that posted about a specific thing. It might be anonymous, but if you post something really stupid they would get you for it. By your cell phone number they'll trace you. You'll get a board for it.* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that even though it is anonymous, sometimes it is easy to know who wrote a post.**

  - *"In my company there was something that was disclosed to like half the platoon, this girl shared a personal story and someone posted it on Yik Yak, some really disrespectful things about what she shared. And it was pretty isolated. So we automatically knew who said it. So it just proves the idea that Yik Yak does give this feeling of anonymity, but you can't get caught, but he did get caught."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that although there are negative comments on Yik Yak, there are also positive ones and beneficial uses for the site.**

  - *"At least when people seem they're really struggling, you see the occasional comment, 'I'm thinking about leaving. I'm having a really hard time.' You maybe see one really negative thing and five, six really encouraging comments. There is the good element to it too, it's just there's so much attention brought to the negative stuff."* (Female)

  - *"For example, this week everybody on Yik Yak is at outrage over mandatory breakfast formations. Leadership will see that. And in some cases it's actually in fact making them realize this is actually detrimental to the success of the Corps. Sometimes it can be good."* (Female)

  - *"It's not always constructive, but you definitely get some of the things that people wouldn't say show up on there. Sometimes it's helpful as a leader to know what people are thinking."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that recent posts are not generally about sexual assault or harassment.**
  - *"I've never seen one about sexual harassment, sexual assault and stuff, it's cadet so and so did whatever, it's more like he screwed my friend over and now getting in trouble."* (Male)
  - *"The percentage of Yik Yaks about AMI [Ante Meridiem (morning) Inspection] to the number about sexual assault is infinity to one."* (Male)
  - *"When it first came out it was almost all sexual slandering things and I think it's calmed down a little bit. At first when it was unleashed, people were saying terrible things. I almost feel like people have been talking about it more, been educated on it. Again I feel like a lot of things here it's not like they want you to do the right thing, it's the fear of punishment."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that posts are more often about things that happen day-to-day.**
  - *"Most of it is complaints about regulations here."* (Male)
  - *"This morning it was a lot of people complaining about having to wake up for formation."* (Male)
  - *"Bashing up the leadership. A lot of bashing. A lot of cynicism on there, like 'This sucks, I hate my life.' A whole lot of 'I wish I could drink more,' stuff like that. And the thing is, like we say, we're a lot better than other colleges and the fact that we have a lot less sexual assault, but if you were to look at our Yik Yak feeds and Yik Yak feeds from Yale or Yik Yak feeds from Rutgers or Yik Yak feeds from Marist, it's pretty much the same stuff."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they could see the application being banned or becoming less popular.**
  - *"I can see it getting banned. The Academy can submit a request to remove this location. I could reasonably see that happening very quickly."* (Male)
  - *"I don't know about getting banned. It will lose its steam. Something else will come out."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that by discussing Yik Yak in briefings, it brought attention to a site that many did not know existed.**
  - *"I would say West Point made it into a worse problem than it ever needed to be by the extent that it was a huge knee jerk reaction and they had every single company had briefings about Yik Yak. I think half the Corps didn't even know about Yik Yak."* (Male)
  - *"Only two percent used Yik Yak. And when West Point tried to crack down use of it and it was like 'Oh, it's a thing now.' It was ten percent and now 70 percent."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that posts may portray the Academy unfavorably.**
  - *"We have issues you'd say. A lot of anger."* (Male)
  - *"I think that's why we're trying to get rid of it."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like away from the Academy cadets are fine. But when we're here, people are just shitting on the Academy."* (Male)

Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated that there are rules in place from the Academy for social media use.**
  - *"If you say something bad you can get a board. You'll definitely get in trouble at some level if you complain about your TAC or something. Obviously it's different that Yik Yak is anonymous. There will be backlash. But I've heard of people who put something on Facebook or Twitter status about how much they hate their TAC and you could get a board for that."* (Female)
  - *"And this year they decided to go the other way. And last year if you had it on your phone, you could actually have a board for having the app. Now what they decided to do at the beginning of this year was more educate the cadets because they discovered that if you prohibit something then it's just more likely for cadets to do it, it's very enticing. So they decided to go more with the like 'Okay, here's how you act appropriately,' rather than 'Do not use this.'"* (Female)
  - *"Supposedly we're only allowed them [smartphones] in our rooms. But effectively, as long as you're not pulling it out anywhere. If you are sitting in the library, nobody will bother you for being on your phone, or if you are going to class."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that banning websites is not always effective.**
  - *"They tried. They tried in the beginning, just like they tried to ban Facebook when it first came. But it doesn't work, for kids it doesn't work."* (Female)

- *"It's not just the WiFi. People across the country have tried to ban Yik Yak, but it doesn't happen. You can get into it anywhere you want."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that some at the Academy have embraced social media, but do not think that social media posts should be taken so seriously.**
  - *"At one point the Superintendent openly embraced it. I guess higher up leadership here is trying to see the positives of it and use it as an informal sense of how the Corps feels about things. But I don't honestly think that they should look at it that way. I really think it's just people are going to say what they want to say and I really don't think it should be taken as a serious. If they wanted a serious program, they could develop that. But it's an app on their cell phone and I think it should be seen that way."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that even if the sites are blocked by the Academy, students can find ways around it.**
  - *"Even if they blocked it on the school's WiFi, most people have it on their phones, and just use the phone, the cellular network."* (Male)
  - *"And people have their own connections set up that lets things on their computer."* (Male)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy monitoring sites might make things worse.**
  - *"I think that will make it worse."* (Male)
  - *"The Academy has tried to do that and it didn't go over so well. It was last year or the year before, you're not allowed to have it. If we catch you on Yik Yak, which I don't know how they would, you can get in trouble."* (Male)
  - *"Also I feel like the problem is trying to address it on Yik Yak, even trying to put it on a filter type thing where they can get rid of posts or comments they don't like, cadets will find a way around it. And it will just make the problem even worse, where now cadets don't trust the Academy leadership where they see it as trying to be censored. Earlier, if they are censoring, if something happened and they don't want the facts of the case to get out so they decide to censor the names or initials of the people in the case, everybody knows what they are doing so they'll use the initials or they'll take the initials and they'll switch them around, so instead of being XY, it's YX, things like that. Everyone still knows what they are talking about."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that Academy staff follow these sites.**
  - *"Some of my instructors have the app. They talk about it from time to time, what they've seen on it."* (Male)

- *"Our TAC pulls it up at drill and reads it out. It's like a 50/50 shot on Yik Yak. Some of it is harmless and hilarious, that my TAC pulls it out at drill and reads out some pretty funny things. Unfortunately if you get on it at a bad time when everyone is ranting against either a team or an individual and call them out by name, it's depressing."* (Female)

- *"I think the only thing that really helps is that I know that the officers write on it. So it's just like I know that even though it's anonymous, it's just like I know the BTO [Brigade Tactical Officer] is reading that. I've seen him pulling it up on his phone and he says 'Oh, okay, that's funny.'"* (Female)

- *"Not like a professional. We have people literally assigned to monitor Yik Yak. Everyone has the app, all of the upper leadership."* (Male)

Academy response to social media

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy has taken measures to raise awareness about using social media safely.**

  - *"For instance, they grabbed every NCAA or D-1 team and they went through all of their Facebook, Twitters, and then they grabbed them and are like 'If your mom and dad aren't okay with this, you can't do this.' They'll show examples of people who were on a team, what they're posting, and they're like 'You can't post it. You can get in a lot of trouble. Delete all of this. You don't understand how this is affecting like your career.'"* (Female)

  - *"I think that the Academy does push that. Because I know that we've had PME [Professional Military Ethics] sessions and they talk about things like our social media presence all the time."* (Female)

  - *"We all are assigned mentors here at the Academy. Some of them are pretty paranoid about it [use of social media]. My Facebook doesn't even have my last name on it, says nothing with the Army, has no pictures in uniform, nothing. I had some pictures in my white and gray at the beginning of the year. [My mentor advised] take them all down just because of operational security right now and with the fact that anything you put out there could be a representation of the Academy."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that instead of banning social media sites, the focus should be placed on reminding cadets that they represent West Point even on social media and should be mindful of their posts.**

  - *"I don't think it's a privacy issues or anything, but also as cadets we do represent West Point as an institution. We're taught here you never take off the uniform per se. How you act in your personal life also reflects in your professional life. So I don't think that they necessarily can really put things in a place or should put things in place and regulate it or take away our freedom of speech and things like that. But I*

do think there should be an emphasis on us realizing that we represent more than ourselves and our comments aren't just a representation of our professional things but also of the Academy." (Female)

- *"That goes back to the whole training. We're trained really well not to post anything on social media that could harm our image but as soon as there's no name to the words, then we don't know what to do. And that goes back to the whole respect thing, where are we actually training people to just not have the cause but still do the thing. It's hard, are we going toward a means to an end or trying to get results based."* (Male)

- *"If there was a way to then [hold cadets accountable for posts], they should. Because just from being here during the whole transition of Yik Yak becoming a thing, I think it's definitely had a negative impact on West Point."* (Male)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Cadets were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix C, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some cadets indicated that their TACs and NCOs would make efforts to stop sexual harassment and assault if they saw it happen.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Multiple Females)

- **Some male cadets indicated that the classroom and locker room are not appropriate places for discussion of SHARP issues.**
  - *"Is the academic classroom the place to address [this]? If I'm in calculus and my teacher is like 'Let's have a talk about SHARP.' I'm honestly going to be a little bit confused and annoyed."* (Male)
  - *"The same with athletic staff, I don't want to be in gym class and talking about SHARP. It would annoy me."* (Male)
  - *"You go to play basketball. All right, we have to sit down and talk about sexual harassment, which you probably got that same briefing in your company."* (Male)

- **Some male cadets indicated that context and delivery are important when it comes to addressing SHARP issues.**
  - *"It's all about the appropriateness of the situation. If it's just in conversation and they overhear something in class, some sort of negative comment, they say 'Hey, don't say that in my classroom,' that's something to respect. But if we have our first lesson briefs of this is how the class is going to run, here's our honor brief, here's our legal brief, here's our harassment brief and here's our SHARP brief, at that point I'm annoyed, you've negatively diluted it and having no effect."* (Male)
  - *"I know there's some instructors who, if you have a class with him on Friday, as you are walking out they might say something, be safe this weekend, don't sexually assault someone, don't drink and drive. I know there's one instructor who had this one saying where it was just real quick, three points, and it would stick with everybody. I think that helps."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that people in lower level leadership positions could highlight that they are available to support cadets on SHARP-related issues.**
  - *"I think letting people know that you're there for them. Even if you're not necessarily friends with the person, you would still help them out if it came to that situation, they can still come to you and talk to you and you would know what to do. And you would be open and willing to help them as opposed to them coming to you and you being overwhelmed with the situation or not knowing what to do or being confused or things like that."* (Female)
  - *"I think when you see the people who are at the lower levels and they are in line with those people who are comfortable going to, coming and approaching saying they have a concern, because they know that person really cares. I don't know how they get trained, how the people who are in the position, like the reps, but those who had more buy in intrinsically and that manifests itself in the way they gave the brief."* (Female)
- **Some cadets were not surprised by the *2014 SAGR* survey results on leadership and efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment.**[18]
  - *"I think it's pretty accurate."* (Female)
  - *"I think it makes sense, obviously Academy senior leaders are going to be the highest and then gets diluted as it goes down the chain. Obviously cadet leaders are going to think that the leadership is making efforts because they're the ones trying to do it. And maybe the athletic staff, they're not involved with our day to day stuff. They don't see as much, I can see why there's a difference. Whereas Academy senior leaders, they're the ones that are orchestrating and directing the efforts that happen, the*

[18] See Appendix C, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants.

SHARP trainings and all that. And then as it goes down, either down or horizontally to the athletic staff, then it gets diluted." (Male)

- *"I think it's interesting that it goes down in percentage based off of how much they're around cadets. Academy senior leaders, how much do they really see the cadets when these incidents would happen, on the weekends and at night they're not here, but yet all of them were reported. But cadet leaders who are always there, it's a lot lower. And athletic staff they see their cadet every single day after practice are less likely. So it's interesting because it's almost fake. Sure, 92 percent of senior leaders were reported, but have they ever seen it?"* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated they think the results on leadership and efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment should be higher for cadet leadership.**
  - *"I think honestly the cadet leadership should be higher. Any mention, any comment that has anything to do with sexual harassment, sexual assault is taken incredibly seriously. I don't know, confidence, you'll see an increase in that in cadet leaders for sure because of the training that we have all the time."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the perception of a USC case being handled poorly could result in lower ratings.**
  - *"Their company TAC wasn't terribly great at handling the situation. That's a pocket of people who really think negatively because of the experience they had. I think maybe it doesn't get after things as the whole, people are surveyed based on their personal experience. One bad experience, I'm not sure that means that only 87 percent of commissioned officers in charge of units are good at handling this."* (Female)
  - *"It also depends on how you define effort. TAC officers or individuals handling it poorly doesn't necessarily mean that they're displaying a lack of effort towards handling the situation, maybe there's that person that's not prepared to handle that situation."* (Male)
  - *"I guess you can see where leadership isn't playing a role, because if it's not discussed or where a situation arose and it wasn't handled well in terms of that situation where the TAC, I'm not sure exactly what happened, I wasn't involved, where the TAC mistreated the victim or individual. But I guess in those types of situations where I guess it wasn't handled professionally by the leadership or it wasn't paid enough attention to by the leadership."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that lower level leaders may not be seen as sufficiently distinct from the cadets for them to feel comfortable reporting SHARP issues to them.**
  - *"I would be more concerned about things like rumors. If I tell cadet leadership, who else would he be talking to? I just know that in the end of the day we're all human, they're going to say it to somebody else."* (Female)
  - *"For a cadet, the higher up you are in the leadership, if you have a brief about this, and that shows that you're committed to it. But obviously like the yuk [sophomore] isn't going to have a brief for his plebe [freshman]. So I feel just because you're in a higher position and you put on a brief or at least address it, the Commandant or the Superintendent at the beginning of the semester, that shows that but that's because they're highly visible people, so you can't really make an assessment on the lower level cadet leadership."* (Female)
  - *"I think also people are really aware of the pressure, responsibility that comes with the higher up in leadership you are. At the lower level that's where the rubber meets the road and you actually have more challenges."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that cadet leaders often do not take SHARP issues seriously.**
  - *"Make jokes. That's pretty much what they do. Cadet leadership. Not TACs and NCOs, they don't do that, they know it's inappropriate. Like the cadets here all make jokes about it."* (Female)
  - *"The only interaction I've had with people making fun of it is cadets. If you ever get a brief from an actual officer about it, they are a hundred percent serious. Whenever I've gotten a brief from a cadet about it, they'll try and make it a joke."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that senior leadership makes SHARP issues a priority.**
  - *"It's General Caslen, it's on his top five priority list. We went to the brief, coming back from Beast, first week, go to reorg week and that might be the number one priority."* (Female)
  - *"Everyone repeatedly says my number one priority is sexual harassment, stopping SHARP, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and a lot of times they'll specifically review and make a little comment about this doesn't mean you can't trust each other. Obviously he got to this position for a reason, the cadets respect him, and hearing that from him is a good trickledown effect where it's a good incentive for you to take is seriously."* (Female)
  - *"They talk about it. They just bring it up over and over again that this is a priority so that we don't have happening something that shouldn't be happening. And the more you talk about it and the more people are hearing about it the more you realize that they care."* (Female)

- *"Also on the campaign this year that is one of the things that senior leaders really push, to make sure cadets were really embracing the fight against sexual harassment and assault."* (Female)

- *"I think just because it's pushed so much that no one would risk not trying to push the message that's being passed down. If you have Generals telling you this should be your priority and this is what you're talking about, you're not going to have people who work for them saying I don't really care about that."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that TACS and NCOs also take these issues seriously.**

  - *"Definitely."* (Female)

  - *"It's a priority of almost every person and staff here. It's mentioned in every brief, every company meeting. As soon as people get here you will get briefed on it. When you come back from a break you get briefed on it. Before you leave for a break you get briefed on it. I feel like just the amount it's discussed just shows how they're making an effort."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that a few TACs and NCOs may not treat SHARP as seriously as they should.**

  - *"That first SHARP that we had was literally, after having some experiences with SHARP at other colleges, that was probably the worst SHARP brief I've ever been to. We were in Robinson Auditorium and the speaker didn't show up so we had the entire freshman class there, September maybe, briefer didn't show up and we're sitting in the dark in the auditorium, so this TAC NCO decides to get up and give this brief. And he absolutely made fun of the entire program for the entire duration of the talk. He didn't have a mic, we were sitting in the dark. And after, if you have any problems or questions on the brief, come talk to me. We all just sat here and listened to you talk about this for the last 40 minutes and you just mocked the entire program. I think that's the only big problem I've seen all year, every brief since then has not been a problem."* (Female)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Cadets were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and cadets were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some cadets indicated that the perceived sense of entitlement and lower standards compared to other students may translate into increased unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
  - *"We talk about SHARP being number one on the list of priorities of the school. Number two on that list would be beating Navy. I think a lot of times, if they have a player that's a huge contribution to that team and they're definitely a key asset, a lot of other offenses can be overlooked or dealt with in a way that's much more in-house under the covers."* (Female)
  - *"For a D-I athlete there's an expectation that if you do something or you're involved in that [gender-related behaviors] they will sweep it under the rug and move on. The football incident, that wasn't SHARP related but there's a football incident earlier this year. And only because the Air Force Academy found out that this occurred and put it in the paper. 'Oh, guess we should tell the Corps because this happened and now it's in the news.' I think that's the concept behind the Corps squad, Corps squad being D-I, that we're only going to mention it if we have to. They're not really sorry that it happened, they're sorry they got caught. And that covers everything, including SHARP."* (Female)
  - *"Especially if you're a key player on the team. [For a gender-related issue] You're going to have to do some paperwork, you might not be able to come to practice for a few days, but you'll be good. Especially if you're recruited."* (Female)
  - *"I think that there are several instances like that [held to a different standard in regard to something like sexual assault or sexual harassment] that has happened that resulted in them just getting hours or something. And if I take that perception, I don't know if it's correct, then I would say yes, they were in a different standard and it's probably not as strict as us because if all they had to do was hours, and you get hours for anything and everything. I think, in a way I want to say yes, they are put into a different standard."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that Corps squad teams (not club teams) are not held to the same standards as other cadets.**
  - *"I feel that is a very interesting distinction because Corps squad teams get out of a lot more things and I feel cadets who don't know what happens with Corps squad teams, they almost don't relate to Corps squad athletes. So when something happens they don't understand what's going on and nobody tells them what's going on. So cadets have to make up what's going on. And lead them to believe more radical stories than what are actually happening."* (Male)
  - *"They're on a pretty sharp divide in that regard. The football players, the soccer players and I think some of the other teams left our summer training a week or two earlier than the rest of us because they had to go practice the sports and at the same*

time why are we here if it isn't that important. These sorts of issues tend to widen an already existing divide." (Male)

- *"I think that Corps squadders are held to a little bit different standard to a degree than what an average cadet is held to."* (Male)
- *"On the teams that I've been on it was much more that they set themselves apart from the school and the company, almost to the point of elitism. And so they don't necessarily follow a lot of those rules and the coaches certainly didn't help that."* (Female)
- *"A cadet I know was on a D-1 [Division I] team wasn't doing well academically and because he was on the D-1 team they overlooked it. You can make it up during step or take it again next year or something."* (Female)
- *"They take one set of things where there's a little bit of leniency and make the assumption that there's leniency on other things maybe more related to behaviors."* (Male).

- **Some cadets indicated that athletes are held to different standards in general and that may extend to sexual harassment and assault.**
  - *"I've seen honor things get swept under the rug. I don't know if it would be the same for sexual harassment and assault. I would hope it isn't, but I don't know. But if they are sweeping one thing under the rug, if they are doing it with something else..."* (Female)
  - *"Some of [the privileges] make sense to me, a few more hours to practice, a few more calories a day. Some of those are practical to getting the job done. But if there's a mental attitude about well, I have privileges here so I can have privileges elsewhere, maybe that's what needs to be addressed."* (Male)
  - *"Not all sports are the same. If they don't show up for formation, it's okay, your coach will cover for you. So if you get treated a certain way you develop a sense of entitlement that comes out to everything. When you use sports as an excuse to get out of literally anything, then it's just a bigger problem."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the football team specifically is not held to the same standards as the rest of the cadets.**
  - *"My guess is that mainly pertains to the football team, because in general life that's the reputation those individuals have. But then you also have the fact that a lot of their issues tend to get glossed over more easily."* (Male)
  - *"There's always those football players who can't make height, weight during the season because they are bulking up and can't pass an ATF and those are allowed to happen. And so we see this as inequality to get away with things we aren't and that's stretched so they can get away with this too."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that athletes are no different from any other groups at the Academy or in society.**
  - *"I think Corps squad is just like in the regular Corps, you're always going to have those guys that don't conform to authority, they're lazy, don't want to do things, maybe they might sexually harass and not be appropriate. You are going to have people in every group, whether Corps squad or the USCC as a whole."* (Male)
  - *"You find different personalities with everything. And I feel that's just what it boils down to. I've noticed that any incidents that have been found, it's been dealt with and probably won't happen again."* (Male)
  - *"The worst person you can find on a sports team, you can probably find somebody who's just as bad who's not on a sports team."* (Male)
  - *"When they recruit people for enlisted, they get what they get because they don't force people. People join for so many different reasons. That's what a lot of recruited athletes are. Since we're so concentrated here it looks really bad. If you are going to the big Army, so many people go for so many reasons and some of them are bad, some of them are good. Some of the people could care less, they want the money. I don't think it matters why you're coming here, but I think it's the way they take certain things seriously or not, leadership wise, determines if the cadets take it seriously or not."* (Female)
  - *"I feel people just don't recognize that it's not isolated to just the sports teams because I know plenty of really [bad] cadets that aren't on any sports teams. You can't just look at an entire group of people and associate negativity with it based off of one person."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that athletes are held to the same standards as other cadets, particularly in regards to sexual harassment and sexual assault.**
  - *"I don't think the peers do [treat athletes differently]. I think, if anything, they hold them to a higher standard because they are the face of our Academy. But as far as I've seen, it's pretty whole, they're all like one team."* (Female)
  - *"May be held to a rougher standard, honestly, might be rougher on [athletes]."* (Female)
  - *"When there was a pending case on our team, our coach immediately took that individual off the team even while the case was pending, he didn't even know whether it was true or not, the individual was taken off the team and I feel that would happen on any team here. I don't think any team would condone that."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think when it comes to sexual assault or sexual harassment at all. There may be implications that if they do break certain regulations or fail classes or get in trouble for drinking they get preferential treatment, but I think one hundred percent we draw the line at sexual harassment and sexual assault."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated the complication of some Division I athletes being perceived to be lazy or disconnected while still having to attend to their athletic commitments.**
  - *"When my friend quit, a lot of people who didn't talk to him before, upperclassmen, also started talking to him, 'Oh, why aren't you on a D-1 team. Oh, so you're a normal person now. You actually like work.' It's just a stigma that a lot of Corps squadders are lazy, they think they're entitled."* (Female)
  - *"I think a bunch of the Corps squadders in our company don't usually help out with some of the things we have to do. But it's not like they're sitting around doing nothing, they're at practice, but at the same time they're not doing stuff where we see it because they're not around."* (Female)
  - *"I think there's more of a disconnect between the Corps as a whole and the Division 1 teams than the Corps as a whole and the club teams. The Division 1 teams get their own tables, get their own stuff, their special office. They get to be a team but it does create a disconnect."* (Male)
  - *"I feel that's one of the largest problems, trying to find a solution, because you can't not give them as much. Not let them out of so many things, but you can't really tell them not to go to practice almost because it is a D-1 program, and they are highly competitive and they need to be and that's how they attract some cadets."* (Male)
  - *"We're a prestigious Academy, we can't really say we're not going to have competitive sports even though every cadet is an athlete. It's a contradiction because they need these privileges so that they can be competitive and we can have a good sports program, but at the same time those privileges create a divide."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy should be less concerned with sports programs.**
  - *"I really think the Academy needs to decide whether it wants to be highly competitive in sports or if it wants to be a Military Academy. I feel there's too much focus on sports instead of the military aspect."* (Male)
  - *"A few people have mentioned the idea of what if we just bumped everyone down to D-III, that way they don't have to worry about competing with the top tier and focus on preparing for being future officers, which is what they should be here for. And I'm personally in favor of such things."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that team leaders should take responsibility for the culture in their team.**
  - *"I also feel if you are in charge of something, you are setting that culture for your team. If you start out, you're in a locker room, horseplay, your initiations are leaning towards those types of things, you need to stop it. You need to say this is messed up and we're not going to do it and this is why. And I feel the team would respect you a lot more if you said this is what could happen. And these are the things that are okay*

and these are the things that aren't. And I feel that would help our culture out and maybe in the long run help out people for not making stupid decisions." (Female)

- *"I don't know that it's any more prevalent among staff leads, I wouldn't generalize that and say that, but it's definitely well-known because they are high profile, so when these incidents do happen it's widely known."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the negative perceptions of Corps squad members could be the result of jealousy.**
  - *"I think part of it is a jealousy thing. They're jealous of the sports teams, so whenever they get a chance to strike people down that are on those Corps squad teams, they are going to do it."* (Male)
  - *"There are a lot of people that are really against the whole Corps squad. I know people that say 'I hate Corps squadders.' They don't like them just because of the benefits they get and they feel they shouldn't have those entitlements."* (Male)

General perception of athletes and sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated that the culture of the Division I teams may be changing.**
  - *"I think all teams, coaches probably cracked down on the guys and additional teams themselves recognized this is something that could really get us in trouble. Whether or not they believe that what they are doing is wrong, the fear of reprisal is so steep. And carry over to other teams."* (Male)
  - *"I feel in the past teams used to be all about going to parties and trying to do stuff together, trying to find sex, blah, blah, blah. Now, I feel with all of the education that's come out, the gear has shifted back."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that it is not the case that athletes are less serious about being cadets.**
  - *"You might come here like that but you're not going to escape being a cadet. If that's the case, they'll be gone pretty quick."* (Male)
  - *"You can try and not conform and stick around. But it's pretty obvious it's going to be a bad experience through and through."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that a team may gain an unfair reputation because of the actions of a few team members.**
  - *"Even the incidents that did happen, they're made out to be these huge scandals."* (Male)

- *"I think our perception is definitely skewed based on the few major incidents that we're aware of. I can't say that I know that athletics, D-1 athletics, are any more prevalent to sexual assault and harassment than a non-D-1 athlete."* (Female)

- *"What I think happens is that there'll be a group on this team that makes a name for the team. They're a significant minority on the team. It will be five percent of the people on the team, in a group of forty individuals, it will be four or five that will make a name for the entire team. And there's nothing the team can really do about it except kick them off, if that makes sense."* (Male)

- *"You definitely hear 'stay away from this team.' Never date anyone from this team. A certain guy because they have this reputation. Just wrapping all of the reputation on that team onto individual people, even if they may not deserve that reputation."* (Female)

- *"The identity of the team is so recognizable that it just sort of generalizes the one or two, brings sort of that perception to the whole team then."* (Male)

- *"I guess sport scandals play a bit of a role in people's perception, however I think that a bigger light is shed on athletic teams when situations like that occur, even though they occur throughout academies with multiple individuals throughout the Academy, it's just when the athletic team does it, that's what makes the news, that's what people see on TV. I think that plays a big role in how they're perceived by other individuals within the school. A select few individuals, they do something and that's how they perceive the whole team as. Personally I think that's the biggest thing that plays into how other cadets or other members of the school view teams."* (Male)

- *"If a Corps squadder gets caught, it's a bad reflection on the whole team, a whole connotation of everyone having this bad idea about the team."* (Male)

- **Some female cadets indicated that female teams take the issue more seriously.**

  - *"I think certain teams have a reputation for being the way that they are, but then I know of other teams, more of the female teams, they're the most solid people I know here. I think that they definitely wouldn't stand for it and they would take action that needed to be taken. But I think it just depends on the team, to be quite honest, the publicity of the team."* (Female)

  - *"I think most females here are a little more mature than some of the guys, especially when it comes to Corps squad rumor club. The females are probably more serious about it than the males are."* (Female)

Recruitment for athletic purposes

- **Some cadets indicated they believe that some of the cadets recruited for their athletic ability are "bad apples," but the Academy can weed them out.**

  - *"They're weeded out eventually."* (Male)

- *"The Academy actually changed up their admission policy this year, so they're actually evaluating character more. They have to do an extensive character, research on your character, background checks. So I think they're trying to weed out bad apples."* (Male)

- *"I think with recruits, they really want them to come here to play sports, but at the same time they might not take into account their character. Whereas a bunch of us that aren't being recruited, you go through multiple interviews, they want to know everything about you, make sure you really want to be here. I know a few people who have been on sports teams, they are nervous about being in the military or being an officer, but they still want to play the sport, so they come here and then they might either leave by choice or through separation. But I think that they need to pay attention to who they are recruiting and their character because that depends on SHARP cases."* (Female)

- *"The system eventually weeds them out honestly. Because if there is someone that comes in with not the intentions of being an upstanding Army officer at the end of the day, then they're not going to put up with the stuff you have to put up with through the years."* (Female)

- *"I think this place also has a way of changing your perspective. I know my friend, as a recruited athlete, his number one goal when he came here was definitely not to be an Army officer, it was to play the sport he loved at a Division 1 level. And coming here and going through the stuff that he's gone through, it's definitely changed his perspective, now he feels he's on the same page as the people who came here for other reasons other than to play sports."* (Female)

- *"Not everyone grew up knowing that they wanted to be in the Army and knowing that they wanted to come here. So I think there's really nothing wrong with recruitment. But I think that people come here and they will get weeded out if they're not here for the right reasons. But if you do come and you do realize that this is actually want you want to do, that you will work hard the same way everyone else does."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the athletic recruitment is fair.**

  - *"A lot of people want to continue their sport through college and the only way you are going to do that is to play Division 1, whether you're at an Academy or through another school, is through recruitment. So I don't think everyone finds it unfair, it's just part of sports."* (Female)

  - *"You could say there's the group that's recruited for athletics, but they also recruit pretty hard for academics as well, to have the numbers for the school good. And so I don't think athletics should just be singled out for that."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated special screening of athletic recruits to try to prevent sexual harassment or assault behaviors is not a good idea.**
  - *"I don't think that [recruiting practices should change] because career athletes have to go through the same processes as other cadets that come to the Academy in terms of their background check, whether they have a police record or whether they've had instances of I guess drug use or abuse or whatnot. There's nothing that recruited athletes do that other cadets don't do in terms of coming here, so I don't think so. I mean if something was to be instituted, I feel you'd need to institute that across the board, because as of right now they're held to the same standards as far as their background and what West Point looks into about the individuals."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think it's fair to judge the incoming people. Your opinion about what these issues are can change drastically every year over your four years here. I think the definition actually changed while we were here, so that was a little confusing. I know a lot of young men and women out of high school who have a very different approach on how they view certain things. And it's more about the ability of the young leader to change their opinion to match the regulation and enforce regulation and have that buy in. And so if we judge kids off of what they think of sexual harassment at 18, I think that's pretty lame."* (Female)
  - *"I don't know how the recruitment process even possibly can tell a person is bad. Recruitment takes three days and coaches talk to them. I don't see how in three days' time this person sucks and don't want to be around him, this person has a negative attitude, this person is that way."* (Female)

Opinions about athletic staff

- **Some cadets indicated that athletic staff are less aware of incidents of sexual assault and harassment than other staff members.**
  - *"They're just not aware."* (Male)
  - *"They have other missions."* (Male)
  - *"Their priority is to coach you or provide the best services for athletes. And a lot of times athletic staff, for the most part, they're civilians, so they don't place as much emphasis on something that is kind of a military focus."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that cadets who have little interaction with athletic staff may form their opinions on those staff based on "scandals" related to sports teams.**
  - *"There's also probably a negative stigma considering we had the whole rugby incident and there's another team, lacrosse I think, had another incident like that too. So some people might view the athletics staff in a negative way."* (Male)
  - *"I feel people might judge athletic staff based on the team, so I might think a certain team has an athletic staff that really encourages terrible behavior based on how their*

players act or think they might have a really good captain that year who's really keeping the team in line and their athletic staff has nothing to do with it." (Female)

- **When asked on the *2014 SAGR* survey whether they believed leadership made honest efforts to stop unwanted behaviors, athletic staff were rated lowest, between 60%-64%. Some cadets indicated that the statistics on athletic staff should be disaggregated to make the result clearer.**
  - *"I think a better judge of it would be surveying people who it would actually apply to. Like how is somebody who doesn't play a certain sport going to know about a coaching staff because they have no contact with them at all?"* (Male)
  - *"Coaching staff are so different, you could have one coaching staff that has a one hundred percent approval rating saying they are really big at preventing, the other coaching staff is twenty percent. And you have no idea, you wouldn't be able to separate those people out."* (Female)
  - *"I think since only half the Corps is involved in ODIA and some of the club sports, half the people taking the survey have never interacted with a varsity coach."* (Male)
  - *"Not everyone here is an athlete, so I would never put 'Yes they are,' I would put 'I don't know.' The data doesn't really represent. If you were like 'Oh, every cadet who is on a Corps squad team, do they think that?' that would probably be a better representation. Rather than do I, who haven't played sports here."* (Male)
- **However, some cadets indicated that in their opinion the athletic staff may be more accepting of this type of behavior.**
  - *"Probably because they tolerate it more, especially maybe boys' teams more. It's locker room talk, so they hear all of that, and of course they want to win their games and they're not going to turn one of their own kids in. They are going to get in trouble and not be able to play on the team anymore."* (Female)
  - *"I see athletic staff is low and I guess that makes sense to me, because you have athletic staff coming from different places that didn't really come here and has that culture of locker room talk or that kind of stuff. And so I feel as though they may hear or see it more often than say the senior leaders and they won't say anything about it, they'll just let it be and walk away because that's a norm to them."* (Female)
  - *"Our priority was to practice and win, that's all we do. If you had a personal problem that was affecting your playing ability, then they'll pull you aside and be like 'All right, what's wrong?' but other than that they don't care. They just want to win."* (Female)
  - *"It's two different spheres. When you are down the hill at practice or the game, you separate yourself from everything that occurs up here. And it's just I don't think that the spheres necessarily overlap all the time. It's kind of separation of church and state and that's how a lot of people want it."* (Female)

- *"They have a reason to keep people here even if they commit something. If they're a fast runner, a great basketball player, and they bring attention and recruits to the program, it's just a risk that they take in cutting them. It's a courageous thing. It's about courage and having that integrity. And I don't think a lot of coaches here are in the military necessarily so they don't have the same buy in."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that athletic staff are not as involved in SHARP training, and may not be seen as leaders who are relevant to this issue.**
  - *"I'm not NCAA or anything, they're just not as involved. I think they have the lowest concentration of military personnel. Most of the coaches are civilian contractors. Very minimal SHARP training, make sure you have your numbers to call if you need anything. If I was on a team, unless I had a really, really good relationship with my coach, I would probably go to someone probably within the military because they have more of a connection to all of the SHARP proceedings and everything."* (Female)
  - *"They're not involved in SHARP briefs as much. Not to say that they're not educated on it, but every single officer, civilian who works on this side of campus, and by 'this side of campus' I mean tactical, meaning BTCs, brigade tactical department, the Commandant all the way down, and the academic staff, the dean all the way down. They are all required to go to all the same stuff that we are. So the athletic department doesn't fall under that, they don't have to do that kind of stuff."* (Female)
  - *"I would be much more inclined to go to someone on my team or a cadet on my team rather than the coach. I would never go to my coach. It's just not something that really overlaps. People say they've been trained. But I don't think they take it as seriously as academic staff or just in general around this area just because it's not hammered into their brains that it's such a big priority."* (Female)

Culture

Cadets were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

General comments about Academy culture and gender relations

- **Some female cadets indicated they feel safer at their Academy than they believe they would at a civilian college.**
  - *"Definitely. If I had a choice to report something or say something about 'This guy is making me uncomfortable here,' I think I'll have a good handful of people being like*

stay away from that guy or watch out for him or something. But I have this gut feeling that if I did that outside of here I think people wouldn't take me as seriously, with my limited experience, because I haven't been outside very much." (Female)

- *"I feel like not only do we have the open door policy, you're not actually allowed to have sex in the barracks or you're not supposed to have guys in your room. We have a lot of rules to prevent it. But you just have a lot of friends and a lot of people that care about you, so I feel like you have people looking out for you and everything."* (Female)

- *"I feel like cadets in general have a better connection. I think that might happen a lot at a regular college and because they are walking around and don't know anybody and this could be a guy on the campus and he may not even go to the school. Here we all know each other, we all respect each other. Even though we do have a lot of protection and we also have this connection because we're cadets, I don't think we should feel afraid of each other."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated there is a sense of responsibility for each other that would not happen in civilian settings.**

  - *"I would say that definitely we have a different culture here. I think at normal colleges a lot of the times there's a party culture and alcohol is involved and that's an expectation. Whereas here it's a right and a privilege and you do alcohol training and you're trusted with that responsibility and if you prove that you can't handle that, it will be taken from you. So I think there's definitely a different level of maturity that people carry here in our growing up process I would say that maybe civilian colleges don't experience."* (Female)

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- *"And I also don't think it just applies to cadets. We're definitely more likely to be like 'Oh, see her, she's familiar, she's from school.' You're going to jump in and help her. But if you see a guy harassing a girl, just because you don't know them doesn't mean you're not going to say something, just because that's inherently our idea that no, that's wrong."* (Female)

- *"I think we're more bold to say stuff to other people. We're more bold to say things to other people than I think most people normally would be because we know the situation's wrong and we're going to fix that and do something about it rather than just like chill and let it happen when you can physically like see it going on."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated they do not believe there is as much emphasis on sexual assault at civilian colleges and universities.**

  - *"I know smaller colleges, they don't emphasize it as much. I know of one college in particular, they almost don't ever talk about it or anything like that. It's more of we're going to put up some poster around saying this is the procedure and don't do it, that kind of thing. But there's never something like this [the emphasis at the Academy]."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they believe the Academy would treat sexual assault more seriously than a civilian college or university would.**

  - *"I know at least after the fact I would have a much easier time getting someone to take me seriously here than at one of the civilian institutions. Even if something happened, just because it's smaller and so many people's job is to make sure you are taken care of, I know someone will take me seriously."* (Female)

  - *"I think it's a difference because we're a more professional institute and many other universities and colleges are definitely not professional. Like you will see crazy things just walking through campus and you would not see that here. You would get in so much trouble with half the stuff that they do."* (Female)

  - *"I know a guy who smacked a girl's butt at the Firstie Club, and it was a friend of his and he thought it was cool, she didn't. I think if you walked into a handling center at a university and you tried to turn someone in for sexual assault for slapping your butt at a party, I'm pretty sure you would be laughed away."* (Female)

  - *"I think West Point makes a more conscious effort in order to educate their students about sexual assault and sexual harassment. Maybe that's because we have so much congressional oversight and whatnot. But I definitely feel that as opposed to other colleges and universities, there's a larger emphasis placed based on the leadership roles that we'll be filling."* (Male)

  - *"I know that they don't sit through briefs about it and they don't have student lead groups and I don't know what their equivalent to a company would be. Nothing. But*

I just know that there isn't organizations dedicated solely to this issue that a wide number of students in the school are a part of." (Male)

- **Some female cadets indicated there are misperceptions among people in the public about the degree to which sexual assault occurs at the Academies.**
  - *"The perception of sexual assault in the military is definitely blown out of proportion by the press. I see some of the articles and it's these scathing, like if you join the Army you're a rapist. And that's not true."* (Female)
  - *"I think it's really interesting, people will stop you and are like what's it like to be a female cadet here. It's no different than being a male cadet here."* (Female)
  - *"I had a neighbor buy me a Taser."* (Female)
  - *"People don't get it. My friend freaked out. He was like you are going to West Point. He thought I was going to get raped. I'm like no, that's not how it works. Thank you though."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that, in general, fellow cadets are respectful of each other.**
  - *"We try to be the best we can. It's inculcated into us."* (Male)
  - *"Daily interaction is very respectful, at least for my company as far as I know. We haven't had any issues."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated the Academy has raised cadets' ability to assess situations.**
  - *"I feel like we are inculcating those values and really thinking about them and that's maybe why your numbers are so low in that first chart. But I know I think about it when I'm in situations and something is seeming weird or whatever. It may not even be me being involved, but me watching or observing the situation, I think about it and is this something I should try and stop or something along those lines. When the thoughts didn't cross my head before, I notice that they are crossing my mind now."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that there are various bystander and intervention programs for preventing sexual assault.**
  - *"Last semester the Superintendent set off the 'It's on Us' campaign to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. So it's like everyone's job to police people up and ways to look out for each other because we're a family here, we're a Corps."* (Male)
  - *"AMI [Morning Inspection] would be a prevention program. You have to keep your door open if there's somebody else in your room. You can't close your door if there's two members of the opposite sex in your room."* (Male)
  - *"Each company has a CASHA representative."* (Female)

- *"Fridays at lunch formation we get safety briefs, they'll be like 'If you are going to drink, do it with a buddy, make sure you have a friend with you.'"* (Male)

- *"And then there's Night Rider too. It's a designated driver that will drive into Highland Falls. They drive through Highland Falls and pick people up and bring them back."* (Male)

- *"I know on the back of my door there's a SHARP card. It's all people you can go to. So I know you can go to chaplains, you can go to Keller, you can go to your CASHA representative. There is a SHARP-like officer, on-duty, you can call. His card's right on the door. And, your Tactical Officer. You can go to anyone in your chain of command."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that their support for each other is a primary prevention measure.**

  - *"I feel that cadets are very good at taking care of each other."* (Male)

  - *"Most people get with their friends. 'Hey, look at that, that doesn't look right.' And one takes the attention off one and takes the attention off the other and I think that's the most common scenario."* (Female)

  - *"And it's like if you are going to go out, you go out with a battle buddy. You have someone there that's going to watch out for you or you step in if you see something's wrong or the situation."* (Male)

  - *"You're more likely to go to someone you're comfortable with, someone on that list [SHARP card] you would feel more comfortable with. Or if there's someone not on the list you would feel more comfortable with, you can talk to them because you are confident that they're going to take it seriously regardless of whether they're a CASHA rep or not."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that, while there is more awareness on bystander intervention, they are cautious intervening when issues are observed with a couple.**

  - *"'Oh well, they're a couple, that's their business, I'm not going to jump in and try to sort their stuff out.' Usually when it comes to couples, people don't try to stop it at all."* (Female)

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy appears to take sexual assault and sexual harassment very seriously, making prevention the top priority for emphasis.**

  - *"Top [priority for the Academy]. I hear about it all the time."* (Male)

  - *"I think we've had more briefs on that kind of issue than anything else."* (Male)

- *"There are a lot of people who talk about it."* (Female)
- *"I was just going to say you hear about it at least on a weekly if not daily basis for most of the time. And I don't know about everyone else's company, but mine at least, at least monthly has meetings and discussions and stuff. And so it's a pretty well discussed issue within the school."* (Male)
- *"As far as a culture, I think SHARP has become very important to be professionally proficient. That's important for people taking it seriously, because whatever your personal views on it, you can't say that taking SHARP seriously helped your career as an officer. It doesn't matter if you like it or not. If you want to go bar jumping you have to take it seriously, the way it is now."* (Female)
- *"The Superintendent has addressed us and came out and said that's his number one initiative, to prevent sexual harassment in the Army and at the Academy. And we also had sexual harassment prevention groups like CASHA, Cadets Against Sexual Harassment and Assault."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that emphasizing sexual assault and sexual harassment too much can diminish the importance of the message.**
  - *"Over emphasized."* (Male)
  - *"[Multiple affirmative responses about overemphasis.]"* (Multiple Females)
  - *"I think it's important when you see the results, when we see the statistics, it's surprising in a way, whether you think it's too high or too low. I understand why it needs to be emphasized, but I still think we kind of overemphasize it."* (Male)
  - *"Last year we had like three SHARP briefs in one week. The general consensus was 'Okay, this is too much.' But whenever they spread it out, I think the overall attitude, either you're indifferent or I think people see it as a good thing. The Superintendent and the TACs and the CASHA reps and everyone are promoting a big thing, that the big Army is promoting here, that's where we're going to be."* (Female)
  - *"I think in emphasis, sexual assault falls right at the very top. But I do not think that it's perhaps the most effective. It's not like what we do best. I feel it does decrease the rates of sexual assault, but it also increases tension and it causes people to be suspicious of each other almost."* (Male)
  - *"I do feel that SHARP does have sometimes a tedious concept to it. One of the gentlemen at the forum said that sometimes it felt like they are having all of these sessions and head bashed, the guys a little bit, and the girls had written them off. Obviously the program has gotten better. And even in one of our CASHA sessions, they showed us an old video that victimized women, like if you are out alone, it's kind of your fault. So obviously the program changes over time as far as the approach they have. At least last year, I did feel as far as SHARP goes, it was an annoyance. But as we get used to it, I think less and less will feel that it's an annoyance. Even*

just being an Army officer, you might not deal with it personally but one of your soldiers might." (Female)

- *"I think we get so much of it and it's shoved in our face so much that people are extremely cynical about all of the SHARP training just because the vast majority of people here are good people and would never do anything like this. People get tired of it. And then it also makes it something that cadets don't want to think about when they're not being briefed on it. We get it drilled into our heads so much."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the frequency that sexual assault is discussed could be reduced.**
  - *"What I think would be more effective is not emphasizing less, but emphasizing less often. So it's not something that is always being thrown in our face and then it's being taken casually. Everyone is 'Oh, we're just going to do this next month anyway so why focus so hard on it now? It doesn't matter how well we do this brief, we're going to have to do another one anyway.'"* (Male)
  - *"I actually, and I'm not sure how many other people agree, think that having such an emphasis is actually more damaging than helping sometimes just because it's something everyone always has to hear about, everyone gets joked around about and people don't want to hear about your specific issues as much as you hear about it all the time."* (Male)
  - *"I think if it wasn't shoved in our face as much but it was still like talked about and discussed often enough, I think the number could go down farther."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault is at the right level.**
  - *"When we got together for the end of the year CASHA discussion, our assessment of the program and where it tested, everybody said that it stood at the far end, like it's being pushed too much. But then we actually broke it down and there were suggestions for how it could be improved. Most people right now we have the perfect amount of discussions, we have the perfect amount of briefs about it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault helps decrease inappropriate behaviors.**
  - *"I feel like these discussions, when they didn't happen in the past, it was more prevalent [sexual assault]. Like you see the numbers, they are higher in the past, probably back then we didn't have all of these briefs so often. I think they are working. I don't think the once a month briefs are giving people the idea to assault people. I think just keeping them constantly updated on the situation. I don't think too much would be an issue honestly."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Corps in general understands the importance of sexual assault prevention.**
  - *"I think the Corps in general, we did the whole 'It's On Us.' It's just like leadership, cadets, it just trickles down from the cadet command."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think there's a need to emphasize it because it's already in the forefront."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they were not aware of any groups within the Academy where sexual assault is taken more or less seriously.**
  - *"Not that I know of [any groups that take sexual assault more or less seriously]."* (Female)
  - *"There's CASHA and their responsibility is to take it seriously. So I think the people affiliated with it usually end up taking it a little bit more seriously than others because they have to be trained on it and they have to know not only information about it, things that have happened, but also know how to deal with it if it happened with their company."* (Female)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual harassment and sexist behaviors are also emphasized as a priority.**
  - *"It's important because they are things that we talk about pretty often and cover and make sure everybody is aware of, but I don't think they're incredibly prevalent."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they have noticed changes in sexual harassment and sexist behaviors.**
  - *"As we go through the Academy, I can tell you, I can see a difference from the guys that were plebes last year and how they are as yuks [sophomores], just being here and being more mature and being more aware."* (Female)
  - *"They are still learning and people do still take it a little bit too far. I think just more on the student, like a culture that's not the norm anymore."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that sexual harassment and sexist behaviors are addressed, but sexual assault is the highest priority.**
  - *"It seems like a lot of the SHARP training we do this isn't like one hundred percent of it, but they'll give us example cases and blatantly obviously wrong, like someone raped somebody. And everyone just sits here and, of course, now I know to not rape somebody. But we don't talk about as much, like smaller things that are more likely to happen."* (Male)

- *"I feel like it's overshadowed by sexual assault in some cases because I think in most of the briefs that I have been to or seen, people always want to ask questions about sexual assault and they always want to know how to report sexual assault and what sexual assault is and when sexual assault is happening. But the sexual harassment is just a this is a formal complaint process, are there any questions? No, okay."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that behaviors such as gender discrimination are not emphasized as much as sexual assault or sexual harassment.**
  - *"Discrimination based on gender is not taken seriously or as seriously as assault or sexual harassment."* (Female)
  - *"It's definitely tolerated [discrimination based on gender]. We praise the Honor Code, we will not lie, steal, cheat, or tolerate. Everyone struggles with toleration."* (Female)

Role of peer programs

- **Some cadets indicated that there are peer programs for addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment.**
  - *"There's a [CASHA] representative in every company. That's one program. They'll brief the company from time to time about issues. I think it's effective in a way. That along with that you have your respect person and they go hand in hand usually with the CASHA rep, also the respect officer or NCO. Also just anything that's respect related, if you feel disrespected by another classmate, or honestly could be literally anything, you could report it to the [respect] rep. Of course we have SHARP. I don't know of any other organizations."* (Male)
  - *"Cadets Against Sexual Assault and Harassment. They do all of this training, they go to eight hour classes and they learn about just these topics. And I know my CASHA representative, he's also my classmate, puts a lot of work into the PowerPoints. And if he thinks it's too bland or something like that, he'll try to make it exciting, more interactive. And he includes really good videos. They might be lengthy, but watching them, they run us through some really good real-life situations. I think it's well done. And rather than seeing some bland PowerPoint slides with bullet points on it, it's just more interactive for me."* (Male)

- **Cadets expressed positive sentiments about the CASHA and sexual assault prevention and awareness program.**
  - *"Personally I think CASHA has been effective because they've transitioned to organizing small groups. Within companies we have four platoons, and at least how our company does it, and I think that's the way it's been, every CASHA discussion is platoon-based. So your whole platoon meets and usually drives the discussion and the CASHA people facilitate it and organize it."* (Male)

- *"They make it more, not relatable, but they make it for cadets, specific to us. And that's how the information is presented to us. Whereas SHARP is just the overarching, that's the program. And CASHA is us."* (Female)

- *"I'd say it's a little bit effective because I've known personally that people are able to report more when they know who to go to and seeing like, okay, if this is my company rep, I can ask them questions about it or I know that they're available and they told me that I have these avenues, but I don't really know them. You have that person to go to to be able to say 'Hey, is this the phone number I call? Is this the person I go to?' I think the company reps really help."* (Female)

- *"Mostly how it's effective is it gives cadets responsibility. You give one person in the company, even if you are starting out small, you have one person in a company to get the CASHA position, they have to do all of this training on it, they help one or two people with it and they come away with it much more internalized, way more than they would have previously. And even if the person doesn't have to be in it every single semester, you can't be the CASHA rep for all four years, so if you're even reaching that small number of cadets, just educating and informing, that's small ways that you can just make steps in that direction."* (Female)

- *"CASHA it's not just dealing with things after they happen, we get a lot of training, probably more training, about preventing things before they do happen. The signs of unwanted sexual behavior and stuff like that. So it's really an all-encompassing program."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that if they had the need to talk to someone about sexual assault, they would reach out to their CASHA representative first.**

  - *"CASHA rep.'"* (Multiple Males)

  - *"I want to say that we need them. I feel like they are the most important because it is a lot more comfortable to talk to them. The CASHA reps are accessible. It's not like the SHARP or the regiment chaplain, it's not like they're not accessible, but it's different having one person for 130 in a company versus one for 1,200 or 1,100 in a regiment. You know you can talk to them because it's their job to talk to you, whereas a chaplain, it's not just you, it's 1,110 other people they have to talk to too."* (Male)

  - *"They're the most reliable because you live with the person in the same barracks and you're in the same companies, you experience the same thing, so it's really easy to talk to them."* (Male)

  - *"I was just thinking about how approachable the CASHA reps are. I never had an experience where I had to go to the CASHA rep, but I can see that people maybe feel uncomfortable being a man and going to a woman about sexual harassment problem. Maybe having a CASHA rep of each gender in the company."* (Male)

- *"I think initially some people have an exposure to some cynicism from upperclassmen, but I think as time goes on people have more respect and looking at it [CASHA] as an important program to have."* (Male)

- *"If you go talk to the CASHA rep, you don't have to make a huge deal out of it, keep it more confidential."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that aspects of the CASHA program could be improved.**

  - *"A lot of companies, some people get forced into it and they don't take it seriously, so I think that might be one of the reasons. If you're not going to take it seriously, I'm not going to take it seriously. And if you are going to half ass the PowerPoint, then why should I be here."* (Male)

  - *"Some people are told they are going to be in this position versus if someone volunteers they are invested in it. I feel like you get more out of it if there were more volunteers."* (Male)

  - *"I think they need to pick an appropriate person to give the CASHA lessons. It's the personality of the person."* (Male)

  - *"I think that's just like a cadet by cadet basis. Our company's CASHA rep is a good guy and I think we all respect him, so I don't think people would have any problems talking to him. But he may have another company where it's not."* (Male)

  - *"There were two CASHA talks, one SHARP and one CASHA, that I listened to and they were both influential. One was led by an officer and one was led by a cadet. With the officer, it was an officer that everyone was familiar with here at the Academy, he's respected, and he was able to interact with us and to connect with us on a more personal level. And he's already got credibility with us because we know him, we've seen his leadership. And the same with the cadet, he had good qualities, the cadet, we all got along with him and he took his job seriously. So I'd say the peer run groups, it's great for development also, but in the end it's who has credibility with the target audience and who's going to be a good leader in this scenario."* (Male)

Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed

- **Some cadets indicated that continuing to address the culture is the correct way to change inappropriate gender-related behaviors.**

  - *"I think a lot of this, especially for the guys, the boys will be boys thing. And it starts with joking and kidding about something and it escalates to something that can fall under the domain of sexual harassment or contact. A lot of it is acceptable. Like this kind of behavior is acceptable even among roommates or buddies. And then all of a sudden you find yourself in a position where, okay, that just went across the line, that went too far. It is really hard on an institutional level, but if you are focused on stopping things at a cultural level, your jokes and the way you are talking about*

things, or even some of these activities are going down a path that we don't want to go down. So stop it more preventatively, preemptively, which comes with time. You can't change a culture overnight." (Female)

- *"I think empowerment of individuals as well to just step up and tell people they're wrong for saying certain things is really important. Just people stepping up."* (Female)

- *"I think the culture change, like we've seen through history, the integration of lots of different diversities, it just comes with time. I think the culture, you can't change the culture in one year. They're doing everything they can I think and it will just stop becoming something that people talk about as much and stop becoming as much of an issue if they keep doing the trainings, keep them in the conversation as time passes."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the appearance that decisions are made for political correctness does not help gender relations.**

  - *"Stop putting females in roles they don't deserve because they're females. It hurts. It hurts everybody. I'm thinking of a specific example and maybe I shouldn't be. When you give female leadership positions because you don't want your top three to be three white males, it doesn't help anybody. It just hurts."* (Female)

  - *"I can definitely see how West Point tries, in an effort to create diversity among the leadership, they sort of pick and choose leaders based on what their gender and race is."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the changing roles of women in combat will have an effect on gender issues.**

  - *"I think the entire military is trying to do that. The big focus is on women going into combat arms right now, that's spurred a lot of discussion about the equality between the men and the women. And I think that's a lot of focus on our role and women's role. I think that as that progresses it's going to change a lot of the predetermined mindset that the Army has and that maybe will in turn change the culture."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated the Academy could do more to address respectful relationships among cadets.**

  - *"So right now here at the Academy it's split up. So we've got PME [Professional Military Education] honorable living, we have sexual harassment, and we go to RESPECT. So you are addressing the symptoms, and that's good because you do need to look at the individual cases on a much closer level. But as far as just general human interactions and talking about how do you conduct yourself properly, diving into the heart of it, not so much."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that efforts to improve respectful behaviors would be most effective if targeted to respect officers and leaders rather than Corps-wide.**
  - *"I just don't know how you can train someone about being respectful, a good decent human being with know how to be respectful. If anything, I know a good training, without having everybody do it, have the captains or clubs or teams be trained on it and then they could pass it onto their team if they are the right person, the right personality and character to do so, because you can't guarantee that. But I definitely say in my team house, because I was the team captain of the team I'm on right now, I clearly stated when they said some stuff you better shut your mouth. But I'm probably one of the minorities that does that, I don't know. So I think if anything if you target the leaders and teams and maybe clubs, I think that would be appropriate. I don't believe we should have an entire Corps do a training program on respect."* (Female)
  - *"There's respect teams in every company, respect officer, respect NCO, those from the company could receive them but should not be a mandated Corps wide brief, lecture."* (Female)
  - *"They could do more [respect officers]. Aim the training at them."* (Female)
- **Some cadets made general recommendations for improving the approach to sexual assault prevention.**
  - *"I think just in general helping cadets to be better listeners and better counselors overall would help everything. The resiliency, as well as CASHA, as well as everything else. If everyone was able to listen to people and they had that ability to sit down with somebody and say this is your problem and these are the avenues that I know that you can go to for help, I feel like that would be a lot more effective than sitting people down and briefing them or things like that."* (Female)
- **Some cadets recommended a culture shift to emphasize respect as a way to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault.**
  - *"I know that the most important thing anyone's ever told me with respect to the Honor Code is the idea that the nation's entrusting you with the responsibility to take a life, so you should be an honorable person. And that's a lot of times what gets cadets to respect something; at the end of the day, put it on their shoulder. If you talk about you're the kind of person who's going to sexually harass a teenager, you can't be trusted with unit cohesion and all of that stuff, I think that aspect should be emphasized more in order to help a culture change eventually."* (Female)

- *"Why can't we just promote respect, something like that, instead of sexual assault prevention. Honestly, why can't they promote that there's a reason why you should respect a human being and the rest will fall under that."* (Female)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Cadets were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated that their training on bystander intervention was useful.**
  - *"What was helpful is just the different types of training. It's not just about what to do when someone is sexually assaulted or what is sexual harassment. One in particular that was really helpful was the bystander effect training, of would you let this happen or allow it to happen, what could you do to prevent it or would you speak up. And that took away the stigma with the SHARP training as far as don't be a rapist or don't be a victim, it's more than that, it's being aware that it's happening. Like you can help or do something about it even in the smallest ways."* (Female)
  - *"Some of the training that we do is application. Like in one of the CASHA briefs there was a video where they showed one scenario where a woman went through and showed her night and how it ended up with sexual assault right at the very end of the video, but then it cuts out and we stopped and went through a whole bunch of different points, like somebody could have stopped and intervened here. Her best friend could have stopped here. The bartender could have intervened here. The security guard could have intervened here. The bouncer could have intervened here."* (Male)
- **Some upperclass cadets indicated that training had changed a lot since they started at the Academy.**
  - *"The trainings have actually transformed. We're allowed to have discussions and conversations about and allowed to become a more self-interpretation based program. It's a huge transformation in ideology. It's not the typical Army trainings where you get like the PowerPoints, you just look at the slides, but more of like there's this gray area of discussion that you can have."* (Female)
  - *"You see less literal PowerPoint these days. Like there's literally less PowerPoint."* (Male)
  - *"It's gotten better. Overall now you have your RTOs [Regimental Training Officers] walking through the training and TACs are there during most training. But I think it*

got better overall. But I attended the SHARP summit, I think that was the most realistic training I got because we were in these groups and we talked about it, but then they brought cadets who had been sexually harassed." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that smaller discussion groups are better than large group presentations.**
  - *"For my company, CASHA and SHARP briefs have worked a lot better in smaller groups. So like getting one class to go into Robinson Auditorium isn't going to be received as well as say sitting down as a platoon or even as a company and just going over XYZ cases, going over expectations as a company."* (Male)
  - *"You could probably use more small group instructions than overall briefs where you are talking to a thousand people. People can really think about how they feel in a situation."* (Female)
  - *"We had one [small group discussion] in our company that was really good and even was like wow, that's a really good experience. But it was tailored differently from what the actual requirement was. He did this on his own. The person who is giving the training did his own thing."* (Female)
  - *"[Discussion in a class] was about the bystander effect and they definitely broke it down to a level that was super tangible. We had a really good in class discussion, people were talking to each other about it, actually got to the heart of the issue. And it was like an eye opening thing because of the way he presented it and everyone was talking about it. We also had some strong personalities in the room, it also depends on that. So that's what made it effective."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that there is no "good" time to host a training.**
  - *"You can change the time of training, but you're never going to change the time of it that fits everyone."* (Male)
  - *"I don't see how we can facilitate any type of training with one hour on a given day at a platoon level other than discussion facilitated by a PowerPoint slide or something."* (Male)
  - *"You tend to have this free block on your calendar that you intend on doing homework, and then you find out actually we're doing this. It's not a CASHA issue, that's more a timing issue, they wait until the last minute."* (Male)
  - *"We get training, but they do training at the most inconvenient times. Honestly, we get training right after lunch or right before class or some weird time where you pay attention to it, but it's more like I learn about it for this 30, 45 minutes and then I'm going to class."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the quality of their SAPR training varies.**
  - *"Just talking about it. We have CASHA and SHARP briefs within our companies. I know sometimes throw up a slide with some statistics and stuff like that and everyone is sitting there like texting on their phones during it. But the other half of the time we throw up like the XYZ cases and actually do discussion groups on them and talk about whether we think that was right what happened or what could have happened and how it pertained to us here at the Academy and in the future as well. So I think like discussing it it's pretty much one of the bigger ways because people don't really pay attention if it's just on the slideshow and someone is pointing and talking."* (Female)
  - *"I think it can be summarized with the concept of quantity versus quality. I think that realistically we're all focusing on the quantity but the quality is questionable. Whereas I think they could make it overall more effective if they focused less on the quantity of it and tried to make the quality improve that way. People would be less cynical and they would be more prepared."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that when training becomes too frequent or repetitive it loses its effect.**
  - *"I think that's an issue with a lot of people or a lot of people have with it is the redundancy. Realistically there's only so many times you can essentially say the same information. You can have different statistics and stuff and good job, we got it down a percent or oh, we went up a percent and fix this. But it usually ends up boiling down to assault, people don't rape people in almost every case and so a lot of people feel like okay, I get the message, we can stop."* (Male)
  - *"A lot of good points are put forward and that West Point is really making a conscious effort in educating us about the issues. If there's one sexual assault or sexual harassment, that's one too many. I'm hesitant to say that they overdo it just because it happens, so they have to make a conscious effort, but sometimes it feels like it's overwhelming."* (Male)
  - *"I think there's like a market saturation. I'm sure there's a sweet spot for how many sessions will really lower the statistics and then when you go over, that excess pretty much just increases cynicism about the subject. When you make the training unbearable, it lessens the effectiveness."* (Female)
  - *"I think most cadets perspective is that they would never do anything like that, but there are a select few that may, so that training may help them maybe help their perspective, to learn more. But to most cadets I'm not going to do any of this, I understand it, and it then gets repetitive for us because we keep hearing it over and over."* (Male)
  - *"The intent is good but I think they do too much and then people start to not take it seriously. It's constant and it's taking time out of your day."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that even if the trainings are presented at inconvenient times or by presenters who are less than enthusiastic, the message gets across and is important.**
  - *"I know at the end of the day he did his job because it is very repetitive, you see everything is covered. But I know at the end of the day what sexual harassment looks like, I know what sexual assault looks like, and I know what to do if it happened, so the training works."* (Female)
  - *"And you get an e-mail and you have CASHA tomorrow and you're like 'No, I was going to nap!' And you get there and if they present you with XYZ cases and you learn and you understand, you actually get into it, like what happens, what to do. It definitely overall has been helpful. You don't necessarily like it, you don't want to take the time and go to it, but because we're forced we obviously go. But I think it's helpful."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they were unsure as to whether training has an impact on the prevalence of USC.**
  - *"None of us probably really know how effective it's been. That's just personal. I think that this past year, based on the discussions I've heard during the CASHA and SHARP trainings, that I think they're useful and been doing a good job of preventing what these people are saying, that they've been doing a good job of prevention, but without numbers no one knows."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the sincerity and effort of the presenter in a training session affects the way cadets receive the training.**
  - *"He cares about it so maybe I'll pay attention. I respect him, I'm going to pay attention."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like the more you formalize a program the more you make a strict syllabus or something, the more people are going to be 'Oh, just another formalized program.' Doesn't feel like it's sincere. Feel like if somebody close to you is actually good at PowerPoints, putting effort in behind it, actually interactive and interesting, and that's when you pay attention more. Whenever I see the premade PowerPoints, I know everyone in the Corps is seeing them, another class that they are making us take. But if he's sincere, I'll pay attention."* (Male)
  - *"I think it depends on the source of the training because a lot of times if you go to a class-wide SHARP brief, it can be pretty dry and people emotionally check out. But I know the SHARP rep or the CASHA rep from my company, this semester he's awesome. He keeps us engaged in stuff and you actually want to participate. But I think it all depends on the source."* (Female)
  - *"The training, it's just extremely instructor dependent. It's so varied. You can have a great, wow, that was actually useful and then a total waste of my time. It's almost*

completely in my experience dependent on who is giving the talk or giving the training." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that their training has made them aware of resources available to them.**
  - *"We've had so many briefs on the topics over the years and then we're made aware of the resources that are available to us. If you don't have them on hand, you have a business card or a magnet that says what you can do. I think it's pretty easy."* (Male)
  - *"Definitely know the resources available."* (Male)
  - *"Also a bigger emphasis, what is defined as sexual harassment and no contact all of this stuff. So we were educated on that and have to confront it if it happened."* (Female)
  - *"There's definitely no shortage of knowing what to do. There's a SHARP card on everyone's door and like a billion briefs. Not that it's a bad thing. But definitely if I ran into something I would not be short on resources at all."* (Female)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some cadets indicated that more discussion of gender relations overall could be added to CASHA topics.**
  - *"It's mainly about sexual harassment and assault."* (Male)
  - *"I would like to see maybe some aspect of gender equality almost brought into CASHA. So it's not just like about sexual harassment, sexual assault, and don't do this, don't do that, but it's also about making it so that both the sexes are more played the same."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like that's why [gender relations] should be included in CASHA because that is not talked about and there's nobody really to talk about it. And CASHA is really the only place it could go. You could put that in like honor system, but the honor system already has a whole bunch of issues to handle and it's got its own little, I don't want to say problems, but it's got its own things to deal with. I feel like CASHA would be prime."* (Female)
  - *"Part of the way that our higher leadership wants us to face this is by altering the culture, and if you want to do that you should probably implement something that goes towards gender equality for that program. We should put that into CASHA to improve the culture."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that having a draw down day might be beneficial.**
  - *"It seems like our training is either after lunch, that one hour period after lunch, or it's during reorg week. And both times are pretty inconvenient to people. Because people don't want to do training that one hour after lunch. And during reorg week people in a down mood because they're back here and they're just busy trying to get everything organized and get ready for the semester to start. So I think it's inconvenient then. But if you reserve a day or something. It may backfire, it may not. I think that would be something to look into. Maybe do one day a semester where people don't go to class and just focus."* (Male)
  - *"Not too large a group. So something like we have project day come up, you take a day off of classes and you have a whole bunch of different stations, each individual CASHA brief that would have gone on but it's a station and you make your way to each one."* (Male)
  - *"I think what could be more beneficial is like West Point, they take away plenty of our weekends, maybe one weekend where it's a SHARP conference and everybody breaks into small groups and then you knock it out and then throughout the course of the year do less periodic sessions, I think that would be a lot better way to distribute our time."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that XYZ case discussions are helpful and similar type discussions would continue to increase awareness and the importance of prevention.**
  - *"I feel XYZ cases are helpful because it shows how maybe even though we might not consider it sexual assault or harassment, somebody else might. If we see cadet X and we see somebody in that position, I wouldn't consider that sexual assault, but they are considering it sexual assault so we might intervene then."* (Male)
  - *"It provides a context just beyond here's an auditorium full of people and the Superintendent is going to tell you not to do that, now you have a more specific context and done at a smaller level and causes more discussion. I don't remember any large scale XYZ cases, but within my company and platoon meeting we do that every time we have a meeting."* (Male)
  - *"XYZ cases give situations in which it would happen. So it's not like somebody is 'Oh, I wouldn't just walk around doing that.' You see cadet Y doing it and you say 'Oh, this is the situation. It's not just like a boogeyman type of thing.'"* (Male)
  - *"So XYZ cases we get via e-mails once a month, but also talk about them in CASHA. And they're real situations that happened to cadets while they were here. Cadet X and cadet Y went and did this. And they give you the scenario, ask you what you think about it and give you the outcome. Some of them are really interesting. Some of them are really bizarre. But I think it puts things in context of these are things that actually happened to cadets and all within the last five years. It actually makes us think rather than throwing up 50,000 different things on the side."* (Female)

- *"XYZ cases, that drives it home. I know when a guest speaker comes in and speaking about the experiences they had, yes, it would be powerful, but I mean it's almost in my mind it's the same to me hearing about a case because things happen to people. We need to know what happens to people."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that more guest speakers sharing their experiences would be helpful.**
  - *"The juniors here had a brief that they did have victims come in and share their stories. They all talked about how uncomfortable they were, but it was probably the most beneficial brief or meeting that they've had about talking about these issues. They were looking into maybe setting up more of those for not just the junior class, but all classes."* (Female)
  - *"I think the only thing that would be maybe beneficial is having victims speak, because there's such a small number. Even though it's so small percentage of people that are West Point, if you have a victim speak about what they're actually going through. I think that would be very beneficial."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like having someone in person explaining a situation of what really happened would shed light on like this really can't happen and make it more real."* (Male)
  - *"My company, for firsties two years ago we had a person representing JAG come in and talk about cases that they dealt with. And we had the Chaplain come in and a medical professional and like I think it was a captain or somebody who had recently just come back to West Point. And they all talked about their experiences on the platoon level and what cases looked like. But that was completely run by my company and our CASHA rep at the time, finding all of the people and putting them together. And it was only really for firsties, but whoever wanted to come down could, I thought that was effective."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that classroom discussions on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment have been beneficial.**
  - *"There was one situation before my history class, my history teacher was like 'Hello, guys, what's going on with you?' Like what's going on in the Corps of Cadets and see how we're doing. One time somebody was like 'Got more CASHA today.' And we ended up having a 10, 15 minute discussion on what happened. And he gave us a situation in which he dealt with it. And that was definitely good for us. It showed us not only situations that might happen to us as leaders, but how we might choose to deal with it."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the "leaders challenge" has been helpful in understanding how to deal with issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment.**[19]
  - *"They can range from anything from honor violations to stealing, cheating to sexual assault."* (Male)
  - *"We had one that was like dealing with a soldier who had gone through a sexual assault thing and trying to reintegrate her into the unit and make her feel like she belonged. So it does touch on that issue."* (Male)
  - *"We have those leaders challenges. I think our first leaders challenge of the year was sexual assault case where her soldier approached her and she was a company commander and they go through the whole scenario, how she dealt with it. How would I have dealt with it otherwise and you hold discussions."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that it is not be beneficial to publicize disciplinary outcomes because it distracts from the discussion, focuses on negative outcomes, and could reveal the identity of those involved.**
  - *"I don't think the important part of the case is how people were punished either, I think the important thing is what we did in our last CASHA session, is just these are the things that actually happened. One of the cases they showed how people were punished and that's all anyone was talking about during the CASHA session. If that had been left out and all we could focus on is this happened between cadets at this school. I don't think the punishment should be publicized at all."* (Female)
  - *"I think that would increase the attitude that people think they're just automatically going to get SHARP boarded if they do something semi wrong. I think that guys think they're just victims. So I think that if you publicize stuff like that it will honestly make it worse."* (Female)
  - *"Probably not right away. If it was something that happened even in the last year or two, someone you could have possibly known, I think it would stir up mixed feelings."* (Female)

[19] The Leader Challenge program was designed by the Center for the Advancement of Leader Development and Organizational Learning (CALDOL) in support of the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic. Cadets conduct platoon-level professional development sessions based on real-world problems told by the officers who experienced them.

Chapter 3:
U.S. Military Academy Faculty and Staff

Three faculty and staff focus group sessions were conducted at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) from April 27-29, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. The three sessions were: faculty members, coaches and athletic staff, and military staff (Tactical Officers, Tactical Non-Commissioned Officers). Each session had between 7 and 14 participants. A total of 31 staff members participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the faculty and staff participants the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix D, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USMA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rate for women decreased from 2012 (noting that the incidence rate for women at USMA was statistically lower from 2012 to 2014 and the incidence rate for men remained unchanged), and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Participants were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Participants further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some staff members indicated they were <u>not</u> familiar with the results of the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"[Multiple No]"* (Athletic)
  - *"Anything I've heard about in briefings is more of the incidents reported, that's usually the number. Not so much the actual rates."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were within the range they would have expected.**
  - *"For me it doesn't surprise me because I know this literature, I know the prevalence rates that are generally reported for men and for women. So with fluctuation these would be consistent with what we see in college samples, a little on the lower side, which is good, for women. But even for women it fluctuates depending on the institution and the sampling method that you use. But the pessimist in me always*

thinks that these are underestimates a little bit anyway but they are within the range that I would expect." (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated they had read the report of the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"[I read] the report."* (Several Military)
  - *"Stuck mostly with the executive summary."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the 2014 DoD Report to the President on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response had some influence at the Academy.**[20]
  - *"My sense is that the military one affected us more than the educational one."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that more timely information and comparisons to the general population would be helpful.**
  - *"It's not so much of a prevention, although it ultimately could be. The issue on getting the word out on results. Letting everybody know where they stand, what their expectations are."* (Military)
  - *"We hold ourselves to a very high standard, but it would be nice to be able to compare how well we do against the general population. And any means to go and just do this with a civilian equivalent and just to put it in perspective. Because no one else does this and we get beat up because we do it. And there are numbers, no matter how good or how bad they are, numbers are provided and there's a problem. And it just would be nice to weigh that against what the general population is like."* (Military)

Reasons for decrease in USC rates

- **Some staff members indicated they do not have a good frame of reference for judging the decrease in USC rates for women.**
  - *"I guess two years ago maybe I went and looked at the Army wide survey that was done and percentages were generalized from that. It seemed like the overall Army numbers were actually small. They were smaller than the impression I had from the way the issue was discussed. And it makes me wonder because I never see this, I have never seen this discussed here or in the Army survey, how do the rates in the Army compare with general society?"* (Faculty)

[20] Department of Defense. (2014). Report to the President of the United States on sexual assault prevention and response. (RefID: 5-1059E72). Retrieved from http://www.sapr.mil//docs/reports/FY14_POTUS/FY14_DoD_Report_to_POTUS_SAPRO_Report.pdf

- **Some staff members indicated the Academy has increased emphasis on sexual assault in recent years.**
  - *"Shift in focus. More awareness."* (Athletic)
  - *"Education."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think the leadership has made it a priority here within each department."* (Athletic)
  - *"I would also say that the emphasis the Superintendent is placing on subcultures, specifically looking at clubs and sports and saying 'Hey, come on, this is unacceptable,' becoming more and more gender neutral. So I would say that the Superintendent's emphasis on subcultures should have a bearing, if not these are lower over time."* (Military)
  - *"I think 2013 was the significant change in what we were conveying in SHARP training. I think even just with the videos that we saw 'Hey, here's a significant problem that we have to deal with internally.' I don't know if that is a reason, but I believe that it definitely changed the message, it changed the message for the better."* (Athletic)
  - *"The extra emphasis placed on it and the formation of the CASHA representative in the Corps."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that education and increased enforcement have helped reduce the USC rates.**
  - *"Maybe a better understanding of what the definitions actually are."* (Military)
  - *"I think there's more enforcement."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated the USC rates might stay the same over time.**
  - *"I think it will go down, but I think eventually it will level off because I think you have people who are going to offend, I think in every population you are always going to have something, so I think it will go down."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members were not sure about the future levels of USC rates.**
  - *"I'm hopeful that the CASHA program is only going to continue to have legs and continue to have the support behind it from leadership, which I do believe is there. And so I think if that continues then it could stay down, but it would also not surprise me if it went back up. And in some ways we'll have to see what the 2016 point will be because the external event for USMA, that's 2012 to 2014, is the CASHA program really starting to gain momentum and visibility. So is this drop just a statistical drop or is it a reflection of the efforts of the CASHA program and the efforts by cadets to take ownership of this issue? That will be interesting to see."* (Faculty)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[21]

- **Some staff members indicated that the definition of USC increases understanding of behaviors that are not acceptable.**
  - *"Go a number decades back to my locker room, when you put it in terms of locker room. I think the program gives them a definition. In the 1980s, I don't think a towel to the butt was unwanted sexual contact, but now that we have a definition, I think it may be."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members felt that behaviors such as horseplay and locker room antics are common among men.**
  - *"I think if you're looking at the hazing and horseplay, that's probably more prevalent with the male population."* (Faculty)
  - *"I don't know what sounds about right. You look at unwanted sexual contact, nothing sounds about right. But as far as the horseplay and locker room, that could be male-on-male. To me this looks more like locker room behavior. I would assume that it's not as taboo as obviously male-on-female, at least culturally. I don't know with the recent crackdown on the cultures, that's getting closer to even with the one below that, with the genitalia, that's getting close to a third [referring to the percentages of unwanted sexual touching]."* (Faculty)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[22]

- **Some staff members indicated that alcohol might be involved in many incidents of USC.**
  - *"[Multiple agreement] Absolutely."* (Military)
  - *"It's more like almost every time there's an incident there's alcohol involved."* (Athletic)
  - *"Alcohol is usually involved."* (Faculty)
  - *"They have no inhibitions. So if you see something and you've consumed an amount of alcohol, you can pretty much be brave enough to say what you want to say or how you want to say it or how you want to present it. So you have no inhibitions and you say what you want."* (Military)

[21] See Appendix D, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USMA Men" for the details shared with participants

[22] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.

- **Some staff members indicated that there might be expectations for sexual relations when alcohol is involved.**
  - *"I think alcohol and circumstance. You look at something like Army/Navy where they're off post and taking pass, I think you mix the two together and there's an expectation there. Maybe it's not necessarily predatory in nature, but it could be an idea and plan and this is what's going to happen."* (Athletic)
  - *"Being alcohol and drugs, in our training, the comment was made that alcohol was the number one rape drug of choice. That's almost a quote. And personally I found that very interesting because it starts off with a group of people abusing, seriously abusing alcohol in a very stupid manner and then going out and abusing alcohol even more and placing themselves in a very high risk situation because of that. But there was no mention or orientation towards moderation, proper use of alcohol or any of that nature. The video made it appear that the norm was this behavior, as stupid as it is, it is the norm and that, to me, was very unfortunate, very sad to see that kind of approach to that. So how that can be reshaped and reoriented would be very nice if it could include something about appropriate use of alcohol in moderation, taking care of yourself, not putting yourself in those situations."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets are advised about responsible use of alcohol.**
  - *"If we send them off on pass, we have a head OR [officer representative] or somebody come down who can come speak to them on a more directory level [as in formal directions] than maybe a coach or someone like that would. And they talk about the buddy system and things like that to try to help them. I'm not sure exactly what's said because we step away from it, allowing them to cut through the fat a little bit."* (Athletic)
  - *"Just that alcohol is inhibiting your decision making. So once you include that, your sound decision making becomes less and less throughout the night."* (Athletic)
  - *"There was actually a scenario which was video-based and it was a situation in which you could affect the course of the video. One of them was to intervene in the case where somebody was trying to get someone drunk for the purpose of assaulting them. So they have seen that recently and have been called upon to act. And I'm really encouraged that they did. I mean that's great."* (Faculty)
  - *"And it's culturally accepted in the military to consume alcohol responsibly, never to participate in recreational or any other kind of hard drugs. So we have that split. Which is very different than other college differences where the cultural norm is recreational drugs are okay, especially when you are in states where it is okay, it's lawful. That's a real difference at the Service Academies."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets will watch out for each other when alcohol is involved.**
  - *"I think the vast majority are going to step in. And I think there's been a lot more focus on the bystander intervention and taking care of each other, not necessarily assuming something nefarious is going to happen. We talk to our cadets a lot about the designated smart person because when you are drinking you make bad choices sometimes, not just in terms of sexual relations but just in terms of where you decide to use a bathroom, and obviously the Superintendent's yard is not one of them."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that alcohol could be used intentionally to prepare for sex.**
  - *"[Alcohol could be used deliberately, Multiple affirmative responses.]"* (Faculty)
  - *"[Alcohol could be used deliberately] Yes. A norm. I think that well-meaning men and women don't necessarily understand that [alcohol] as being used as a weapon. There are some that clearly do and it does sound like perhaps it was recognized that that interchange was very deliberate. But the whole loosening each other up."* (Faculty)

Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates[23]

- **Some staff members indicated that the rates of perceived sexual harassment might have increased because the behaviors are defined better now than in the past.**
  - *"I think there's been such a focus, this is the number one initiative in the Academy, the Army. Part of it is the education. There's been such a focus on it it could be that part of the education that people are having, that's unacceptable behavior, maybe something that had been labeled acceptable in the past the person didn't realize that. We think it should be going down because of the emphasis but part of the process is this education. So maybe what accounts for what looks like a spike is more of people are reporting with more education."* (Military)
  - *"I was going to say I think having a higher number of sexual harassment [higher rate of perceived sexual harassment] and a less number of assaults is a good indicator because that they're informing or stopping it at that level and then is not going to the next level."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that the rates for perceived sexual harassment might have increased because that topic has received less emphasis.**
  - *"You can probably contribute some of that [that USC rates went down while sexual harassment went up] to the fact that it's [sexual assault behaviors] more defined, it's*

[23] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 55% of women experienced perceived sexual harassment (6 percentage points higher than 2012) and 12% of men experienced perceived sexual harassment (4 percentage points higher than 2012).

more specifically defined. And not only is it more specifically defined, it's more the point of the training. Over the two years, if I keep telling you this is an example of sexual harassment, you may not have known you were being sexually harassed." (Athletic)

- *"I think they used to separate the sexual harassment piece from the sexual assault piece, and now they've blended it with more of a focus on the sexual assault. So it could be that there's not enough emphasis on the sexual harassment piece of it."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that the perceived sexual harassment rates might have gone up with more discussions of women in combat roles.**
  - *"There's also I think combat exclusion rules and just talking about females joining certain branches of the Army. 'You'll never make it in the infantry. You can't do that, you don't have the upper body strength.'"* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that there is not enough discussion of appropriate behaviors and boundaries.**
  - *"Right now the training that we received recently was, and in years past, is pretty much 'Don't do this.' But there's no role modeling as to what appropriate behavior, the parameters for appropriate behaviors are. How you would initiate or infer or institutionalize something like that without being really overbearing is kind of a trick. But it's a missing variable because people, at least in my training, I was left with the question mark of what are the proper and safe parameters of interacting with the opposite sex given all of this? The negative parameters that we've just been given in training."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual harassment is more difficult to address.**
  - *"Sexual assault, it has less of a gray area than sexual harassment does. I mean unwanted touching, I think it's easier to train people don't touch people inappropriately if they don't want it. And I think it's harder to train people not to say inappropriate things or not. The quid pro quo stuff I think is probably pretty straight forward. But the locker room conversation in mixed company type thing, honestly I think the vast majority of people are pretty easy to train out of that. But in my observations, I don't think they mean anything by it, they're just clueless and no amount of annual training I think is going to train it out of them. Either they're going to keep doing it or somebody is going to sit down one-on-one and say 'Hey, you shouldn't say things like that.'"* (Faculty)

Discussion of sexist behavior rates[24]

- **Some staff members indicated that the rates of perceived sexist behavior are alarmingly high.**
  - *"92 percent is extremely ridiculously high. That's almost a hundred percent of the Academy females. I'm not sure what the numbers are with the females here, that's quite a few. So I think that that alone is substantially–or potentially needs attention brought to it. It's education. So how much influence are we as a force giving to these kids, because that's what they are, they're college kids, how much education are we really making them sit through. I don't know how much SHARP training they're getting, if any. So I think that's important because the soldiers in the regular Army, they receive it quarterly, it's mandatory. I know they've got a lot going on here as it is. If these numbers are true and as high as they are, then obviously there needs to be some kind of influence and some training."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that with the increased education the sexist behaviors should decrease.**
  - *"If you come right out of high school and say throw like a girl or whatever, that's part of the culture where you come from. Where here it's not acceptable. So it would be interesting to see what they say as a plebe and then there's 47 months experience. As he goes through training and trained by non-commissioned officers and officers and explained and go out to the force and see the Army and they claim the Army values, then I think the number would decrease."* (Military)

Reporting

Faculty and staff participants were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix D, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Participants discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Participants were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more cadets to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with faculty and staff participants providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some staff members indicated they were not familiar with the number of official reports.**
  - *"No."* (Military)

[24] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 92% of women perceived experiencing sexist behavior (1 percentage point higher than 2012) and 45% of men perceived experiencing sexist behavior (12 percentage points higher than 2012).

- **Some staff members indicated they were familiar with the number of reports.**
  - *"I want to say this kind of information is in the report and it's been briefed."* (Military)
  - *"It's in the report."* (Military)
  - *"I'm pretty sure this information is put out through the entire West Point community in the Sup's town hall. So when he talks about reducing SHARP is his main priority, he puts these numbers up. So the entire community is invited to these meetings."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the number of reports was consistent with their expectations.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Athletic)
  - *"West Point is a microcosm of larger society. So sexual assault is one of the most under reported of the crimes. So we would expect that here as well."* (Faculty)
  - *"So we point to that there is an increase in reporting rates, even though it's still so low, it's an increase over time. And so the word is getting out. Whether they choose to, there's lots of factors that will influence whether they do it."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated difficulty interpreting the relationship of reports to prevalence rates.**
  - *"When I received the briefing on the reports, one of these was by a foreign officer during summer training program and I think there were civilian on cadet and I think at least one was prior service before even getting here. They're reporting it during this year but it may have been an incident that happened previously."* (Military)
  - *"Generally speaking, I feel like we're asked to compare apples and oranges and we don't have all the necessary information to compare things adequately. But I do agree, it's only 14 percent, which is kind of low."* (Military)
  - *"The anonymity of taking a survey versus face to face confrontation, I'm going to make a serious accusation here that I would think that's probably the biggest reason for the divergence here."* (Military)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some staff members indicated they would personally encourage cadets to report.**
  - *"Yes."* (Athletic)
  - *"Absolutely."* (Military)

- *"Yes."* (Military)
- *"It's not even a question. If the cadet would come to me and tell me that she's been assaulted, it's the law."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members report that leadership at all levels encourages reporting.**
  - *"Yes."* (Military)
  - *"It's very clear that that's the expectation. I think that will always be the fight though. These people say it but will the system support it, can we trust the system. There are accusations made that are unfounded that probably happen, there's just no evidence to back it up. So that could lead to not trusting the system."* (Military)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some faculty and staff indicated that the cadets perceive reporting to be more costly than other options.**
  - *"I'd say multiple reasons. First off, because they don't want to get in trouble or get someone else in trouble. The other is because you have a lot of Type A personalities here at this Academy, so having an impropriety like this be part of their life and then continue outside of their little cocoon could be a traumatic type of experience that they don't want to have because they just focus on the positive and the next goal and the next objective. So I think there's a lot of, okay, that's bad, boom, I just cut it away and move on to the next. Just because of that mentality of being able to overcome adversity and then still continue on."* (Military)
  - *"There's definitely a spectrum of incidents and we're taught in our SHARP training we're taught, as with any training, you try to handle it at the lowest level. Everything is serious. It depends on the perception of the person. If it hurts them, it's serious. However, I think that's part of the culture of fix it at the lowest level that you can, depending on the level of severity."* (Military)
  - *"Am I embarrassed and I don't want anybody to know under any circumstances? Do I have confused loyalties? Will I get punished? Will this other person get punished? We ultimately train a lot of cadets and we train them to adapt and overcome."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that pride and achievement among the cadets causes some to avoid addressing or reporting unwanted behaviors.**
  - *"I think there's a huge pride factor, and might be gender focus, probably on both sides just in different tones of it. There's a huge pride factor in I'm coming forward and telling everybody I need help, when at the Academy as a female cadet you're assumed to need help with so many things, you are just validating that huge misconception, or maybe, maybe not. But I think there's a huge pride factor that goes along with it."* (Athletic)

- *"They're here, they each have an individual goal to get the highest class standing to be able to get what they want and get in the Army. And when you are in the Army, they are doing everything they can to make the unit better. I don't know if you can build it to the point where you won't have any of these issues where I'm concerned about reporting because I'm concerned about how people are going to perceive me, how they're going to treat me. I've seen cases where incident was reported, everybody rallied around the soldier. And also seen it where the incident was reported, and that soldier had to get out of Dodge."* (Athletic)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some faculty and staff indicated that the data shows there is a problem with repeat offenders that needs to be addressed.**
  - *"It [the percentage of repeat offenses] doesn't surprise me but it tells me we still have a reporting problem."* (Athletic)
  - *"If it was rape and it happened more than once from the same person, you think yeah, well, you should have done something."* (Faculty)
  - *"Well, from the same offender being involved, so that goes to show that that person is offending multiple people, so multiple people have seen the incident, from cadets to instructors to whomever, but no one has stepped in to stop it."* (Military)
  - *"I think it's important that over half of them are repeat. So in other words, it's not stopping at the first offense. But make a report, that's our training, that's what they tell us to do. If it's going to continue, it's going to cause a culture, people are going to see this and other people are going to think that's inappropriate; so we're taught, we train, we see it, we fix it, we do it right then and there. So the fact that it continues then, that's surprising."* (Military)
  - *"I don't think it's surprising in the fact that the cadets live on top of each other in barracks or on teams or with each other 24/7. So if they experience it, it's most likely with someone that they know and hang out with. Chances are they probably hang out with them or around them multiple times. And the cadet that's inappropriate to them is probably around, in their group or in their company or in their team."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that emphasizing the likelihood of repeat offenses would encourage reporting.**
  - *"[Knowing survey results on repeat offenders would] cut it in half."* (Athletic)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some staff members report that leadership training empowers cadets to report incidents of USC.**
  - *"I think the leadership training that they get here. In the only case in which I am personally aware I know that the cadet in question said 'Hey, listen, I want to help put a stop to this and I want to help other people who have been in this situation.' And this doesn't go away if everybody is quiet about it, so somebody has to stand up and say it's not okay."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members suggest that the likelihood of reporting increases with the severity of the offense.**
  - *"And I think the severity of the assault, if that's really a thing, are you going to do an unrestricted report on groping of the buttocks, taking it to that level for something like that that maybe might be able to be handled directly with peer intervention or something like that rather than going to a full on report and everything else that goes with it."* (Military)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some staff members suggested that rates of reporting would increase if sexual assault investigations began without questioning the veracity of the report.**
  - *"I think we as a society need to stop automatically distrusting what people say when they are reporting something like this. But at the same time a lot of the things that she went through were in the process of pursuing justice for her attacker. And they both have rights and it can't just be a kangaroo court, you have to go through the process. But I think that a lot of the things that happened to her didn't need to happen in her pursuit of justice. I hope one day we are a society that can do that."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that publicizing sentencing outcomes would encourage reporting by enhancing cadets' expectations of system effectiveness.**
  - *"One thing that we failed very miserably in doing is, as an institution, when the reports are made, people get caught, people are punished. Nobody knows about it. So while something bad could have happened and then ultimately the system works like it was intended to work, no one knows about it because you don't read about the courts-martial or the person was punished, whether it's jail or whatever. And I'm not too sure a lot of the cadets really knew that once [a case] got reported and the system started working, it was bad, what that person did."* (Faculty)
  - *"So when this goes out to the public and they go 6.5 percent, they don't see the back story, that it was handled at the lowest level or it was taken to some administrative or judicial process, you just see 6.5 percent. We never heard what happened to any of*

this, so obviously they're covering this up, and that's the big fight that we're in right now." (Military)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
>
> 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a cadet would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some staff members indicated retaliation could occur at the Academy, but it is subtle and hard to detect.**
  - *"It has a negative connotation. I think there's retaliation, but it's so silent and that can be worse than someone hitting you over the top of the head. I don't know the degree of retaliation, but just some of the verbiage that you hear, 'I just got SHARP'd or he or she SHARP'd me.' The term 'SHARP'd.' So you hear it in a discussion."* (Athletic)
  - *"My point is with retaliation it's sometimes very hard to say 'Yes, this is retaliation,' because it works on a much more subtle form than that."* (Faculty)

- *"I think I can see it happening. I haven't seen it happening obviously, but there's a time in IG world there are so many ways to retaliate against someone without being able to prove it or without it being detectable, or maybe not detectable because someone is going to know they're being retaliated against. There are so many ways that could happen."* (Athletic)

- *"I think it's an overt form of retaliation. So if for example a TAC ever misused his or her power and clearly targeted a cadet who had made a report, I firmly believe that the senior leadership would be responsive to that. But I think the retaliation that victims experience work on more subtle levels than that. And it's something that they say, 'It just didn't feel right.'"* (Faculty)

- *"I've seen commanders [in the Army] do it, at least the reports of what commanders have done. I can't say that's a pattern of retaliation. It's a change in behavior towards a soldier. It's a very subtle change. They may not give them the same amount of privilege that they normally would have, but they're well within their command authority to do that. It's something that they hadn't been doing before but they chose to enact that ability now. And those kinds of things can go on all the time."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that retaliatory behaviors would be more likely to be social (ostracism and maltreatment) than professional.**

  - *"It would be more the social. We have a small population, there's a lot of people that are friends. So by the nature of this there's going to be one side and there's going to be another side. Maybe the social relationships aren't there as much or there's definitely an issue with 'Okay, I'm human, I'm not going to associate with this person if they did this to my friend,' or vice versa."* (Faculty)

  - *"Mostly I think social retaliation. I think there was something a few months ago. I picked up sort of whispers of it, so to speak. But apparently it was being widely discussed in the Corps. And apparently the amount of social ostracization that she was experiencing or about to experience if and when she returned was going to be quite severe was my impression."* (Faculty)

  - *"But just imagine a silent retaliation. No one is talking to you and everyone is shunning you, what are you going to tell someone? They're retaliating. 'What do you mean they're retaliating.' ' They're not talking to me. They're not doing nothing.' That's the point."* (Athletic)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated retaliation can come from a variety of directions, not solely the offender.**

  - *"It depends on who reported. The case a few years ago in terms of the NCO that was videotaping, taking pictures. She speaks quite eloquently about the social shunning*

she got. That much social shunning was taking place in a case where there were not as much gray, as is usually the case in these situations." (Faculty)

- *"People take sides when an accusation is made or a report is made."* (Faculty)
- *"I wouldn't be surprised if there was a one hundred percent rate of social shunning. Everyone will take sides."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets are very sensitive to actions that impact their social standing, so not interacting with someone can be seen as retaliation.**
  - *"Because the group that we're dealing with, their social life is very important. So their self-esteem and everything is tied to their social life. It would be natural for people to divide. Not saying even if it's my friend, I don't know to help you in this situation so I would choose to be silent rather than aggravate the situation."* (Faculty)

Ostracism as retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated it is difficult to take action against ostracism.**
  - *"Well, social shunning, there's not really anything you can do about that. But professional retaliation should be easily documented. This is what happened to me and I can tie it directly back to the fact that I did this reporting."* (Faculty)

Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated their awareness of DoD regulations against retaliation as punishable offenses.**
  - *"Absolutely."* (Athletic)
  - *"That's kind of standard whistle blower type stuff. That's what it rings like to me."* (Military)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated they would encourage someone to report retaliation, even when the circumstances are subtle.**
  - *"It doesn't mean I don't do anything."* (Athletic)
  - *"If we're told that that occurred we have to."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets can report experiencing retaliation for reporting sexual assault to the SHARP office or civilian hotlines.**
  - *"It would be the same reporting for a SHARP incident. Fall under the same category because that's how we're trained."* (Military)
  - *"Also have the cadet chain of command. It's a Military Academy, there's a chain of command. So if there's an issue or problem, and knowing that this is sensitive, they also have another chain on the side, civilian side too. You may not go to the chain of command, but at least you have another organization, that hotline, they're always carrying their phones on them. So everyone is well aware of who they can report to."* (Military)
  - *"I'm sure they [cadets] know. Whether emotion overrides that knowledge or not, it's kind of hard to say."* (Military)

Leadership awareness of retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated that senior leadership would intervene should they witness retaliation occurring.**
  - *"I don't think there's any question about that."* (Military)
  - *"That's leadership, that's what we do, why we're here. So we're here to make sure they're doing the right thing. So if you see a retaliatory action, it could even be considered hazing at some point, of the aspects you're looking at. So definitely, anyone that has moral values is going to step in and make it right."* (Military)
  - *"That's what we're here to do. These are assigned professionals, Army professionals. You have professionals here that are saying this is unacceptable, this is against the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or 'Hey, what's going on?' That's why we have TACs and NCOs and instructors."* (Military)
  - *"And you don't know what the right thing to do is, that's why we have a boss; you just raise it up, evaluate it up and eventually someone knows how to respond correctly to whatever the scenario is."* (Military)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated that the best approach to reducing retaliation would be to change the culture to help identify unacceptable behaviors and make reporting acceptable.**
  - *"You were saying that understanding the reasons for retaliation, whatever variables might exist there, understanding that fully and then coupling that with the culture accepting reporting and so forth would be the only way you can beat it. You can't stomp it out, you have to make SHARP reporting an acceptable behavior and diffuse*

whatever reasons exist for the retaliative behavior in the first place. I think that's all minimize and eliminate." (Athletic)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, faculty and staff participants were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among cadets and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Participants were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some staff members indicated that social media plays a role in retaliation.**
  - *"Oh, to retaliate. Yes, you see it on Yik Yak."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that retaliatory responses on social media consist of both slander and social isolation/ostracism.**
  - *"It's both. The problem with that is it goes against all of the things that we train them to do all the time. Then you introduce social media, which is this anonymous thing out there where they can really go haywire on it. Somehow my chain of command official reporting stuff and then other official reporting chain not in my chain of command, they're having a hard time with that. But they can leap right into that social media with no sweat at all."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that Tinder is popular.**
  - *"Tinder, they're all on Tinder [an online dating app]. That's interesting because I haven't downloaded it, I know a few people who have what are the cadets into now. Apparently it matches you with potential dating prospects and it's all objectifying in a sense because it's all based on whatever picture of the person shows up. Apparently you swipe right on your screen, maybe set up a coffee or something, swipe left if you're not interested."* (Faculty)
  - *"I heard of it. Although some use it as a dating, it's much more of a hook up. It's much more of a hook up culture. I think you might find some that use it for finding a dating partner, but my understanding of it is it's more I want to hook up, let's see who I can hook up with."* (Faculty)
  - *"Well, I think hook up originally meant sex. So does anybody think that that kind of environment is going to feed these kinds of problems? Seems to me that it would."* (Faculty)

Use of Yik Yak[25]

- **Some staff members indicated that use of Yik Yak is a problem at the Academy.**
  - *"I think a Pandora's box that is unsolvable is Yik Yak right now."* (Athletic)
  - *"There was just something about the incident involving placing genitalia on someone on Yik Yak and response about that yesterday. It was a joke. My roommate is asleep, what should I do to mess with him and one of the responses was…[that]."* (Faculty)
  - *"Yik Yak is a big one. If you watch that, it's not an outright, it will be a subtle thing. And we witnessed it with one of the incidents that happened not too long ago where it didn't call a person out by name, but used the name within the context of the sentence and everybody knew what it was about."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that postings are less frequent now.**
  - *"After spring break, I think it was after spring break they said it's dying. The postings are a lot less frequently. I think the novelty is wearing off."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that there may be benefits to Yik Yak, but there are also many negatives.**
  - *"It could be a great thing, somebody can go back and stand up for somebody, but the reality on what happens is not usually a positive. 'You can do it, you're fine, blah, blah, blah.' That's not tolerable."* (Athletic)
  - *"In terms do we see things working, I think as bad a rap that Yik Yak can get at times, if you look at the progression of Yik Yak and the conversations that take place on there, I still see the comments that make me really worried about some of the folks that we have out there. But I also see plenty of posts that make me really encouraged at the quality of the folks that we have here in terms of taking care of it."* (Faculty)
  - *"I find it pretty good. Sometimes even faculty go on there, especially for IT problems. The IT department goes on there. Someone has a problem, he monitors it, he's like 'No, come see me if you have problem getting on here.' So it is a good gauge. And I wonder if it's the same people pushing back against sexual comments. It also seems to be very supportive, like if someone posts that they're having problems with depression or things like that, it's extremely supportive for that and I wonder if it tends to be the same population."* (Faculty)
  - *"Actually not to go to Yik Yak again, but a few days ago there was something, it said shout out or something. And someone said I hope someone intervened. And everyone jumped in is like 'Oh, yeah, I was there. We definitely stopped that.'"* (Faculty)

[25] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

- **Some staff members indicated that it is important to remind cadets about accountability and the impact of their posts.**
  - *"You're accountable for what you say and that what you put out there on social media you can never take back."* (Athletic)
  - *"Before you make that Yik Yak post about how nice somebody's butt is, would you like that to be said about your mom or your sister or your wife or daughter? I think that over time, it's not going to be tangible, but I think over time that message can get accepted and promoted and it's like 'Okay, before I send this, I really wouldn't this said about my wife.'"* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that the types of social media posts are indicative of the maturity of cadets based on their age.**
  - *"Regardless, these are still 18 to 21 year-olds and we're juxtaposing that we can mature them faster than what they are. And being a male, we don't mature as fast as women and in life things. You're trying to inject a maturity and experience."* (Athletic)
  - *"From reality's perspective too, when [kids] come here they really haven't done some of those social things others have."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that many cadets are just viewing and not actually posting.**
  - *"I think a lot more are quietly surfing than actually posting. Like the most votes I've ever seen is like three hundred and change."* (Faculty)
  - *"What's interesting is that when you look at the numbers, it's a small percentage of the same repeat offenders [people who post] because they can't tell maybe who it is, but they can tell if it's the same person over and over again."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the anonymity of the site is a draw.**
  - *"And I think that's the difference. Someone would probably not put that on their Facebook site because it's a direct correlation back to themselves, but Yik Yak, being the anonymity of that, you just get silliness that goes with that. And it's not just here, it's everywhere."* (Military)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some staff members indicated that banning sites like Yik Yak was not effective.**
  - *"I think they tried that when it first came out and decided that wasn't the wise approach."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy monitors sites, but taking any action is more difficult for anonymous sites.**
  - *"We do monitor it. We monitor it, but just because of the anonymity, there's not much we can do. We just use it as atmospherics, this is the conversation that's going on. And sometimes something happens and it's fast and furious Yik Yaking for five hours and that goes away and you never hear about it again. So we look for trends, we look for is this appearing day after day after day, does it appear to be the same person on the same unit, and then just advise. And a lot of times it goes over to the brigade chain of command to deal with."* (Military)
  - *"And there have been people prosecuted for doing things on Facebook. An incident a couple years ago, two months ago finally came to conclusion where somebody got jail time. Somebody was discharged, they lost their commission and got jail time for making a fictitious Facebook site, putting pictures up out of context and making absolutely derogatory terms. There's an investigation, they identified who the person was and UCMJ took it to a conclusion."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets police themselves.**
  - *"The positive thing though is the Academy polices themselves pretty well. You see some negative. However, if it's so inappropriate it would be nice if we could go after that person."* (Military)
  - *"And we're talking about the five or ten percent that just want to get silly and stupid. But you do see a lot of self-policing, you see a lot of people stepping in saying this is important and there's no place for that as a commissioned officer if and when you ever get there. Then there's the down voting function on that, so you'll see the bad stuff maybe for a blip and five people say no, we're not going to tolerate that and it goes away. The bad part of that is that we don't always get to see what's happening because it does go away."* (Military)
  - *"With Yik Yak, if it wasn't anonymous, the Academy didn't have to monitor, the cadets police it up. Just like Facebook, if somebody posts something wrong, they posted this, this should come down. We do a good job at teaching them. I think it's that small population that continually puts comments out there that shouldn't."* (Military)
  - *Yik Yak is an interesting place to observe the self-policing that does go on."* (Faculty)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Faculty and staff participants were provided the results of those questions and asked

to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix D, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy is taking serious steps toward reducing sexual assault and sexual harassment.**
  - *"The new Superintendent came and said despite all of these cutbacks, I am going to build my own SHARP cell. So you have staff there that are one, two people deep and they are not able to cover certain missions, but he's still building a team in-house. So I think not only is he saying it, but he's putting resources towards it."* (Military)
- **Some military staff indicated that gender is more salient in sports and this may have an effect on the acceptability of actions that may be considered sexual harassment.**
  - *"I'm going to play the devil's advocate for a minute. The locker room or the sports is really the only place where it is gender specific, either you're a male or a female. So the emphasis on how fast you run, how high you can jump is really placed there. So comradeship comes from me patting you on the butt or me making a comment about your physique or something like that, not meaning to say it was harmful. But sports, it kind of emphasizes on the individual's gender. Team leader should step in."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that responses to the question on whether leaders take steps to prevent SHARP issues could be driven by a lack of interaction with some leaders.**
  - *"I see a clear trend here, which is most people at the top are talking about and they're giving orders and direction and people hear that and believe it. But when you get down to the levels where someone has day-to-day contact, the closer the level of contact personally that cadets have with these people is inversely proportional to their belief that leadership makes an effort."* (Faculty)
  - *"Civilian faculty, my question would be would the balance of the responses [to the question on the survey] generally be 'Don't know' because of the limited contact?"* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the dynamic between a leader and a cadet might determine the ratings of leaders.**
  - *"I would wish for it to be a hundred percent and I believe we have faculty members that are very responsive to this issue, but depending on the cadet faculty dynamic, you are going to have more or less confidence in that. But I would be surprised as a department if we weren't higher as a whole than this. Because we talk about these issues."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that the results on perceptions of leadership may be the result of inexperience or misunderstanding by the cadets.**
  - *"And it seems it's in the high 80s, 90s, that maybe the cadets are not in leadership positions, they're not quite integrated into the system yet, the freshmen, sophomores, and the more ingrained in the Army values and that the more we try to ingrain and we see it improve, that's good. Of all the things here, the only time you see a difference between men and women's thoughts is with the athletic staff, that's huge."* (Faculty)
  - *"They must not really know what's going on or paying attention to what the Superintendent is saying or the Commandant. Let's be honest, a hundred percent of the Academy leadership is really focused on this, so they must not be really in the know."* (Faculty)
  - *"Or they didn't understand the question."* (Faculty)

Perceptions of seriousness

- **Some faculty members indicated they are serious despite some cadets' perceptions otherwise.**
  - *"I can only speak to what I see in our department. Our cadets pretty much know that our doors are always opened to them."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think that's one of the things that is clearly communicated by all of the faculty in our department, whether it's military or civilian. And we often have conversations about gender issues."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the results reflect the difference in levels of leadership responsibility.**
  - *"But these aren't all leadership. At the bottom there are athletic staff and cadets not in leadership positions. And I'm sure there's some gray area once you get down to the bottom four in terms of how much individual personal contact cadets have with these people. But all I'm saying is it's easy to look at the leader and hear the leader say 'Yes, we will do this, we believe this.' And you sit back and you go 'Oh, that's really what he believes and that's really how he lives his life and that's really how he acts in every waking moment of the day.' But when you get down to the people where you see how they are acting most of the day or more of the day than the guy or the gal at the top you say, 'You know, his attitudes and actions don't really match up with the language.'"* (Faculty)
  - *"Clearly if we look at the ranking order, it's linked to who has the leadership positions. It's really linked."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated they believe the Academy takes SHARP issues very seriously.**
  - *"We're in this room right now, we are having a conversation about this, we have forums on this. I'm not forced, but it's highly suggested that I discuss SHARP in my classes randomly throughout or town hall meetings. We talked about this more than anything else I think here."* (Military)
  - *"It is in the curriculum, we have restructured the staff. Every time there's a list of priorities from the superintendent it is number one. And he doesn't ever hesitate to let everybody know that it's priority number one. It's been resourced, it's been spoken, it's been emphasized at all different levels."* (Military)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Faculty and staff members were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and cadets were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some staff members indicated athletes are held to different standards in regard to unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
  - *"I think athletes are held to a slightly different standard [in regards to gender-relations], not to necessarily a higher standard, I'm saying that I think some are held to a different standard."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the perception of greater prevalence of misbehavior among athletes is unfounded.**
  - *"I honestly believe it's a misperception. I'm not saying we don't have things to work on, indeed that's true, but I think it's a misperception."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that some incidences might occur due to lack of supervision.**
  - *"Speaking from what went down a couple of years ago with the team. What started off as a positive connection with members of the team headed towards the darker side. There was no one who was there, no grownup there to actually sort of pull that in and rein it in and I think it just kept spiraling. And the big problem that they had was that no one stepped up and told someone that this is inappropriate and it should be stopped and everyone knows here what happened to it. The grownup wasn't there*

to make them feel comfortable enough to go to someone in authority and this is going on and I'm not comfortable with it." (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that the standards are different for some issues, but not for sexual assault and sexual harassment.**
  - *"I would say though not for sexual assault. I would totally agree with that in academics and other things where we may accept risk on bringing someone in that may not have a scholarly background versus athletic, but we value all their attributes. But what do you expect, you brought this person in so we're going to give him another class. Where the scholar kid is not going to get that chance in part because they weren't an athlete. So West Point tries to make sure everyone has the possibility and the chance to get through. For sexual assault, sexual harassment, I don't care if you are an athlete or not, this is the community here."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated negative perceptions of athletes are exaggerated.**
  - *"[The perception that athletes are more likely to engage in sexual assault or harassment] might be exacerbated in some fashion. Made a bigger deal than what it is."* (Athletic)
  - *"That was still a hot topic last year when the surveys were taken. So it was a very hot topic in everything, how it was handled, everything, among the cadets. So it makes sense that you would get those [negative comments about athletes]."* (Athletic)

Recruitment for athletic purposes

- **Some members of the athletic staff indicated that athletes are more carefully evaluated than non-athlete cadets.**
  - *"You can't pretend that you don't recruit athletes differently than normal cadets. I think probably in a lot of ways coaches do a lot more research and know their recruits a lot better in an admissions committee that may just see their names."* (Athletic)
  - *"You don't want someone to, if you're a coach, to bring the focus on your team. So what you want to try and do is you want to make sure that they are academically going to be sound, that they're a good person, that it's more important they be a good person than a better athlete."* (Athletic)
  - *"Our coaches actually are investing their livelihood in the recruits that they bring in. So it is very incumbent for them to bring the right type of a student athlete in. Because it's their career. They're invested in that person's future here at the Academy."* (Athletic)

Opinions about athletic staff

- **When asked on the *2014 SAGR* survey whether they believed leadership made honest efforts to stop unwanted behaviors, athletic staff were rated lowest, between 60%-64%. Some members of the athletic staff indicated that the opinions of athletic staff are drawn from perceptions of how athletes behave.**
  - *"They are around our athletes and they see how they act and you know they're going to draw a parallel there. They are around our athletes every day, however they act it's going to be a reflection, do they think we're making an honest effort."* (Athletic)
- **Some members of the athletic staff indicated that cadets may not have any basis for their opinion of how seriously athletic staff members take SHARP issues.**
  - *"I don't know how a regular cadet that's not an athlete would have any bases to make that [judgment]."* (Athletic)
  - *"The cadets don't know."* (Athletic)
  - *"So I understand the concern, but I'm not concerned because only one in four are athletes."* (Athletic)
  - *"[If we just asked the athletes] I believe [the ratings] would be higher."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members offered reasons for the lower ratings for athletic staff.**
  - *"We have also fired a couple of coaches here, not for coach on cadet issues, but for inappropriate issues that the coaches had going on. There have been a couple of coaches did bad things, they're no longer here. I think there's work that needs to be done in the athletic department. Don't get me wrong, there's some great folks over there. But maybe they're not there yet. They have a little bit more to go."* (Military)
  - *"Not to toot our own horn, we're commissioned officers or non-commissioned officers and you have your code of ethics, your shared values. And I know we reach out and we try to hire other professionals, and what is really important is that they have these characteristics. But that goes back to what are you going to get from another school, another society. So if the question is why do we think that's different, it is because they're a different profession."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that talking to cadets about SHARP issues is part of their role.**
  - *"For coaches I think it's a big part of the entire culture of your team; what's permissible, what's not going to be tolerated. Those are the things that have to be addressed. For instance, you bring in the officer representative and that's clearly defined at the beginning of each season with each new team you have, with all your newcomers, and it's got to be a consistent emphasis."* (Athletic)

- **Other staff members indicated that the athletic staff may not see themselves engaged in character building in the way that the military staff does.**
  - *"I think it's more of the coach is 'I'm here to teach a sport.' He's here to teach you how to be a soldier. Here's my culture and there's your culture. They're safe in the locker room away from the barracks. And I think the coaches here need to realize that they're part of the character development as well and this Superintendent will not support coaches that don't maintain that standard."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated they work together and with the officer representative on SHARP issues.**
  - *"Yes, absolutely."* (Athletic)
  - *"There's normally some training that goes on with the preseason that includes this. And whoever is the operations person with the OR and the head coach come up with topics to include sexual harassment, sexual assault."* (Athletic)
- **Some athletic staff indicated that whether a cadet respects and listens to a coach depends on the person.**
  - *"I think it depends who it is. And I think a lot of the role comes from not necessarily mentioning sexual harassment, sexual assault, but it comes from mentioning the type of leaders you want to produce, the type of young men and women you want to produce. And you cannot sidestep it, but you can emphasize other things that maybe make it less awkward, but also are hitting the points. If you are having self-respect this is how you're treating yourself, this is how you're treating your teammates and other people not within the program."* (Athletic)

Culture

Faculty and staff members were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

General comments about Academy culture and gender relations

- **Some staff members indicated that continued emphasis has helped cadets understand the meaning and importance of sexual assault.**
  - *"I say focus on the cultural change through this training and the importance of it from the leadership across the board, and actually continued discussion and interaction on the topic has also kind of helped to elevate the standard of the*

individual. And I'm talking about the cadets. It is still difficult because they still are 18 to 21 year-olds, so there's still going to be some of that wherever you come from type of piece that you can't dissuade from." (Athletic)

- *"Personally, I've been here for a few years. And sponsoring cadets and being around cadet athletes, seeing the kind of discussions that were here five years ago on how they were going to go out on the weekend versus now, there's a difference. There's a more mature flavor to it. Even though when it comes to them being out at night and Facebook pictures, posts and stuff, they're still having fun, but at least they're a little bit more cognitively aware of what the standard should be."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets have a better sense of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors than do students in other colleges.**
  - *"I would say in general they're probably better at professional behavior in a professional setting than most college students. And I base that only on the amount of locker room talk that took place in my classes when I was a college student versus the amount of locker room talk that takes place in my classes here. Now, it was some years ago so maybe society has changed but, you know, I think they are better at not saying inappropriate things in class."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadet behaviors reflect society's behaviors.**
  - *"I think in terms of what they show publicly, I haven't experienced any drastic change in terms of how respectful they are. The bottom line is the vast majority of them are respectful, do the right thing, know the right thing. And this is where your question about cultural change and this is where I get to the larger society. We have, all of us, have belief systems that are supported by the larger society that even though we don't mean for them to be objectified, we don't mean for it to put people in these limited roles, they do influence how we see gender relations. So I think many of these issues, some of them operate at the more public level, many of them work in that middle and then some of them work below."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that the public does not always understand the efforts that the Academy places on preventing sexual assault and shaping proper behaviors.**
  - *"The general population doesn't know all that goes behind putting the program together. So they only see cause and effect. So if they don't see that, they don't seem to think sometimes there is enough."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated they hear from their students that they generally feel safer from sexual assault at the Academy than they would at other colleges.**
  - *"I had that discussion with a cadet not too long ago and she actually went to a four-year college and then switched here. She was telling me how much she felt safer here versus being on the campus because she felt like she had more of a leadership that*

were closer, that were involved, that were people that she was able to actually reach out and touch. She said at the university she didn't have that feeling of reach out and touch the people that she should have had direct contact with, so she did feel safer here." (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that improper behaviors can result from group-think or tradition without being challenged as inappropriate.**
  - *"We only have to look at the history and group behavior to see that when we get groups together that, for whatever reason, sexual behaviors are a part of that power dynamic, that degrading dynamic, that hazing dynamic."* (Faculty)
  - *"You can't just look at one incident and say why is this happening. Is this an issue of dominance, is this an issue of its tradition so I don't even think about it? There are a lot of traditions that take place. Like the pillow flights and putting lock boxes in pillow cases. The rational person would go why in the world would a person think that was a good idea? Well, the social psychology research is full of the explanations for why when you get groups of people together these things that you would never do as an individual you are willing to do. Look at the Milgram studies. The Stanford prison experiment. The behaviors that you saw degrade you saw happen in a five-day study where you got this not only the physical degrading types of behavior, but the sexual behavior too."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy environment introduces unique situations where cadets must balance personal and professional relationships.**
  - *"I think one of the unique challenges that I've seen, as opposed to other universities, is that there's no work-life boundary for the cadets. Because it's not like at the end of the day you go home, they're living next to you. But most of the conversations that I've had with female cadets that are feeling like they're being harassed was, 'Well, he's my friend.' Well, that's great that he's your friend, but he's not behaving professionally. And yes, he's in your company and the relationship that you're required to have with him is a professional one, you're not required to be his friend. And so wrapping their heads around that concept, when it comes to should I report, should I not, should I handle it myself, should I tell someone, coming straight from high school and here, that's a life experience that they haven't had."* (Athletic)

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault receives the most emphasis of all the programs and issues.**
  - *"[Multiple participants responded 'top']"* (Athletic)
  - *"When CID [Criminal Investigation Command] shows up and starts reading rights and asking questions, it gets real. That probably wouldn't happen with other training. CID is not going to come in and read your rights if you are going to the*

range to learn how to shoot. But if an allegation is made, if a report is made, unrestricted, then things start moving and it's visible and it's a scary thing when rights are read." (Military)

- *"This has been all I've heard and it's been the main focus since I got here. I can say at least once, twice, three times a week since I've been here, up until maybe a couple of weeks ago, that's all that was talked about and all that was reiterated and all that was explained to you when you are coming into a position here, the things that were expected of you, that this was the Sup's priority. So I know for me, I've heard it a lot. It has to be the cadets and the leadership here knowing about it and hearing it just as much."* (Military)

- *"It's the Superintendent's number one priority, so makes it our number one priority."* (Athletic)

- *"It's the Superintendent's number one priority and all of the subsequent leadership below him it's priority number one. That's how it's taken seriously and that's how it's taken seriously in the Army. There is no room for error there."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that each class year has its own perspective on the issues.**

  - *"I think quite often we tend to break down cadets by what class year they are because each has their own character. The class of '14 and '15, from what I've gathered, from what I've seen, have been pretty good in terms of character attention to these issues."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that CASHA has assumed responsibility for addressing sexual assault.**

  - *"The CASHA groups and other groups that the cadets have formed internally, it's just another venue, another conduit, another hey, let's handle it ourselves. It's not let the leadership do it, let's internalize and do it ourselves."* (Military)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual harassment and sexist behavior also receive emphasis in addition to sexual assault.**

  - *"Yes, definitely."* (Military)

  - *"They've all got standards [referring to training curricula and objectives] and the standards are communicated."* (Military)

  - *"And I think it helps too that they're all going to be lieutenants in the Army and you can explain that this is unacceptable in your career. You are going to have men and women. So this may have been culturally acceptable where you were from or your family and different generations, that's no longer the case."* (Military)

Role of peer programs

- **Some staff members indicated that CASHA is a positive, cadet-run prevention program.**
  - *"The only feedback I've heard has been positive. I think the cadets that are working in that program are very dedicated to it."* (Faculty)
  - *"I do think that globally the CASHA program is recognized as dedicated cadets who care about this issue and are trying to do good."* (Faculty)

Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed

- **Some staff members indicated that continued cultural change is needed as a way to reduce sexual assault and related behaviors.**
  - *"It's a larger issue of cultural change, the whole socialization, what's acceptable for boys, what's acceptable for girls and the social accusational experience of boys. So the whole boys will be boys and what is acceptable sexual behavior for boys, acceptable sexual behavior for girls. So yes, cultural change is needed. Cultural changes on a larger level are needed. And so West Point, any college institution, is just a microcosm of that. So yes, we have to have these conversations. And yes, cultural change. And some of the issues that we've had with some of the sports team show that we need cultural change and these kinds of conversations."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that developing an attitude of respect and responsibility for each other is important.**
  - *"One recommendation is, and we've done this in units and in combat, is having a battle buddy system to where alongside of being with each other whenever you go out and potential locations, that you actually are there for each other in the event that there's a truly horrific event. And actually the thought is to prevent that from ever happening but then also to have a true battle buddy that is willing to be there to share topics that are like this. I know that down range, at least from a unit perspective, having male and female soldiers, that we were able to bring our incidents down because of the battle buddy system because they were always together. I mean even when they were away from work. Of course we are in a different environment. You set the bar and make them get to the bar but you don't lower the bar. But you also have to remember that each individual case has its own merits and there are differences between a plebe and a firstie."* (Athletic)
  - *"Respecting our trust and respect our dignity is like the underlying parts of sexual assault and harassment and gender training and everything we do. So respect, the bedrock of our profession is trust and you need respect. Specific training is in there, it's just labeled something else."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated they try to model respectful behaviors for the cadets.**
  - *"I like to think that modeling respectful behavior between the genders is helping."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that emphasizing many important issues is a challenge.**
  - *"For me this is always a hard thing because at an institution how do you sustain all the various programs that you need to sustain? How do you have the resources to put in place the types of programs that are most effective? Dealing with issues like sexual assault, gender relations, decreasing the stigma related to mental health issues, talking about suicide, these are all things that are hard to do, that you're not just going to throw anybody up there to do it. So do I believe that the Army, the leadership cares deeply about all of these issues? Yes, I do. Do I believe, as with any institution, we struggle with how to meet those needs on a consistent basis? Yes, I do."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the emphasis needs to be ongoing given the nature of the flow of students through the Academy.**
  - *"We're always improving our battle positions, yes. How can it be improved? I think it's not so much how, the American people are constantly coming in here from all different types. It's a culture that you have to continue. You have to re-indoctrinate people, here's our culture and here's our values and then reinforce them."* (Military)
  - *"The faucets are always turning. One quarter of the population turns over and you're bringing people of all different personalities and experiences and just being brought up differently. You are starting from scratch every year with one fourth of the population. So how much does that affect the overall culture. You're going to get the bar to a certain point and then you have to start over again. So I think that's the tricky part."* (Military)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Faculty and staff members were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated leadership addresses both sexual assault and sexual harassment during training.**
  - *"[Multiple affirmative responses]"* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault might be more emphasized than sexual harassment, but the trainings are blended.**
  - *"I think it's because sexual assault is more thought of as a violent act and is going to be treated more seriously, but I don't believe that sexual harassment gets less emphasis. I think it's equal, it's just people pay more attention to the thing that's more violent."* (Athletic)
  - *"Because they blended the two."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that leadership discusses these topics frequently.**
  - *"It's included in professional development. When the Superintendent or the Commandant talks, it's one of their main priorities. But any time any of us, and I know for myself, when you are giving any kind of professional development, it's most definitely one of the things you're talking about. And also it's important to us way before we get to West Point too. Some of the colleagues here went to the school but as you go through the Army, it was important to you way before you got here and it stays important to you, so therefore it's not hard to educate cadets on it."* (Military)
  - *"I think the community more so with the actual Brigade Tactical Department and the cadets and the Corps and our experts in the SHARP community. We have some of them, they provide a lot of the insight. But our leaders, whenever they talk, they are constantly talking about SHARP."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the CASHA and SHARP programs are effective at training.**
  - *"Yes [CASHA]."* (Military)
  - *"As far as I know part of that SHARP office that we talked about, the Superintendent made that a high priority, that's been within the last two or three years, we've had SARCs and we had advocate people and they were very good and knew who they were, but it's been a larger thing in the last two to three years."* (Military)
  - *"I think the professional staff and the SARCs and the victims' advocates and all that, they have a direct tie with the CASHAs. But that's the process, that's the way it's designed to work. So it's the subject matter, expert training, the trainers who then do the training. It's just the way the Army does things."* (Military)
  - *"It's on a poster too, who all the individuals are, point of contact, on the elevators, walls. We're all professionals, if you don't have any human mentor or whatever, you can go in the elevator and see who that is."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that training helps prepare cadets for dealing with situations when they become officers and leaders in the Army.**
  - *"Yes, because that's what the training is developed for."* (Military)

- *"Yes."* (Military)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some staff members indicated that the amount of training has not discouraged reporting, however, excess training has created a divide between the genders.**
  - *"I don't think so much that it discourages reporting, you start to see some females, people will say now they won't be my friends, or they're nervous, they're scared around me. And it's kind of an innocent thing. The person says I've heard so much, I'm so nervous, but I would like to talk to that person. Reporting has so many meanings. I think it's pretty close to saturation as far as all the systems, all the infrastructure, all the programs, everything we have. But I think it's key when I say improve upon that. Yik Yak was not here a couple of years ago. Things change, we just have to make it relative to what's going on in the Army and that ties with the Army, and the people that are going to go train and lead is key. I think we have the right leadership, leaders, and I think we have the right infrastructure of both cadet, tactical, our leadership, cadre, and we have the right amount of training on the calendar, the trick is keeping it up to date and have people internalize it."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that XYZ trainings are the most useful for cadets.**
  - *"I'd say vignette training probably. Cadet XYZ training are the best. Cadet X leaving post with a bag on his shoulder. Something bad is going to happen. I think vignette training it pretty good. And especially I think what's needed is this whole cadets, the CASHA movement, because it's not coming from us, like the gentleman said, the Army. This is what the Army is, so all we're doing is trying to build these aspiring individuals and put them in the Army and take care of the logistics. And they're going to have the same issues that we have now with this cross section of America coming in with all kinds of moral and value systems and what is socially acceptable to them. I think vignette training and I think the constantly having this rotation of military faculty in here keeps it pretty fresh."* (Military)

Chapter 4:
U.S. Naval Academy Midshipmen

Seven midshipman focus group sessions were conducted at the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) from March 24-27, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. There was one session each for men and women held for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors and seniors combined. A single mixed-gender session of juniors and seniors was also held. Each session had between 6 and 12 participants. A total of 68 midshipmen participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the midshipmen the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix E, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USNA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rates decreased from 2012 (noting that the incidence rates for both women and men at USNA were statistically lower from 2012 to 2014), and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Midshipmen were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Midshipmen further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some midshipmen indicated they <u>had</u> seen the results of the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Males and Females)
  - *"We were briefly briefed as a company, like 15, 20 minutes in the afternoon. Went through a PowerPoint, different slides on some of this data. This chart was probably on it."* (Male)
  - *"Our company did it by class, so they had a lot of charts."* (Female)
  - *"My SEL [Senior Enlisted Leader] took the company and shared the results of surveys with us."* (Male)
  - *"We actually talked about with our senior enlisted leader just the stats of this year's survey within our own company."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they had not seen the survey results.**
  - *"So, no, I have not seen these numbers."* (Male)
  - *"We've talked about Navy-wide or military-wide trends, but I don't think we've looked at this report. I definitely think it's something that people should see."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they had heard about sexual assault at the Academy before they entered.**
  - *"[I came from] The prep school, so SAPR and sexual assault was talked about a lot. So we were educated coming in."* (Female)

Reasons for decrease in USC rates

- **Some midshipmen indicated they were surprised the USC rate went down as much as it did.**
  - *"Shocked me the percentage doubled and then stayed the same for two years and all of a sudden halved. That just doesn't happen. Personally I think at least with 2012, after the CNO came to us and talked to us and told us that there was a huge issue, I feel like a lot more people would either report perhaps. We came here in 2011, but through 2011 and 2012 I didn't notice any huge changes in command climate that would explain this, this disparity in rates. I haven't noticed any large scale changes that would explain that."* (Male)
  - *"I thought they would be higher. Because we get so much training, it's like they make the problem seem bigger than it is. Which I guess they should so you can solve it. Because even if it's only 8.1 percent, it's still a big problem."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the rates of USC might have gone down as a result of the increased emphasis by leadership.**
  - *"We actually talked about with our senior enlisted leader just the stats of this year's survey within our own company."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like the leadership, both through the brigade and professional staff, they actually do care. So they have definitely taken efforts into trying to educate midshipmen the best they can."* (Male)
  - *"Over time I guess the message has succeeded and the rates are down."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated increased education and bystander intervention might have contributed to the decrease in USC rates.**
  - *"I have a feeling it could be two possible outcomes. Maybe people just stopped reporting or the other way people stood up more to be able to stop their friends before they could spread. Maybe they didn't know they were sexually assaulting*

somebody, but their friend stood up and said, 'Hey, it's not wanted' and maybe it stopped." (Female)

- *"I think it could be factor to it, if the guys see that females are becoming more aware of what we can do to protect ourselves and they'd definitely stop or think twice before they do that."* (Female)
- *"I think more people are aware because of the SHAPE [Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education] session. We go over previous cases, people are aware of what would happen to them, sort of like the repercussions. I think people are much more careful about what they do when they're drinking or the way they touch other people."* (Female)

- **Some female midshipmen indicated that the increased emphasis has led to less interaction between male and female midshipmen for fear of being accused of sexual assault.**
  - *"I just notice a lot of my guy friends are afraid to even talk to female midshipmen because they're afraid to get reported for something. I think that probably had a lot to do with it too."* (Female)
  - *"['There is a sense men are afraid to talk to women or interact with women.' Multiple Yes]"* (Females)
  - *"They make jokes all the time, you can't talk to a female or she'll 'SAPR' you for making eye contact or something. I think it really does scare guys off from talking to female midshipmen. And it's definitely something that they joke about, but I'm pretty sure they're really serious about it."* (Female)
  - *"It's almost to a point they're not willing to date any female midshipmen. 'We're going to go after civilian girls.' It's a constant thread on the Yik Yak."* (Female)
  - *"They're going to prevent the situation all together by not interacting."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the increased proportion of women at the Academy might have contributed to the decrease in USC rates for women.** [26]
  - *"I think what would help as well is the increased population of females. I can't prove it, but I'm pretty certain that more women are being accepted in each cycle, and that's just getting the male population used to having to deal with a less intense environment."* (Male)

[26] Midshipmen were correct in stating that in 2014 there were more women at USNA (962) than in 2012 (874). The increase represents 21.6% of the population in 2014 versus 19.7% in 2012.

- **Some midshipmen indicated the increased emphasis on prevention by leadership in 2012 might have contributed to the lower rates of USC.**
  - *"The CNO coming to speak to us in '12 [February 2013]. They stood up more watches, so people were on watch more."* (Male)
  - *"I personally have seen a huge change in the culture. Like our firsties, at least in my company, the class of 2012 were very much, I don't want to say a boys club, but there was definitely like a fraternal culture. And then that's when grew up in plebe year and then we got smacked in the face with all this SAPR stuff. For better, I think it's turned out for better, even though it was a really painful process. Because nowadays we're much less accepting of a lot of the stuff that used to go on. Which in hindsight was pretty borderline with being inappropriate. That's not a big deal in and of itself, but I could definitely see how it caused some of the incidents that happened in the past and that's why the number has gone down, in my opinion. I do believe there has been a decrease in incidents and that's because the culture has become more relaxed in some ways for sure and a transition away from this. It's become less of a fraternity atmosphere."* (Male)
  - *"We haven't been here since 2010, but I can tell from what I understand, we've been getting a ton of briefs on sexual assault prevention business, pretty much since the first few days of plebe summer all the way up until now. So I think it's just becoming a much more prevalent issue. I'm aware of it now. As opposed to before maybe nobody thought about it perhaps."* (Male)
  - *"It's not really an afterthought. It's almost day one it's something that's really harped on, that this is something we're going to take serious and we're going to continue to take seriously. I think while midshipmen are going to be cynical about things we're forced to do, I do think that a lot of the briefs in the training sessions we've been doing are helping to cause that downward trend."* (Male)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[27]

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the majority of experiences of USC for men may involve "locker room" type behavior.**
  - *"That sounds pretty spot on [the percentages of USC involving hazing and locker room behavior]. You hear about that kind of stuff happening."* (Female)
  - *"I think that men are less likely to think that a contact has been taken too far just in our general psychology. I don't mean to jump ahead or anything, but more than half of those incidents are in a locker room where something has been taken just a little bit too far. So I think that's what is mostly being reported there. But the rates for women, I feel they are having more monumentous experiences when it's happening to them. So men are less likely to report it then."* (Male)

[27]See Appendix E, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USNA Men" for the details shared with participants

- *"It sounds like the basic male dominance, show who's stronger, who's in charge. I hear it all the time. We kind of accept it. We're like, they're doing their thing, they're guys. Let them be because you don't want to step in on that really."* (Female)

- *"I think the fact that the locker room antics is the highest makes sense. People come from different backgrounds, especially men, and what was acceptable in the locker room on my high school team is something that wouldn't be acceptable here. But not everyone had the same frame of reference."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated this type of behavior is part of tradition or initiation.**

  - *"I think it would be varsity athletes. [Described behaviors expected of plebes] So that would definitely be a hazing initiation, horse play, locker room."* (Male)

  - *"I know certain companies have initiation things that they make males do. Hopefully it's something that they would volunteer for and be asked to do, but I don't know if that's the case. But I know that that happens."* (Male)

  - *"I know some of these things are a rite of passage almost. And if somebody were to speak up and say 'No, this isn't right,' the team would look badly on them because most likely the upperclassmen went through the same thing. It's a kind of tradition that goes on. It's not really addressed ever, it just happens."* (Female)

  - *"They consider it a tradition a lot of what they're doing. We had some grad from forever ago tell us stories of what they used to do. Like they used to chase around the smallest guy, the smallest plebe in the room, he had to be stripped naked and run up and down the hallways before women were at the Academy. And they used to stick their finger in light bulb sockets and see if they'd get shocked. He said this with a smile on his face, like kind of expect it to keep going. So when they come back and talk with the guys and have a cigar with them, that's the traditions they're passing on."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that their training does not address all of these types of "locker room" behaviors.**

  - *"The two biggest numbers as far as there being more popular than the other ones makes sense to me, hazing and initiation rites, has been a really big deal at the Academy that we talk about a lot, trying to avoid it and everything. So I think there's a lot of awareness about that. I think those two categories, the horseplay, locker room behavior and placing the genitalia on them, are things that some guys might think are socially acceptable to other guys. They might see it in movies, TV shows, video games, so they might think it's okay but it's not to the other person. I think that that's not really something that we talk directly about in SHAPE, but I feel should be assumed based off of what we talk about. But maybe needs more attention just so that people get the message of what is right and what is not acceptable."* (Female)

- *"I think most of the trainings we go to, it's mostly rape or sexual assault between a male and female, not really same sex or on your team or something. It's mostly preventing, they're trying to protect females in the training that we do."* (Female)

Changes noted by upperclassmen

- **Upperclass midshipmen indicated the emphasis by Navy senior leadership affected USC rates.**
  - *"I think it's a pretty similar trend as what the statistics show in that we came in and it was a big deal, and then it got a little progressively worse when they had the CNO come and scold us. And I think it's definitely, it has decreased since then."* (Male)
  - *"Our youngster year [sophomore], it was a reform our youngster year. And it definitely changed the dynamic and the thought process around SAPR in I would say a negative way. Because there was such an emphasis on the numbers and how this shouldn't be happening and speaking down to the brigade as a whole because we were gathered as a brigade at that time, instead of saying how can we fix this. Here's a problem, we see it's a problem, we're letting you know it's a problem and this problem exists. We don't necessarily know what happens to each other, what each other experiences, but how it was approached definitely changed the mindset towards a lot of this."* (Female)
  - *"It was a very negative visit [CNO address in February 2013]. And SAPR at the time was generally just pretty negative. And especially from the males, you could tell they just hated going to the meetings and stuff. And they kind of felt attacked, like 'I'm not raping anybody.' But I think it's gradually moved towards being more positive, like 'It's, okay, what can you do to prevent other people from attacking your shipmates, versus why is everybody at this school raping each other?'"* (Female)
- **Upperclass midshipmen indicated a change in culture over the years that might have affected USC rates.**
  - *"I'd say there's been a cultural change more so between the academic year 2011/2012 up until this year. What I experienced as a plebe is really different than what a plebe female in my squad might experience this year. I don't know if unwanted sexual contact rates are attributable to that, but I do think there has been cultural change."* (Female)
- **Upperclass midshipmen indicated that increased disciplinary action might have affected USC rates.**
  - *"I think there's been more disciplinary action as well. If something happened we hear about it more often than maybe we used to, and people are more wary than something they might have otherwise done in previous years."* (Female)
  - *"I don't know so much about actual acts occurring, but because of all the cases that have happened and the disciplinary action, there's a lot more attention on it. And*

people are more afraid of it because they know if you do something like that, it's highlighted right now, pick something else to do wrong." (Female)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[28]

- **Some midshipmen indicated that alcohol was involved in some incidents of USC.**
  - *"I think it's a factor. I don't want to say most, but I think a lot of the incidents are alcohol related."* (Male)
  - *"Sure, there is a role. I think even if you are drinking you're still going to have these thoughts. Like remember your SAPR training and all. Because they really take that seriously here, and nobody is going to forget that, even if you have been drinking. But at the same time I think you could definitely see a correlation between the number of alcohol related incidents and sexual assault incidents. Not necessarily the majority of the cases, but certainly a number of them have alcohol involved in them."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen were not sure anyone would use alcohol to facilitate having sex.**
  - *"Well, I don't know, I think it can go either way. I know alcohol does lower your judgment, impairs your judgment, so it can be opportunistic or trying to get someone else drunk to take advantage of them. I think it goes both ways."* (Male)
  - *"I think here alcohol and sexual incidents are more a correlation, not causation. I think that if you were to force everyone and the whole campus to be dry, I think people would still have sexual assault issues and sexual harassment issues. So, I think they're correlated but I don't think they are directly."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like at the Naval Academy a lot of our training now really reflects the wingman. That's supposed to prevent something like that. You have somebody looking out for you, so even if somebody had a premeditated thought process [purposely using alcohol to facilitate having sex], if you had a good wingman they'd steer you clear of those dangers."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the Commandant has taken positive actions with regard to use of alcohol.**
  - *"I think Captain Byrne has just done an unprecedentedly phenomenal job with handling alcohol. And he's done that through a couple of different ways. They changed the midshipman regulation so it gets rid of these completely arbitrary numbers. This number game of 'Oh, if you're breathalyzed and you blow above such and such we're going to fry you for such and such.' Also, and more subtly so, he goes to different events. Like there was a surface warfare social earlier in the year. He was at our service selection dinner. He drinks at these events in front of all the*

[28] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.

midshipmen. By doing so he's modeling responsible drinking behavior. Whereas our previous Commandant would always say, 'If you get in trouble, just call me.' And it would ring so horribly untrue, just false. And our new Commandant doesn't try to say anything like that, because it would be ridiculous to actually think that of all people you would call the Commandant." (Male)

- *"I think the Commandant has done a good job of emphasizing group cohesion when you go out drinking taking care of your buddies. Because there is not really a presence of DTA [downtown Annapolis], but we don't have the same exposure to alcohol as in a civilian school, like freshmen year where you're absorbed by it. We're also going to be presented into more dangerous situations like training in Thailand or some other foreign nations. We have a much limited window to try to get accustomed, so I think it's useful to start learning how to protect; stay at a safe level, keep everyone safe."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated there are not many resources for someone to help them with drinking behaviors.**
  - *"I don't think there is a lot of help for people who are in the middle ground. Like if someone realizes they are an alcoholic and they want to get help, they are good to go. But if someone thinks that they are irresponsibly drinking and they are not comfortable enough with their shipmates to go and ask them, or their shipmates aren't 21, I don't think there is a lot of places to get professional help. 'All right, I need to learn how to find my limit and stuff.'"* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated the wingman program is good with respect to addressing use of alcohol.**
  - *"I think the wingman campaign they have had has done a really good job of encompassing bystander intervention."* (Male)
  - *"A big part of that emphasis is on the wingman mentality. They are really focusing on not just the person who is getting in trouble, not the guy who gets in a drunk brawl, but the buddies he was with that allowed that to happen. I think by focusing on that wingman mentality is helping with alcohol-related sexual assault cases."* (Male)
  - *"I think they almost punish the wingman as bad as the perpetrator because it's their responsibility to watch over who they are with. I think it is working. Because guys and girls are realizing that it's more their responsibility to help keep their friends out of trouble if they are there."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated alcohol can be used as an excuse for bad behavior.**
  - *"I feel alcohol is used as an excuse. 'Oh, I was really drunk so I didn't mean to hurt you like that.' If you get yourself to a point you can't control yourself or that's what you do when you can't control yourself, it makes me feel a little weird."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated use of alcohol is part of the Academy culture, similar to some other colleges.**
  - *"I think it's a huge part of it because it's part of our culture. We're pent up here through Thursday and you're allowed to go out on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning. That's the main time frame you can drink. A lot of people probably drink more than they should, more than they can handle so they go past their limits and that's when a lot of stuff happens."* (Female)
  - *"I think midshipmen, we're not treated like adults as much as we would like to be. So when we get freedom a lot of times it's binge drinking. Midshipmen binge drink, it's part of the culture."* (Female)
  - *"We're only given so many hours of liberty, it just happens, it's when people are drinking. If we were given more [liberty], more incidents would happen when people aren't drinking."* (Female)
  - *"If you would compare it to another college I think it's hard to say it's worse here than at another place."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that proximity to an urban area does not necessarily contribute to access to alcohol.**
  - *"I think definitely it causes a lot more mids to be in one spot, but I wouldn't say that it makes them more inclined. Honestly I think mids would find alcohol. I don't think being close really gives people more of a reason to drink. They're going to go out and find places to drink. Only thing I think it's better because you have the bars right here, then you come right back to school. I think it helps."* (Female)
  - *"If you really want alcohol you'll go out and find it."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that proximity to an urban area reduces the need to depend on someone for help getting back on campus.**
  - *"I think being so close to the bars provides a different set of issues because you know at the end of the night you're going to get back. But somewhere like Air Force where you can give a dooley [freshman] your keys and say, 'You can be my DD [designated driver],' that also creates a whole other host of issues for that Academy. So we have our own separate issues. I know at the end of the night I either have to be able to get through the gate on my own two feet. I may drink too much but I know that that has to be the end result, whereas at the Air Force I have to be able to get in the car. So I think it's different issues in different places."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that proximity to an urban area reduces exposure to people other than midshipmen.**
  - *"There's also a social aspect too. We can go out and DTA in bars and there's other midshipmen. There's also other people, but it's majority midshipmen, whereas I have*

friends at West Point, Air Force and they travel to other colleges, to big cities, they travel to all these areas where they might be drinking, but it's not with necessarily one another, which can either be positive or negative. It just depends on the situation." (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that alcohol is used to reduce the stress of Academy life and that might lead to inappropriate behaviors happening.**
  - *"When all of us are in our old mental capacity going around, that's a really loud thought in our minds is all the training and all the consequences of if we slip up and do something like that. I would think at least it would take something like going out and drinking to quiet that a little bit enough where the possibility that you would weigh the cost and benefit to where you think it would be okay to do it. The consequences would be so loud in your mind that you would be able to forget about them a night and go do something like that."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they believe the Academy's policies on alcohol use are changing.**
  - *"The alcohol policies are lightning up. So it would be interesting to see the numbers the next survey. The youngsters aren't getting breathalyzed any more on Saturdays. And they don't have rules where if you come back and blow a certain level then you are awarded a certain punishment. It's like you can be really drunk, just don't cause a problem."* (Male)
  - *"It's putting a lot more personal responsibility on people that they are not going to be babying us as much about it. But at the same time then if we do get caught crossing that line, they are going to come down a little bit harder than they would have maybe in the past."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated their training emphasizes that an offender would be punished even if both parties had been drinking.**
  - *"It's emphasized a lot in the trainings even if both parties are drinking, the person who commits an offense is still the one that's going to get held accountable. Some might [also be punished], but I don't think that's the attitude that's being pushed down from the training."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated their SHAPE training helps make them aware of how alcohol impacts consent.**
  - *"I think the SHAPE sessions make you more leery of having sex with someone who's intoxicated. They tell you that you should be like completely sure that they're able to give you consent. So if you're intoxicated then you can't really give that consent. I think that's the way midshipmen are really cautious about because of the SHAPE training."* (Female)

- *"I think honestly that's one of our big things that our SHAPE sessions do address. I don't think anyone who's been through the SHAPE sessions would go out with the intention I'm going to get this girl drunk and do this. That's exactly what they're afraid of."* (Female)

Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates[29]

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the rate of perceived sexual harassment for women might have gone down with the emphasis on reducing inappropriate comments.**
  - *"Our plebe year three years ago you could say things, jokes. We just don't do it in our company any more. We just don't have jokes at tables anymore because they were almost always inappropriate, whether a sexual nature or racist or whatever. But it's kind of a purge, a change in that. I don't know if it's yet gotten to the point where people are positive in their talk because it's the right thing to do or if it's just still enforced really well by the senior class."* (Female)
  - *"We've been fostering a pretty open environment where people are encouraged to speak out about things that happen to them. So it's probably just overall a cultural shift towards awareness and be more sensitive. And probably the SAPR training and all the sexual trainings we get, that could explain the shift downward."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the increase in the proportion of women at the Academy and their qualifications might have influenced the rate of perceived sexual harassment.**
  - *"In my leadership class we were talking to one of my professors and he shared with us that the women that apply to the Naval Academy are more qualified than the men. And he also said that the numbers just reflect the number of applicants that apply. So I think that with more women applying to the Academy and the fact they are extremely qualified, I think that definitely attributes to the change in numbers. Just having the culture of qualified women here."* (Female)
  - *"I wasn't here in 2012 so I can't really speak on that statistic then and how it's changed. But I think that part of what might be contributing to the lower numbers is that in social media there's more awareness of society wanting strong women to be respected when they deserve it. And so I know that women and men demanding that respect for people who are working hard and everything is coming to the Naval Academy as well."* (Female)

[29] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 44% of women experienced perceived sexual harassment (17 percentage points lower than 2012) and 9% of men experienced perceived sexual harassment (unchanged from 2012)

Discussion of sexist behavior rates[30]

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the emphasis on eliminating inappropriate behaviors and comments has affected the rates of sexist behaviors.**
  - *"Depending on how people grew up, they were exposed to more and there are other people that are more sensitive towards that. I think the fact it's really being shown as an issue, the people that are using it are not intending to talk down on people, but just using it as conversational stuff, because that's what they are used to. I think they are starting to realize, okay, even though I don't necessarily see that as being offensive or something, there are enough people around here that do and it's getting cracked down upon. It's not worth to potentially get busted for something like that. Especially when they don't mean any harm by it."* (Male)

Reporting

Midshipmen were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix E, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Midshipmen discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Midshipmen were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more midshipmen to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with midshipmen providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some midshipmen indicated they <u>had</u> seen the number of official reports before.**
  - *"Yeah, I think they mentioned it before."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like they've shown them on briefs and slides before."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they had <u>not</u> seen the numbers before.**
  - *"No."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think so. I remember, I think it was 2012 when the CNO came and spoke at our Academy, I do remember a statistic, it was somewhere in the 50's with these reports. So obviously much lower."* (Male)
  - *"I hadn't seen them."* (Male)

[30] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 86% of women perceived experiencing sexist behavior (8 percentage points lower than 2012) and 36% of men perceived experiencing sexist behavior (10 percentage points lower than 2012).

- **Some midshipmen indicated the number of reports was lower than expected.**
  - *"Relatively low compared to most other colleges. One could be the caliber of people here."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like it's always going to be that low even though no matter how many times they say don't be afraid to come out and let everyone know you need help, something's going on, but still you can't change the person's feeling if they want to let someone know about it or if they want to keep it to themselves."* (Female)
  - *"There's probably more that people don't report. That's always the case. You have to consider when you're talking about sexual assault or sexual harassment there's probably other cases that are not reported, either restricted or unrestricted."* (Female)
  - *"I almost think it should be a higher percent coming forward in the Naval Academy or in the military because I feel like there's not as many programs and everything that are made available in the workplace in the civilian sector as we do have here. We make sure that's very important that everyone is aware of how to help others and how to get help if you experience one of these. So I would expect it to have a higher percentage of people coming forward than in the civilian sector actually."* (Female)
  - *"I agree. We have so many resources on so many levels."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated the number of reports was in line with their expectations.**
  - *"They are about what I would expect."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they were in favor of releasing reporting statistics to midshipmen.**
  - *"I think that's easily something they could throw into one of our many SAPR trainings. I mean I don't think it would hurt to know."* (Female)
  - *"I think the percentages are a better thing to tell mids rather than the numbers. I know I'm not perfect, but when you see the numbers, do I know these people, in your mind maybe, who is this? Whereas the percentage is like, okay, now I'm not alone. More curiosity rather than thinking of the actual issue."* (Female)
  - *"They don't really tell us outright. I think that's one of those things you might hear about if it was a close friend of yours or something, if they want to share it. But they don't go around as much necessarily saying, 'Oh, there was a report this weekend of someone that got sexually abused.' They don't really do that as much."* (Male)
  - *"I think it's a good idea. It shows that people utilize the services available. And I think if someone sees that other people have done it before them are more willing to come forward about it."* (Female)

- *"I think the communication with us is very poor. No one really tells you how much is going on. It's very gossip heavy. You'll hear like a case is going on, but you won't hear how it's concluded."* (Mixed-Gender Session)[31]

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some midshipmen agreed that Academy leadership encourages reporting.**
  - *"Definitely."* (Male)
  - *"Yeah. It's been one of the biggest pushes the programs here have made. I mean I'm sure you could go find any random midshipman, ask him the avenues of sexual assault reporting, and they could riddle them off verbatim. They drill that into you."* (Male)
  - *"[They encourage reporting by] always asking about you, always company officers and senior enlisted leaders are like 'It's an open door policy,' they make it very well known if there is ever anything, 'Don't hesitate to come by.'"* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they receive guidance on SAPR issues from fellow midshipmen.**
  - *"I came back from spring break, I know it was through an email, but I thought it was pretty surprising that one of our upperclassmen said if anybody experienced some kind of a SAPR-related incident please report it. If you have that need, restricted or unrestricted, I think that's pretty interesting but we didn't make the effort to do that. I don't think that necessarily came from our CO but just an upperclassman. That was a concern because spring break is crazy. Anything can happen actually."* (Female)
  - *"It's treated more like an open door policy, if this happens you can come to me, but you don't have to kind of thing."* (Female)
  - *"I know there's a few [upperclassmen] that are noticeably, they're more genuine. They have the initiative to make the positive changes and the other ones are like, check the box and mention it because they have to and never mention it ever again."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they receive guidance on reporting from all levels of leadership.**
  - *"We have things such as midshipmen, company officers, senior enlisted, and then up through the staff here, some of the senior levels. They all echo the same thing."* (Male)
  - *"Yeah."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

[31] At USNA the gender of the speaker was not recorded in the mixed-gender session of midshipmen.

- *"Everyone."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
- *"I think everyone really. Yeah, they really encourage reporting."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they are encouraged to report by role models in senior leadership positions.**
  - *"My company officer, he was a former infantry enlisted marine and now he's an officer. He talks to us about the older culture of hiding it and pushing it under the rug. And he always talks to us like being better and changing things, and you have to report it and to create a change."* (Female)
  - *"Our SEL has come and talked to us about her experience. She was harassed as a chief and she's been a victim advocate in the fleet, so that's her attempt to, like this has happened to me too, so if you need someone to talk to. She's very personable about that."* (Female)
  - *"My company officer talked to us about how at the Naval Academy we're formed leaders here so if we don't report something then a lot of times that person is going to go out and eventually lead sailors and marines and something may happen to those that work with them in the future."* (Female)
  - *"I want to say that comes directly from our company tight knit leadership. It's all included in training and it's repeated."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated concern that leadership cannot ensure their privacy during the reporting process.**
  - *"There are 200 girls maybe in our class and I could probably with a tiny bit of information figure out, A) exactly what happened and B) who it happened to. And it might take me hours if I wasn't trying to figure it out. So I think it's, sometimes so much is, they want to cover their asses and, hey, we're telling you stuff but stuff doesn't need to be shared with everyone. Yeah, you want to help everyone avoid certain pitfalls or things that may happen. It completely negatively impacts whether it's reporting or repercussion, stuff like that. Because with a very small amount of information you can very quickly figure out what happened."* (Female)
  - *"I think it's a product of midshipmen wanting to take on the leadership roles and feeling entitled to information. Like with conduct cases here we publish them, you can read what happened and try to learn from it. We do so much of that, we feel entitled to information. So whereas some people might not want to know that information, I don't want to know what happened to that girl, I respect her privacy. I don't want to know what happened to the midshipman who passed away. But other people are curious, and it's nothing on them but they're going to find that out and they feel entitled to that information and can get access to it."* (Female)
  - *"I think privacy is a big issue, that people don't want to know, don't want to let other people know what has happened to them. They would prefer to keep it to themselves*

and deal with the consequences of it by themselves rather than getting or having the possibility of retaliation." (Female)

- **Most midshipmen describe being familiar with restricted and unrestricted reporting, but less familiar with formal and informal reporting of sexual harassment.**
  - *"Yeah."* (Male)
  - *"I don't know the difference between a formal and informal complaint, but restricted and unrestricted, yes."* (Male)
  - *"They are really clear on restricted and unrestricted, but I didn't know the difference between formal and informal is for a sexual harassment complaint."* (Male)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report to avoid upsetting the cohesiveness of their group.**
  - *"Fear. If the person is higher up than them, that the perpetrator, is higher ranking, or even if the person is the same level as them, it's a very tight group, they don't want to bust up the group or anything."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report in order to protect their privacy.**
  - *"Part of that might be the private people not wanting to report. People here can be pretty private."* (Male)
  - *"I assume it would be hard to hide the publicity of it within the Hall. Once something gets out, usually rumors get spread fast. So I can imagine someone wouldn't want that much attention on them, especially in a situation like that. Just brings unwanted publicity."* (Male)
  - *"People don't mind their own business, they want to know what everyone's up to."* (Female)
  - *"There's no such thing as privacy here. If something, if an event like that occurred in your life and you took action, I don't believe your privacy would be protected. We're in such close quarters."* (Female)
  - *"Even if it wasn't, let's say you were sexually harassed or assaulted not even by a mid, I don't think I would want the guys in my company knowing about it. I just would want to keep it quiet and not have it out there."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report in order to prevent rumors from spreading.**
  - *"It's really hard to stop rumors from spreading."* (Female)
  - *"Males might be too embarrassed to talk about what's going on because word spreads like wildfire, they're not going to look at you the same. They're going to be talking, did you hear what happened to so and so. And what should have or could have been kept to yourself if it happened, it's not yours anymore, it's for everybody to talk about."* (Female)
  - *"We're always worried what upperclassmen are looking towards us as. They're responsible for our rankings and because they've been here longer, closer to the chain of command. The plebe girls go to the chief or company officer for something. Obviously the chief and company officer, he has constant relations with the company commander, the executive officer. I feel like it's going to be shared with them, fourth class so and so did this. It will just spread like wildfire. Even though we're trained to trust our chain of command, especially with the officer and chief level I still feel we have the worry it's going to the spread to the midshipmen somehow."* (Female)
  - *"When someone does report, there is like a pretty heavy gossip mill. And especially if someone is going to get in trouble for it, there is going to be a lot of people that will be really upset. So I think people probably feel like it would be just easier to not do it."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"Nothing stays quiet. We are in such a confined area that once one little part comes out people want to know. And the whole curiosity thing we were saying earlier, people don't really more or less care about the situation, but was it really that bad, was it this, it's just, like I've never experienced it but I think it becomes your life, that incident. It just takes over like everything."* (Female)
  - *"Bancroft Hall is like 4,000 people. If you don't know someone, you know them indirectly. It's like if there is a juicy piece of gossip, it's going to go through everyone. You have no idea what you're going to get. I think there's a fear of that, like what are people going to think."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report for concern that rumors will follow them into the fleet.**
  - *"We know that our firsties are going to be in the fleet when we get there. If something happens to us now they're going to remember that. When we get out there they might be gossiping about us. So we know what happens here won't stay here. The people that happens to now we'll be with in another four years."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report for concern about the impact on their reputation.**
  - *"I think as females in the Academy we don't fit in right away because there's not as many of us. So when we are perceived as weak almost, we don't want to report it because then everybody knows about it. Everybody thinks you're not strong enough to handle something like that. So I think that's why most females wouldn't report it. And then males maybe just because they're embarrassed it happened to them."* (Female)
  - *"It's possible to get a bad rep from it. You say something, you get labeled as the whistle blower or something. And then people just kind of stay away from that person like they have got the plague. I've never seen it before, but it's definitely a possibility."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report for fear of not being believed.**
  - *"I know a good percentage of the people who find out about it would think I was making it up or exaggerating or wouldn't take it seriously. Then obviously that would really hurt my reputation and my standing in my company and everything like that."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that some people do not report out of shame or embarrassment.**
  - *"I feel like people don't want other people to know that that happened to them. It's kind of like a privacy thing where they're embarrassed, humiliated in some way."* (Female)
  - *"Embarrassment."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the time demands of the reporting process discourage reporting.**
  - *"I think the sheer inconvenience of reporting within like this huge bureaucracy. I haven't been in the situation so I don't know if someone would feel like overwhelmingly they should report something. But I know for me running around busy all day, so it's not convenient, it takes time."* (Female)
  - *"It's a long process, it's not something that takes a week and then you're done. People would rather forget about it, maybe talk to a close friend for a week and then you're done, versus you have to talk to the company officer and SAPR office. By the time you've been thinking about it for four months."* (Female)
  - *"I think there is a lot of stress around here already with things you're dealing with day to day. I think some people might see the reporting process and going to see all these higher ups and people about it as just another thing on the list that they don't*

necessarily want to have to deal with. Because I've never dealt with it personally, but I would imagine it's not as easy as you sit down with someone and just like, 'Hey, this happened, how can I get better?' I imagine it's more of a process than that." (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they might not report if they believed they could resolve the incident themselves.**
  - *"If it repeated, if you were unable to stop it. But if you were able to stop it and solve the problem yourself, there would be no need to get anything else involved."* (Male)
  - *"If it wasn't mid with mid, if it was outside the Academy, then they are more likely to just handle it themselves, which is scary a little bit. But they don't feel like they need to report and go through all that hassle."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
- **Some midshipmen indicated there is a belief that no action would result from reporting a sexual assault.**
  - *"There's a really strong belief that nothing's going to happen if you report. You find out a few months later did anything happen, no. Or nothing happened, they went to trial and they were not guilty."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that, while leadership encourages reporting, the consequences affect life as a midshipman.**
  - *"I think it's just interesting because we're like inundated with all this information about how to report and we should report and stuff. But then whenever someone does report, the news gets a hold of it, the midshipmen always seems to say like I felt a lot of pressure to sweep it under the rug and stuff like that. So I think, yeah, the higher ups are encouraging us to report anything, but at the same time I think there is some peer pressure sort of maybe discouraging that. Because these reports have a direct effect on our lives here and some would say quality of life."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that sexual assault survivors may seek to avoid re-living trauma during an investigation.**
  - *"One of the reasons I might be hesitant is because it's a traumatic experience and reporting it is something that requires you to relive in front of multiple people the incident a number of times. That's a really stressful thing for a lot people and it's not something you want to do. That's a lot to ask about someone. Or ask from someone. It's a lot easier just to push that back and say it didn't happen, didn't happen. Reporting requires a lot of personal courage."* (Male)
  - *"All the attention. Even your emotional state, knowing that people don't believe you, that's really rough [to have to go through describing the incident]."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that men are reluctant to speak up about behaviors that are offensive to them.**
  - *"I feel like the male, if you're on the team and you see everybody doing it but you're uncomfortable with it, it makes you not want to go. You don't want to be the guy to say 'Hey, I don't feel good about this.' It's like be part of the team, what are you doing, everybody's doing it. They don't want to bring their team down. They barely say what they feel. For us females we say 'Don't touch my boob, I don't like that.' But I feel guys barely say what they feel."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that men may be more reluctant to report if alcohol was involved.**
  - *"If something happened to me personally and I was drinking and doing stuff I wasn't supposed to, I would be extremely hesitant to report it out of fear of repercussions for me."* (Male)
  - *"There have been several instances of stories where someone might have done something and they handled the situation maybe as best they could give the circumstances, but because they were maybe drunk at the time, they still got awarded some punishment that didn't necessarily seem fair due to the fact that they did what they could, they got put on the horns of the situation. I think that scares some people."* (Male)
  - *"If I was in a situation where I had been drinking and I know I was not supposed to be drinking, and something happened to me, I would be definitely be hesitant about reporting it. The credibility, the self-doubt. How complicit was I in whatever act took place, how do I know people are going to believe me if I knew I was impaired at the time of the incident. I definitely think that's going to be a concern in the victim's mind, like how sure am I? How sure can I be that this actually happened?"* (Male)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some midshipmen indicated that an expectation of stopping multiple incidents by the same offender might encourage reporting.**
  - *"Like if you see something happen or something is done against you, and you're unsure if you want to report it, but you know it's probably likely that it will happen again, yeah, I think that would make me want to report it, because then you're opening the flood gates for future incidents."* (Male)
  - *"And self-defense. You're protecting yourself at that point. You actually see a gain you get out of it other than with this other person."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they would be motivated to report by the knowledge that repeat offenders were also likely multiple-victim offenders.**
  - *"Yes, I think it actually happened to a friend of mine. Situation came up, repeat offender. And then something came to light that this individual had been doing this to other females. And she said 'I thought I was the only one. Because I didn't speak up it carried forward.' So more than likely she was not the first that happened to, not the only one that she knew. So I think it's up to everybody, if you get that first initial message to contact somebody on a first offense so it can stop perpetuating more in the future. It's just everybody's too afraid to stand up and think it's just me or I'm getting picked on. You don't realize it might not just be you, there might be other people in the same situation too afraid to speak up."* (Female)
  - *"I definitely think people would be more likely to report, because it wouldn't make sense not to report that. If they report and it stops the behavior, then why not? I think the reason that some people experience multiple offenses because they don't report. Because if they did, then the Academy I feel would take the proper avenue to stop that behavior."* (Male)
  - *"I think that definitely needs to be highlighted more. Because I think if anything that's like the most important part of reporting because something has already happened to you and you can't go back in time, but you can definitely prevent it from happening to someone else. And I think that is probably the most important message."* (Female)
  - *"If I was one of those people that was getting several incidents over and over again, then I would probably feel trapped or helpless that it's not going to stop. So maybe if you make a formal account or whatever, then it will be stopped by some authority, or at least you could talk to the right people to maybe get away from that person."* (Female)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some midshipmen indicated people would report for some outcome, such as receiving help, seeking punishment of the offender, moving away from the offender, or seeking closure.**
  - *"I think if you decide to report, as opposed to not reporting it, you're obviously looking for something to get out of it. You're looking either for whoever had maybe done something to you for there to be punishment, some sort of ramification. Or just maybe for help that you need personally. But there is like some goal in mind."* (Male)
  - *"Unless you've already had that dialogue with the perpetrator and then you have like repeat offenses, then that's definite would be an incentive for someone to report."* (Male)

- *"A person is in the same company as the person who might have conducted the inappropriate behavior, if they report it, then they might be able to switch to a different company, get away from that person. So I know somebody who has done that and it worked out for the better for them."* (Male)

- *"I know I would be embarrassed, so I would want to make sure that justice is done and that I get the help I need. But I wouldn't want to broadcast it. If I knew my confidentiality was protected, then I would be more apt to report."* (Male)

- *"The two big battles inside of me would be, one, I want this person to be in trouble for that. Maybe they need to learn or I want them punished for it and not to have them do that again. The other side, me not to be a victim again from the standpoint of like reporting and going through that whole process. And I think it's important not to pressure victims into reporting. I think the standpoint of saying this is what is available to you and not saying, if this happens to you, you need to report. That would not be a very good atmosphere honestly, having people pressuring you into reporting. Because it's a personal choice, it's like what is for you because you are the victim."* (Female)

- *"For closure for themselves."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicate they might report to protect others.**

  - *"I would say to make sure it doesn't happen again to someone else."* (Female)

  - *"I feel like the people that are, it's not one person assaulting one person once. It's one person that does it to multiple people. I feel like that if something awful happened to me make sure it doesn't happen to anyone else."* (Female)

- **Some upperclass midshipmen indicated they would advise a freshman to report, but they might work with other midshipmen to handle the situation by talking to the offender.**

  - *"I feel like if a plebe came up to me and told me something, versus a second class, I would be way more likely to have the plebe, like encourage them to report it. Rather than the second class or my friend, then I would probably go through the thought process of, well, the main thing we want to do is make sure he doesn't do it again, can we accomplish that by going and talking to the person. I don't want a plebe going and talking to their attacker and being like, 'Hey, this is what you did.'"* (Mixed-Gender Session)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some midshipmen felt that assurances that survivors of USC will be physically separated from their alleged abuser might encourage reporting.**

  - *"I think if someone reports, then they should immediately be pulled from that work environment, especially if they feel threatened. They should be given some type of*

assurance that they will never have to work with that person again, if they don't want to. Or if they want to switch workplaces, they should be allowed to. If they want to." (Male)

- *"Isn't it the case that the restricted report doesn't attempt to punish the perpetrator or remove them from like the environment. Maybe if there was one in between, it seems another one. But so that the victim's anonymity is maintained, but the person who sexually assaulted them is still gone after to ensure that they don't sexually assault any more people."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that being informed about the outcome and nuances of cases would encourage reporting.**
  - *"I think the very public case with the football players and the one midshipman, the fact that we didn't hear how that ended and everyone knew the details, you could look it up on the news and we just knew that the charges got dropped. That made me personally at least lose faith with the leadership and with reporting. I understand that it's a privacy thing, but it looks like they just completely rejected that female mid and they just let it to the legal system. So it's like, well, if I'm not going to be backed by my command, then I'm not going to report it."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"What never happens is the institution of the Naval Academy comes out and says, 'This case went on and this is the conclusion of the case.' So there is never a formal announcement from the Naval Academy to our own people. You just have to find out on your own through other, perhaps, public sources and things like that. We're always told the number of cases. We're not necessarily told the number of, I don't know if convictions is the right word. We're not told, okay, there were ten cases and nine of them were found guilty. I think that adds an air of mystery to it."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"I definitely think that's probably for a purpose in that someone can be found not guilty, but that doesn't necessarily mean the act did not occur. And so I think that's probably with respect to that victim, especially if they still go to school here. Because just imagine sitting in a brief saying, 'Oh, this person got found not guilty,' when you know it was just a matter of the prosecution."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen felt that victim blaming would be reduced if "legal acquittal is not the same as it didn't happen" was emphasized in training.**
  - *"I just think that there has definitely been a shift. I guess it's sort of male anxiety that's being exampled here. I feel like now men are more likely to think that, 'Oh, that's a false accuser,' than it was my freshman year. I think I first saw that example earlier this year when someone asked is there an offenders' advocate. Like we have a victims' advocate. I think the only way to combat that is to be more honest with the male midshipmen, show them, if it's true that false accusations only happen one in a million times, show them that. Really show them that even though it's legally not*

confirmed guilty, it most likely still happened and it's not a false accusation." (Mixed-Gender Session)

- *"Despite of all the education we receive, false accusations is the biggest kind of like gaping hole in misunderstanding of sexual assault that we have in the Academy."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated anonymity via the Internet/social media might assist in some midshipmen coming forward for help.**
  - *"As far as maybe having people, getting the help they need, but they don't feel like they can. Maybe have a system like Yik Yak, except not public, where they can send in a message or whatever that is anonymous, that they can chat with an advocate or something."* (Female)
  - *"Talking on the phone or going and seeing someone in person might be intimidating to them and make them feel vulnerable or in danger of being ostracized. If there's a way to type out and anonymously send it electronically they might feel safer because our generation is used to that."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the culture of victim blaming is changing.**
  - *"I think we're on the trajectory [addressing victim blaming attitudes]. It's not something that somebody can stand up and look down from top down and change it. It's a culture change that needs to happen. There's nothing that, you can't order somebody's judgment. I feel like it's not something that can immediately change. It's not going to change in five years, but if we keep the trajectory we're on the stats are going down. We'll see next year if that's true. But eventually a culture change will come about where that diminishes."* (Female)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on

training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].

2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a midshipman would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some midshipmen indicated they believe ostracism is the most common form of retaliation for reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"I think [the most] prevalent form of retaliation would be just ostracism. 95 percent of the time."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that ostracism occurs at the Academy, especially as people become uncomfortable around someone who reported sexual assault.**
  - *"I feel like it would be pretty well known. There might be some sort ostracizing."* (Male)
  - *"Sometimes people just don't know how to act around others. So sometimes if something happens, that person is uncomfortable around them."* (Male)
  - *"Could be even like a subconscious ostracism. Like people don't realize they are treating a person differently, but it's bound to happen."* (Male)
  - *"Now you suddenly realize how uncomfortable this person has been in certain situations, you don't know if anything you do is going to make them uncomfortable, you're just worried, you don't want something to be called against you, and you just treat them differently because of that. Might be happening."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated types of behaviors they believe are associated with ostracism.**
  - *"People would stop talking to you and avoid you because they're afraid if they were trying to interact with you might report them too because they might think you're just reporting people out of nothing, or also rankings, you're ranked by your peers. So automatically if they were to band together they could all rank you last for something that you thought was report worthy but they didn't."* (Female)

- *"Most of the retaliation people experience here from reporting sexual assault is social, I don't know, because you're constantly surrounded by the same people you go through the same experiences. They understand, like they, you know, they find out that you reported something I mean, despite them knowing the whole story whether they do or not, they form some kind of perception in their mind. Like I feel like they like, some people shun you like she said or you get like looks. It's a lot of stuff, I don't know."* (Female)

- *"In a company, in the Academy, we all live together and work together. So the social shunning definitely would be pretty much multiply that, because it's not like maybe in the fleet or regular business where if something happens at the workplace you can just go home. You don't get to do that here. You have to sleep, and you could be sleeping in the same room where the incident happened with the same people it happened with."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that part of the culture is that midshipmen constantly judge each other, thus leading to behaviors that can be perceived as ostracism.**

  - *"I feel like from the get-go we're constantly being judged from the moment we start to apply here by an officer, by anybody you're interviewed by to see if you'll make a good midshipman. When you get here it's like second nature, if something happens people are instantly going to judge. Even with peer rankings you're judged. You might not even talk to an upperclass but you're judged by your pro-knowledge scores or anything that's happened I guess on paper. So I think when something is reported or something like that happens or you're ostracized it's a no-brainer for a midshipman to just judge."* (Female)

  - *"Especially because we live with the same 110 people in our company. I can see in my class some people don't fit into the bigger company dynamics so the midshipmen are ostracized. It seems fickle but when you see a bunch of your classmates, a group of 10 and they notice you're in your room and they didn't ask you to come or you know, it's a Saturday morning and as plebes you have nothing better to do but we're playing cards in our room, you don't ask that person. That naturally happens. For someone that may have gotten your friend in trouble, there's no reason why you would go out of your way to include them in things if you feel they have like wronged your friend somehow. To ostracize someone like you would in high school is the same way you do it here because there are so few of us. And when you have a bad reputation no one is going to go out of their way to include you."* (Female)

  - *"One upperclassman doesn't have a whole lot of power in terms of ranking, but if you're socially ostracized by a large group of people, be it classmates or upperclassman, that can adversely affect your ranking and your ability to get billets or service selection. Like someone across the brigade, it doesn't matter what they think of you, but at least within the company they can really impact your chances at doing what you want to do."* (Male)

- *"I think it's all about sides though, who sides with who. And then because the brigade is so interconnected almost everyone has a side. And that's when it turns bad. That's when people retaliate against others. Say someone, also doesn't know the full story. We're taught here that perception is reality. And if it's perceived that a certain individual reported this and the story they hear is not necessarily what they deem worthy of being reported, they're going to side with the offender. That's when it gets bad or vice versa."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated situations where people might refrain from interacting with a midshipman who reported, out of caution for their situation.**
  - *"I think it's also how it's perceived because if you're an outsider you know that person recently went through some situation, you may just want to be careful with that person, you don't want to bring back bad memories or offend them in any way or try to victim blame. To them it may feel like they're treating me as if I'm broken and damaged, whereas you're trying to be careful. I think it's more the understanding and communication of it."* (Male)
  - *"For ostracism I think it's also, you said take you out of the group, so I think it's also not on purpose sometimes. It's oh, that person is like damaged, so maybe they want to be left alone so I'm going to not talk to them."* (Male)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated that, while they have never witnessed professional retaliation, subtle negative perceptions about a midshipman could affect ratings and assignments.**
  - *"I don't see that here [professional retaliation], definitely not."* (Male)
  - *"Denial of opportunity. In terms of jobs or anything like that."* (Male)
  - *"I generally don't think that your company leadership would withhold a position from you if you reported someone out in town or another midshipman. But say it was someone on the staff, then I think it could get muddy. But generally I wouldn't really say that is very common."* (Female)
  - *"I haven't heard personally of this happening, but I could potentially see something happening where one person had an incident with an officer or something and they had a more negative view on the person because of it and then they're put up for a billet for something and that officer happens to be the one in charge of it and they might deny them because of the inability to take that bias out of it and strictly looking at stuff professionally."* (Male)
  - *"I think while at the Academy it's not as big an issue, but I think for Service selection, the ability, the power that a company officer holds in terms of ranking for stuff like that. You can really mess up someone's chances at getting their desired Service selection by ranking someone 40th out of 40 in a company for something petty. I*

think that would be the easiest way to see or the first way you would see discrimination or retaliation from company officers. That low ranking, really low. A lot of Service selections there's company officer approval or input. I think that would be the one way that we would see retaliation." (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that certain behaviors might be perceived as retaliation, when in fact they are not intended to be.**
  - *"Like an expedited transfer. The leader should have obviously contacted the survivor. I mean if the survivor agreed with that course of action, then go with it. But I don't see why the leader wouldn't have done that. The survivor should be in control as much as they can be."* (Male)
  - *"If the survivor wanted to be transferred out of the company, so the leader is 'Okay, I'll transfer you out,' then that's good, good on you, you're helping them. But if you heard about the situation and you automatically jumped, 'All right, we're getting you out of here' and they don't to necessarily want to, then you're definitely hurting them."* (Male)
  - *"A specific example for me like retaliation is not just going, talking stuff. It's also like withholding [for example] 'I'm not going to recommend you getting that position.'"* (Female)
  - *"If Midshipmen X was the victim of something, and in an attempt to make sure that doesn't happen again, Midshipmen X was forced to change companies, Midshipmen X goes 'Well, why should I change companies if I'm the victim and they go forth and report.'"* (Male)
  - *"I think it would help too when stuff like that happens to be more clear about the intent. Because I think a lot of times people have problems with things when something happens and they can't understand why, but then they are never given an explanation as to why it happened. I know for some things that's not feasible, but just in general letting them know at least the reasons. They don't have to agree with the reasons, but knowing them would help them to see that it's not an attack against them, that there is actually some solid logic behind it hopefully."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated there is an environment of "guilty until proven innocent" in these situations.**
  - *"I could imagine it definitely being perceived as retaliation against not the survivor, but the accused. If that happened in my company, someone was accused of it, and immediately like two or three days later they were put out of the company before anything officially happened, my class would not be okay with that. If it was a victim, then I don't think it would be retaliatory, I think it would be a good sign of support, like 'Hey, we need to get this person out of here as quickly as we can.' But if it was the accused, I would definitely view it as retaliatory and I would be mad. Unless*

there was an overwhelming opinion that something definitely for sure did happen. But unless there's proof, I think a lot of people would be mad." (Male)

- *"With regard to sexual assault, it is guilty until proven incident in every case I've seen."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen described situations where retaliation might occur against someone who steps in, intervenes in a situation, or openly supports someone who reported.**
  - *"Like a misinterpretation, someone had misperceived something and intervened in something that wasn't actually going on."* (Male)
  - *"If they stood up for the victim, then they confirmed the perpetrator to be the one that, before even the investigation is over, they have confirmed that the perpetrator did it, is guilty of the crime. So if they do that, then people who don't think the perpetrator did it might have second thoughts about the person standing up for the victim."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that someone who intervenes to stop retaliation would be viewed positively.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)
  - *"If you see something, do something. If someone intervening got backlash, you know, perception is reality, so they can always take that route and say 'Well, I thought something was going on, I thought I was supposed to intervene.'"* (Male)

Ostracism as retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated types of behaviors they would consider as ostracism.**
  - *"General social, you know, rejection."* (Male)
  - *"A lack of interaction. Some sort of way where you quickly recognize that you're no longer part of this social group."* (Male)
  - *"Be given the silent treatment, shunned more or less."* (Male)
  - *"Emails will go out, like inside the company class-wide emails with funny little mean pictures that are like nasty jokes. And groups will form, talking in different rooms and you walk in you'll hear jokes about all, like such and such person. I've had to call people out in the middle of a parade on the field when we're not even supposed to be talking and I've had to tell them to shut up about different jokes they're making about a certain person. And you watch that person go from being a part of the group, part of the company and all the sudden you don't see them except for at formation. You don't see them come to hang out in the wardroom."* (Male)

- *"Anything that makes you feel unsafe in the workplace/living place since we live here. If it was something that you were afraid to leave your room or walk around in the company area because people would give you looks or say comments, that would be considered ostracism or not feeling safe in that environment. I think that would be probably one of the best examples is feeling uncomfortable around other people because they're treating you in a different way. I think that would be the biggest problem."* (Female)

Victim blaming as a driver of retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated they back away from someone who they believe might have lied or exaggerated a report of sexual assault.**
  - *"Even if you don't outright think they are lying, you might think somebody blew it out of proportion or that they were over sensitive to it."* (Male)
  - *"Just going off that lack of trust, if you see someone is reporting, if perhaps you doubt the validity of whatever that was, then maybe you don't agree with it or you have a differing perspective or opinion."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like midshipmen, this was discussed earlier but like we hold ourselves to a higher standard. So like if something happens to you, you kind of expect to push it off, push through it. There's a lot of victim blaming I think. So if somebody, like reported sexual assault people might, oh, like they're like a wimp or overreacting to it, like it wasn't really that bad or being like get over themselves. I feel like there's a lot of that here."* (Female)
  - *"[Social retaliation] Regardless of what kind of waves or why you're making waves, when one makes waves in a group, the reaction from the group is to question why those waves are being made and whether or not you should be making those waves. Because you're interrupting everyone else's life when that happens."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated they were not aware of regulations that prohibit retaliation.**
  - *"I was going to say I didn't know you can report that."* (Female)
  - *"First time I've heard it officially."* (Female)
  - *"But not a lot of over awareness that those were specifically prohibited."* (Male)
  - *"I haven't heard about the distinction between the two different kinds of retaliation."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think we've talked about professional retaliation, no."* (Female)

- *"I've never heard about retaliation being addressed in terms of all the SAPR groups we've been at. Just basically know the difference between sexual assault and sexual harassment, all that. I've never heard anything about how to prevent retaliation."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicted they were aware of how to report professional retaliation, but ostracism would be more difficult.**
  - *"One can report retaliation, like institutional retaliation, if an officer or someone personally retaliates against me, not personally but professionally retaliates against me, I think that's easier to report. But that group isolation, like being isolated from a group in a personal report, how can I report 'Well, I'm left out of everything. Everyone is spreading rumors about me.' You can't fry the entire brigade because they are treating me like a horrible person for reporting this incident. You can stop professional retaliation, but I don't think there is any way to really stop the most damaging thing, which is the personal retaliation, that loss of trust and faith in your peers."* (Male)
  - *"I think for certain things. You mentioned like if someone retaliated against you for reporting, I remember specifically hearing about that. But other types of retaliation, maybe someone reporting you as retaliation for something you did that's maybe not related to sexual harassment or anything. I can imagine that if you got on someone's bad side for doing something, you might have a little bit of a shorter leash than everybody else."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they might not have heard the definitions of retaliation from reporting, but were familiar with the concepts from training.**
  - *"I know for sure they definitely haven't given us the legitimate definitions that you just outlined. But I feel like they have been addressed in the SHAPE sessions. Where it's like here's the professional outlook, this isn't allowed. And here's what would happen, here's what it looks like it if your peers and people ostracize you. Maybe not professionally written out and spelled out as you have them, but they have been addressed."* (Female)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated different people to whom they would report retaliation.**
  - *"I don't know if they would report to someone, probably just talk with your friends."* (Female)
  - *"I would go to my SEL."* (Female)
  - *"I would say yes, I would report it to the CMEO [Command Managed Equal Opportunity] here."* (Female)

- *"I wouldn't know the exact specific recourse, who to go exactly. But I know about it. I think it's fairly well known. And if you know about it, you would be able to figure it out."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they might not report retaliation for fear of additional retaliation.**

  - *"You're just making more waves which would lead to more retaliation."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

Leadership awareness of retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated it would be difficult for leadership to address ostracism.**

  - *"I feel like they're powerless to stop social retaliation because it can't be like, 'Why are you guys not talking to this person, go talk to them, go be their friend. It's more like a person-by-person thing. And you can't force someone to interact with somebody else, that's kind of not good leadership."* (Female)

  - *"Where it manifests itself is in social settings, outside of the hall. So not inviting them to this on the weekend or something like that. That's hard for the SEL and CO."* (Male)

  - *"There have been incidents in my company where there has been inter-roommate drama, and you don't hear about it for weeks to come, because they just give that person the silent treatment. But outside the room they have to interact like normal company mates. And I know for a fact the senior leadership in the company has no idea. Not that it's a huge deal, but it happens."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated leadership might not be aware when ostracism is occurring.**

  - *"They would have to be notified. I feel like sometimes company officers or senior enlisted in a company aren't always fully aware of all the social movements or actions going on within a company. Because it is a lot of people."* (Female)

  - *"It would definitely be the midshipmen who would be responsible for recognizing it, and not even necessarily the midshipmen leadership."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated different leaders would handle situations differently.**

  - *"I think it would depend on the company, the leadership in the company. I know my company would know to handle it, but for some other companies I couldn't say the same."* (Male)

  - *"We've had situations arise in our company as well, and it was more blatant, it was in public, people making comments, or jokes about something that occurred. And the*

company officer and SEL found that very, very unacceptable. And were very, very mad. And expressed their anger. So some people viewed that as sort of an overreaction or inappropriate reaction to what was going on. So it varies company to company." (Male)

- *"Our company officer and our CO give it back to the firsties to deal with it because we're the leadership of the company. So he has us handle instead, just give us that leadership."* (Male)

- *"I think it might be easier for leadership to control the professional retaliation just because it's tangible and they can fix it that way. But then the other side more socially and everything, I don't really think they could effectively stop that from happening. Because on the one hand they might say, and it will fall on deaf ears, or on the other hand they might say it and people will be worse, they'll think that they should just continue whatever they're doing or be more aggressive because they're feeling attacked or whatever."* (Female)

- *"I would say certain instances they give us advice. It really depends on the event that happened. But for the most part I would say that we're all pretty good at just handling itself, bounce ideas off each other."* (Male)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some midshipmen indicated that decisions affecting a midshipman's standing should not reside solely with company officers.**

  - *"I think midshipmen leadership in my company, actual midshipmen, could have more of an impact maybe on changing the culture in that if another midshipman is coming up to you and let's say the leaders, the midshipmen strippers [upperclass midshipmen] were trained in certain things and they were the ones that were trying to propagate this culture change, I think it would be more effective."* (Female)

  - *"A clear policy about what the company officer is supposed to do when someone makes a report so it's not like there is a gray area. Whether that be moving the person who reported out immediately and then trying to go on as business as usual. But I think when you put it into the company officer's hands, you're giving him a lot more power than he should have at that point. If he gets to decide who he wants to move out, that's almost like a verdict in itself."* (Male)

  - *"That's a decision a commanding officer would make in a command, not a department head, whether or not to move someone to a different division. So I think without a clear-cut policy, it's an overwhelming decision for a Lieutenant, Captain, Major, or such. Battalion level. All battalion officers are post command for O-5s or O-6s. So I think they are the ones who have the experience to make a decision. But a Lieutenant who has done one or two tours, definitely not. Just like I wouldn't trust a midshipman to make that decision. I think a possible solution maybe policy wise, there are a lot of transitional rooms throughout Bancroft Hall. They tend to be used*

when you get some sort of virus or something. Like when hand foot and mouth was disease going around, people got moved into one of these transitional rooms. I think a possible policy could be victims have the option to move there in the interim while the investigation is being pursued." (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that retaliation can also occur against someone accused of sexual assault and they should be treated fairly during the investigation and adjudication process.**
  - *"I think situations like these, somebody is being accused of something very serious and it needs to be handled with as much due process as possible. Defendants have rights too, and that's one of the main consternations. Most of the people who are accused of sexual assault in this place, at large are male, and a lot of the males are PO'd because sometimes we feel like we're automatically assumed to be guilty until proven incident."* (Male)
  - *"A lot of times when something like this happens, the administration and everybody jumps on the side of the person who is reporting. And that's not to say they should jump on the side of the person who is being accused, but I think there should be no side. It should be very, very objective."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen discussed thoughts on what could be done to reduce or eliminate retaliation for reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"Maybe whoever the accused is, they will obviously have a group of supporters around them, in the likely case they deny it or something. I guess just seeing where that would go. Perhaps that group of supporters around him has maybe more influence than those that are supporting the survivor."* (Male)
  - *"Just respecting privacy in general. Because retaliation and people taking sides, that's what happens when an issue is overly broadcast. I don't think a survivor would be going out there and rallying people to their cause and everything. I just think they want to solve the issue as quietly and peacefully as possible. So I think if everyone in the company has an understanding of, all right, it's their business, them and their perpetrator and leadership needs to handle it, so it's not our position to hold blame or take sides."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that privacy issues were a challenge at the Academy.**
  - *"In the Hall [Bancroft Hall dormitory] it definitely is."* (Male)
  - *"Without a doubt"* (Male)
  - *"Lack of privacy all round."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated their training should include more information on reporting retaliation.**
  - *"Tell them how to report retaliation. Like SHAPE is very focused, which is good, but it could definitely broaden out into how do you report retaliation. Like the male anxiety thing we had, like how the cases ended."* (Male)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, midshipmen were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among midshipmen and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Midshipmen were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some midshipmen indicated that social media is used on a daily basis.**
  - *"Daily basis."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the most commonly used tools for communicating are the following sites/methods.**
  - *"E-mail."* (Male)
  - *"Big three, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Yik Yak of course. Look forward to that one."* (Male)
  - *"I would say I use social media sometimes for school stuff, sometimes, but I very rarely use the Academy e-mail for social usage. Very, very rarely."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that social media is used to spread useful information.**
  - *"A lot of groups on the Yard have Facebook pages. So you can go there for a lot of general information. My company has a Facebook page."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that social media is a way of keeping in touch.**
  - *"I've got a lot of friends. Pretty much all my friends at the Academy I'm friends with on Facebook partly for the reason that it will be the easiest way to communicate once we're all gone. We're all going to go our separate way, go across the fleet, literally across the world, and it's good to have the connections now. Also sometimes we're limited in our access to Naval Academy e-mails, especially with a lot of changes that have been made recently, so that's the easiest way to communicate with people sometimes."* (Male)

- *"We use e-mail a ridiculously large amount, but very rarely at least do I ever use it for anything other than school related or professional related things. If I'm going to talk to my buddy, I'll send him a message on Facebook about doing something on the weekend, I'm not going to send an e-mail. If we are working on a project together, I'll send him an e-mail, typically."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that social media can be used in retaliation, but it can also be used in a positive way.**
  - *"I'll say it, it's dependent on whoever is using it. If it's being used negatively, then people on Facebook or Twitter, whatever, are doing, that generally I think if it's negative or retaliatory, it could be something that's against it. But it can also be used quite the opposite way, can be used to generate support for the survivor and what not. It's a simple media."* (Male)
  - *"And some of it definitely is good. Some of it is a good way of releasing just pent up frustration at the institution. Like there was some making fun of striper sword practice or making fun of the ridiculously high salary of not the coach, but the athletic director or whatever. And the mandatory things that we have to do and things like that. But then there are things that get through. One of the things that I've read, the very first day I got back, was the girl on floor such and such, and it listed a wing and a floor, 'Nice rack. PS, your blinds are open.' It's a broad spectrum."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"I don't think of sites, the concept as soon as you say social media and retaliation, I just know that's immediately the first means of retaliation that I can think of. As soon as you think of retaliation I immediately think they jump on social media and want to tell everyone as fast as possible."* (Female)
  - *"I know specifically there was a situation that happened last year. And then the person who was involved in the situation, they left the brigade. But people still mention her now and now she's, her name is immediately associated with something bad and hate."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that social media can be used in cyber bullying.**
  - *"Cyber bullying."* (Male)
  - *"It seems to be kind of on that track."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that retaliation on social media is not typically a result of reporting sexual assault, but more often for conduct cases or general social interactions.**
  - *"Not in regards to sexual assault. I've seen it in regards to conduct cases, but nothing to do with sexual assault or gender or anything."* (Male)

- *"I think for the most part, most people view social media as for social things and sexual assault is completely different. So people generally keep those two things separate."* (Male)

- *"I know a person who ended up being falsely accused. And we discussed it in person, but there was no way in hell we were going to post that for opinions anywhere. Because that was a personal opinion shared among two people."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the Academy has addressed negative posts.**

  - *"It happens every once in a while, and in this case it was like pertaining to the incident that happened in our company. So we actually were sat down by our company officer about a thing posted on Yik Yak. It seemed like a redundant cycle because they don't really know who wrote it so they were yelling at everybody. And after that somebody can Yak about the meeting we just had about the Yak."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that there are limits to how far people will go in posts.**

  - *"There is like a code that everyone follows when using the Yak. The level of how mean you can be, there is a norm associated with it. It's unwritten, but you can only go so far. There are no names being used. And when you violate that, it's down voted. It's a lot better than what other schools do from what I've even seen on the Yak."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

  - *"On that same note, Yik Yak has its own culture. There are rules that are norms that have to be followed. You don't use names. And when somebody does use a name, it's immediately stricken. No one wants to deal with that."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they hold themselves accountable for posts.**

  - *"We hold ourselves accountable even when we're anonymous, better than what I've seen on some."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

Use of Yik Yak[32]

- **Some midshipmen indicated that posts on Yik Yak can lead to ostracizing someone.**

  - *"Yik Yak. For example there was an ECA [extracurricular activity] that had one member rat out a couple other members. It was literally all over Yik Yak. That poor person was probably doing the right thing was so ostracized from that group he or she quit that group and it was brutal. The entire Academy hated this person."* (Female)

[32] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

- *"Yik Yak. That's a big one. One of the incidents that occurred towards the end of last year, towards one particular person, Yik Yak was starting to get big popularity around the Naval Academy. And that was a huge engine and making that person feel unwanted, being retaliated against. I would say social media has a huge impact. Also with the anonymous feature of it, people are less afraid to say something, so they say whatever they want to."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that posts on Yik Yak can be inappropriate.**
  - *"So I very recently got a smart phone, so I had been hearing about this thing called the Yik Yak for like a year or something before ever seeing it. And somebody installed it on my phone. And so I've seen some of the stuff on it recently. It's pretty messed up. To me it almost harkens back to some of the stuff we could say plebe year and get away with, and now is unthinkable."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"I think it is a nice way to be mean at the Academy, which you can't really do that much other ways, because there is like aura of niceness. I don't know if that's true, but that's how I attribute it."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the draw of Yik Yak is that it is anonymous.**
  - *"Especially now with Yik Yak, no one knows who it is, you can say whatever you want and get away with it."* (Male)
  - *"Especially on the Yik Yak. Unless you say I am so and so you remain anonymous. I feel that gives people a power that they wouldn't normally have if they confronted somebody one on one. You remain anonymous, you can say anything. You can talk to almost anybody."* (Female)
  - *"Our Captain goes on the Yak. A lot of important people go on the Yak, but people still say whatever they want. I feel even if our higher-ups told us 'Oh, you should say this and this,' I'm not sure how much effect that would have because they see it all the time, and it goes on. People still say what they want because they're protected by anonymity."* (Female)
  - *"The worst part about Yik Yak is the anonymous factor. It needs to be like Twitter and Facebook more, but when Yik Yak came about people could say something they're not responsible for it or accountable for what they actually said. I'm sure everything on the Internet has a trace. If somebody really powerful wanted to figure it out they could figure out who sent it, but way more technology than we have offered here. People say ridiculous things, whether or not they regret it later on, nobody knows that. If people say something it's not like they apologize later on."* (Female)
  - *"Like if you do something stupid, it will end up on Yik Yak, everybody knows about it by the end of the day. It travels very quickly."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that posts can be used to gauge what they think about the Academy.**
  - *"I think Yik Yak is a fine tool until it's turned toward people. Yik Yak is useful, it's a good way to access information, especially information about your local surroundings. As soon as it turns toward cyber bullying, that's when it becomes an issue."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that Yik Yak is a part of life at the Academy, though not all midshipmen have it.**
  - *"Me personally, I turned off the app on my phone, I don't have distractions. The only thing I have is on Facebook. But I feel like the energy of the place, like if you don't have it, because I'm always lost. My roommates come in, did you read about something on the Yik Yak, there's something going on."* (Female)
  - *"It's how you find out what happens. Something big just happened, everyone checks the Yak and it's all on there."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the Academy has taken measures to address negative behavior on Yik Yak.**
  - *"Sometimes, we actually got called after lunch yesterday because our SEL had been being called out a lot in Yik Yak. And our company officer was freaked out on us and basically told us you've got to stand up for each other. It doesn't matter who it is or what they're doing, you don't throw them under the bus like that."* (Female)
  - *"And also the Commandant, his comments about not attacking people personally on social media definitely I think had a big effect. I think we all know what incidence we remember on Yik Yak. And he personally addressed it. He was like, we shouldn't be doing this. Just because it's not just who see it either, people can view our social media from off the yard. And anyone can see it and it's not a good representation."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that there needs to be a clear message from the Academy regarding their position on Yik Yak.**
  - *"My SEL has also talked to us about Yik Yak [saying] it's not just you guys are reading it, other people are and you're representing yourself. If we find something on there that was insulting or bad, look at the Academy, get five friends and down vote it all together and it's gone. Our SEL says it could come back, but you can always do that. I see my leadership at least talking about ways to prevent it. But I also have teachers who are officers who are, 'Oh, you guys are so funny on there saying whatever you want, it's so cool, I wish we could do that when we were here.' I think there needs to be a general consensus from our leadership of what they think of Yik Yak, because I get mixed messages."* (Female)

- *"I'm pretty sure our CPO uses it for King Hall and what we think about the food. And there's always yaks about 'Oh, I can see Captain B. on the yak, and so and so is on the yak.' I think it's just like everyone's using it, but it's not clear if it's a good or bad thing yet, so we need a consensus."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they self-police the site and there has been improvement.**
  - *"Yeah, definitely self-policed."* (Male)
  - *"I think that we have generally been better at keeping the Yak. People aren't being personally attacked on the Yak as they used to be. It definitely changes and those posts get eliminated."* (Male)
  - *"This semester has been pretty good. Just having a more positive Yak."* (Male)
  - *"On Yik Yak, if you down vote something five times it goes away permanently. And very, very rarely do you see something in regards to sexual assault or something like that on there for much longer than a few minutes."* (Male)
  - *"The interesting thing with Yik Yak here is you do get those posts every once in a while, but they get down voted very quickly. There is a lot of inappropriate posts, but in terms of posts that promote a bad idea of women by calling someone a slut on Yik Yak, there are so many of the officers that go on Yik Yak and of the midshipmen leadership that go on Yik Yak, we've all been told if you see that, just down vote it and once it gets five down votes it's done."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"The thing about Yik Yak is that if it's down voted five times it gets off the feed. So I think a lot of midshipmen know that if it's attacking an individual in an unfair way or really vulgar way people down vote it so it's gone. If it's used in the right way it's not a bad app. But once it starts targeting individuals we have to down vote it. So our responsibility as midshipmen is when something bad is posted to down vote it. That's what can change the culture is the midshipmen and how they use the application."* (Female)
  - *"Mids tend to shoot it down pretty quick. If it's about a conduct case, then people that would stoke a fire to keep it going. But the one or two times I've seen it about something sexual, there is normally people that try to get rid of it quick. I think we all understand that a conduct case normally is something you can joke about, but something with regard to sexual assault, that's pretty serious. At least I hope that that is the consensus among the Brigade."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that a post becoming popular may encourage more posts on similar topics.**
  - *"And you can one up, you can vote it up. You can see how popular your post is. And it might encourage you to post more things."* (Female)

- *"It's a goal of midshipmen to know who has the highest Yak scores, so they're saying whatever they want to get the most laughs."* (Female)

- *"People are just trying to be funny. And they think it's funny."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the anonymity of Yik Yak makes it more difficult for the Academy to restrict its use or control it.**

  - *"I think that would help on social media sites when your name is involved. But on Yik Yak everybody will say whatever they want because there's no consequence, because you won't ever get caught because the anonymity of it. You can say I don't post these pictures on Facebook because then that actually comes back to you and it can be traced, but otherwise it can't. If you do say something there's always going to be the few people who are still being extremely negative on the Yik Yak."* (Female)

  - *"No one has any control over it, so you can say whatever and no one cares."* (Female)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some midshipmen gave mixed opinions whether the Academy monitors these sites or whether they should monitor social media.**

  - *"I think they already do monitor. Every time a Yak that gets out of hand comes up, our company officer would always address it with us. He would say this Yak is inappropriate and stuff like that. And we would all listen and things would actually turn out for the best."* (Male)

  - *"I think it's being explored now. It's still kind of new. I've heard at least my CO and SEL monitor it. To see if anything comes up on there that is worth being looked into and they might ask around, 'Hey, do you know what the deal is with this?' But as far as individual punishments, if someone starts something on there, I haven't heard of anything actually happening yet. But I did also hear that they wouldn't be opposed to if something really got out of hand, like even going to the developers and shutting it off or this area and just taking it out completely."* (Male)

  - *"The Commandant was talking to all midshipmen and he's addressed Yik Yak a couple times, especially because they appear on the Yik Yak also. But they have talked about how they're not going to take it away because they want to treat us like adults. They want to trust us with this responsibility to not be vulgar, rude or whatever. And that brings it back to meaning to take ownership. I do think they do monitor it because a few times there have been posts of people making like suicidal posts and stuff on there and really depressing things they that put out there anonymously. And then my company leadership, our company officer, and SEL will come to formation, gather the whole company and say this is what was posted. It could be any one of you or your peers. So be aware that you have to be there for*

each other and try and take care of each other because this person's hurting and they might need someone to reach out to before it's too late." (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated mixed feelings regarding whether the Academy should monitor these sites due specifically to privacy concerns.**
  - *"If you post something stupid on Facebook or Instagram, there is some degree of privacy, you obviously didn't want your company officer to see it, so the fact that they did see it would piss me off. If I'm not friends with them, but they had a way to monitor my things, that would make me pretty upset. But, there has got to be give and take because if it's really inflammatory then action needs to be taken so they stop doing it."* (Male)
  - *"If an issue comes from inside and goes out, that's fine because someone felt the need to say something. But if someone is digging and trying to get into something they are not meant to be in, that's a violation of privacy, then you lose your trust in the higher ups."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they are often held accountable for posts and believe they should be.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)
  - *"It's cyber bullying. Aren't there rules against that? They probably should."* (Female)
  - *"I think we all know what's right and wrong. We've been given those expectations, it's been clearly put upon us. So if we break that expectation, break that trust of what we post on social media, I believe you do deserve to be punished. It's clear we represent something beyond ourselves. They have been feeding this to us since day one."* (Male)
  - *"That's so beyond the scope of any IT officer, they can do. Here, everybody makes fun of IT, like it's an interesting system, but I wish there was a way to hold people accountable."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the Academy has urged responsible use of social media.**
  - *"In my company, specifically our SEL got mad at us because someone posted something specifically about our company on Yik Yak and it made him really upset because it was bringing a bad reputation to us, and it was putting our company's information out there. And he didn't like that. So we got a verbal beat-down for a good 10 minutes about why you shouldn't do that and how there are ways to find out who posted what on Yik Yak."* (Female)
  - *"The Commandant, a point of his big focus for the semester was responsible use of social media. And our battalion officer pushed that down to our battalion too. So I*

think they are taking the best stance they can without regulating it. Because there's nothing you can do about Yik Yak aside from shutting it down because it's anonymous." (Male)

- *"I think that the Commandant actually said he didn't want to take it away, it's fun and stuff like that. But if it was abused too much then he would. I think when it first came out it was a lot worse. It was targeting specific people for a while."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that it may not be possible to control any particular site because another will replace it.**
  - *"I don't think that the Department can control it because you ban Yik Yak, there's another one out there that could come out and replace it."* (Female)
  - *"I think this goes back to the issue of how close we are to alcohol. You're going to get alcohol no matter how far away it is, they're going to seek it out. Even if the Yik Yak wasn't here, if they hadn't made it, that information is still getting out. People are still saying those things. It's just made it like a little bit faster getting out. We have email, we have little chat rooms, Facebook, it's nothing new. It's a new platform they're doing it from. All those same comments were still going around before. This is just the newest, now it's anonymous."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that there needs to be a cultural change at the Academy regarding social media.**
  - *"I think it's something we need to take upon ourselves to be mature and to not go out and bully people. I think that really does go back to having a cultural change. Information can spread really quickly, but it's comments like hashtag like SAPR, someone's just joking or using the term 'fe-mid,' which I don't know if people find that offensive, I think it sounds weird. So I don't know that stuff has come about Yik Yak."* (Female)
  - *"Realizing we're in the spotlight I think that happened a couple years back with the sexual assault cases and being in the national spotlight for that. I think that we've realized there are civilians out in like Annapolis who are commenting on Yik Yak saying, 'Wow, I didn't know, I thought midshipmen were supposed to be upstanding role models.' So I think they'll comment and I think slowly the culture can change because we're realizing that this isn't appropriate behavior and that's not how we want people to perceive our school."* (Female)

General comments on social media

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the Academy could provide resources for sharing through social media about prevention or resources that are available to survivors.**
  - *"I think it's a lot easier, just because sometimes those hot line numbers are really long and you're like, 'I am never going to remember that number.' Something like on Facebook."* (Male)

- *"Facebook isn't anonymous. I think it would be absolute fantastic if we could have something that people could contact, where electronically where they knew it was anonymous. People are scared to talk to Chaplains, even though obviously we know they can't tell anybody, you're still scared, it's still another person. It would be fantastic to have an electronic anonymous service. Not like a hot line, those are old fashioned."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that information and resources are readily available.**
  - *"I think there's a portal on the intranet on the website that we all have access to. It says here, and it's very easy to access, you literally click, click, click. You have all these resources at your fingertips, whatever you need. It's very much available."* (Female)
  - *"I think I have like the hotline or whatever in my phone as well as. They make us all very aware, if there's something like this is where you go."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that using social media to spread information about resources may <u>not</u> be helpful.**
  - *"I think our generation is more likely to Google whatever resource they need as opposed to preemptively liking a Facebook page and knowing to go that."* (Male)
  - *"No one wants to be that person who someone goes through the profile and like, 'Hey, why are you such a huge fan of the Naval Academy sexual assault prevention site?' Strange."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that a social media campaign would <u>not</u> be well-received.**
  - *"I think if the Academy were to put a social media campaign about that or something, then mids would just eye roll and think 'My gosh, more sexual assault training.' I can't imagine a way they could effectively do a campaign with social media without either infringing on people's privacy or just getting eye rolls."* (Male)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Midshipmen were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix E, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some midshipmen indicated the ratings of the various levels of leadership are not representative of their own perceptions.**
  - *"I feel like the midshipmen not in leadership positions should be above civilian academic faculty."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they believed the ratings of leadership should be higher.**
  - *"I don't see why it wouldn't be higher. I think anyone who has paid attention to anything the Commandant and Superintendent has to say would know they are making an effort to stop sexual harassment. That's my perception. I'm surprised the numbers are that low."* (Male)
  - *"I'm surprised the numbers for the academic faculty, at least the civilian academic faculty. I know a lot them are in the Save Spaces program, there are a lot of civilian academic faculty members that you could go to to talk about an issue like this. Maybe it's not broadcasted enough, or maybe because I spend a lot of time in Sampson that there are more English teachers who are involved in those programs. But I'm surprised that one is not higher.*" (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that commissioned officers take SHARP seriously.**
  - *"I think at the company level as well it's maybe in addition to that it's more like if they see something suddenly on Yik Yak they'll like address it again."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that civilian faculty do not engage with SHARP issues, but they felt that this might be the result of their role at the Academy.**
  - *"I don't think they make an effort and I don't think they should."* (Male)
  - *"I might submit that, for instance, civilian academic faculty, if I had the option [on the survey], in that case I would probably put 'Not applicable.' Because I don't think it's the case that that conversation ever comes up or it necessarily plays into the interactions."* (Male)
  - *"I think they should, but I've never been in a situation where it happens to be brought up in a conversation with a teacher. Although of course the teachers would say that they make an effort."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like personally faculty are more than welcome to get involved in any way that they wish. I think with me at least personally, I feel the general consensus that they just don't. But it's not like they are required to in any way."* (Male)
  - *"I would expect the civilian academic faculty to be lower. Personally I don't think they should be involved in it at all. I don't think that's their role here. Their role is to*

educate about scholarly subjects. I've never heard of sexual assault or harassment occurring in a classroom." (Male)

- *"I would expect faculty, academic faculty, to be lower than senior leaders. Because it is not their job to look at our conduct, look at our development as officers. It is their job to look at our development as students. And I think that those are very separate worlds."* (Male)

- *"For instance, civilian faculty on the academic side, they are not going to stop their lecture and start to talk about sexual assault and the ways in which you can report. It's not their job. Whereas a military leader, that literally is their job in some regards."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the role of civilian faculty is unclear regarding SHARP issues.**

  - *"Can you go to them and make restricted, unrestricted reports?"* (Male)

  - *"They are like normal people, they are not in a chain of command, under legal obligations."* (Male)

  - *"I don't think they can make a report for you, but it's someone to talk to. If you're that close to a professor, by all means go for it. But I wouldn't say it's the faculty's job that I'm here to talk to you at any point in time."* (Male)

  - *"Some of that might be it's not totally clear what role, if any, the civilian faculty would play in reporting and even as someone to talk to."* (Male)

  - *"I spend such little time in my day, a little bit of interaction with my professors and it's such a professional environment in the classroom, especially here, that there is the chance of an incident happening or a comment being made is so much lower in the classroom, that professors don't really have to worry about it. Company officers, SELs, other midshipmen have to because they are in the Hall with us, and the midshipmen interaction is a lot greater in the Hall. But in the classrooms, we're in there for an hour and we're just there to learn and then leave."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that athletic and civilian staff are not trained to deal with SHARP issues.**

  - *"I think for the civilian academic faculty and the athletic staff the reason why I would put them lower is I don't know if they would know how to handle it. In other words, I don't know if they have the training."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

  - *"Maybe those are role based, you would not expect those type of people, like the athletic staff or civilians. Do you even talk about those kind of issues?"* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- *"I think that for me the way I interpreted the question is that it's a black and white situation, sexual harassment is occurring, there's no question of that, and would these people do something. I consider Academy senior leaders, they have had training definitely and they're in charge of enforcing that training, so they'll definitely do something. All the way down, I just feel like civilians and athletics, they might not have had training, they might not know what to do."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the ratings of leadership are driven by the effort they perceive leadership to be putting into SHARP issues.**
  - *"I think a lot of it has to do also with the effort that people see. All these people here have other jobs. So sexual assault is a big horrible deal, but this isn't their main focus. It's not like you see it every day or every month. They don't see their company officer come out and say 'Hey, we got to stop this,' but they do see them say 'Hey, we got to work on all these other things.'"* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the results on perceptions of leadership could be driven by the context in which the leader works.**
  - *"I think sexual harassment is a lot less prevalent in the classroom. And that's why professors don't talk about it that much, because it's just not there."* (Male)
  - *"I think the lower numbers are accountable for the fact that the places where they are less likely to see an instance where they would need to discuss sexual harassment. Most athletic teams are one gender, so you're not going to see as much there. Less likely in the classroom."* (Male)
  - *"I also feel that's just because the environment that you're in with your civilian academic faculty isn't generally aware of stuff, sexual harassment and stuff is happening. If you're in the middle of a class, I would like to think no one is going to be trying to make a move on the girl sitting next to him or the guy sitting next to him and something like that. But then I see the athletic staff is the lowest, and that makes a lot of sense, because the locker room, a lot of stuff happens there, you're traveling to different colleges, civilian colleges, especially sometimes when you have overnight or weekend tournaments and that where you're away from this environment. And I think that is why those numbers are as they are."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the personal involvement of leadership in SAPR briefs can be helpful.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Females)
  - *"My company specifically what helped us is every single SAPR brief we had our chief was there with us. You could tell that he truly cared. And he offered his insights because he's actually in the fleet. He would say sometimes these are circumstances or situations happen. And the best way to solve this is so and so. Just his participation and his insights on how to handle things really helped."* (Female)

- *"Our chief was at the SAPR briefs. I think most people would find it intimidating to be able to speak up about whatever the topic would be that night. Yes, it's a good way to show support, but it's also understanding they keep it at that the midshipmen level, underclassmen, upperclassmen so they can speak about, 'Oh, I have a gunnery sergeant to my right looking at me.'"* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the perception that leadership gives severe punishments for sexual harassment and assault is a deterrent.**
  - *"It's not just training sessions, not just with midshipmen, but the institution is proving that this is not a joke, they are really taking this stuff seriously."* (Male)
  - *"I feel a lot of it is rumor. You'll hear it going around, did you hear so and so just got a meeting with the Deputy Commandant and he got this punishment, this punishment, or he's separated or he lost his service selection or something. You hear it and then they will tell you what happened. And you might not think it's necessarily deserving of that harsh of punishment, but you start to realize I don't even want to put myself at any risks to have that happen to yourself."* (Male)
  - *"I think I'm not sure how much of it is training, but I know a lot of it is the fear of punishment. I know people watch what they say a lot more now because they are scared that someone could take it the wrong way and get punished for it. I'm sure that contributes a lot."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think they are necessarily trying to do it on purpose, 'Oh, we're going to scare them out of doing it.' I think that's just the way that they are handling those cases and that's just a coincidental side effect because they are taking it so seriously. I don't think they are setting out to scare it out of anyone, I think they are actually trying to go about changing people's views on it and that's also happening at the same time."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that leadership changes every several years so emphasis changes too.**
  - *"In regards to whether or not leadership has changed [emphasis on sexual assault], you have to keep in mind our leadership changes every two years or approximately. So a lot of us can't speak to what happened in 2010, because we've had different leaders, so we've had people from the fleet, so the fleet changes. Fleet status changes or fleet focuses more on SAPR, we're getting people from the fleet that will emphasize that. I feel like focus on the fleet, focus on the Academy at least."* (Female)
  - *"I agree with the point about our leadership constantly changing on a yearly basis it's fair to say. But I also agree that the entire culture has changed, like the awareness is very prevalent, very much so."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that midshipmen leaders have other priorities besides SHARP issues.**
  - *"I think most of the time it's only part of the midshipmen's time to work about that kind of stuff. They have a lot of background, they have their own academics, their own physical stuff to take care of. They're midshipmen first and foremost, they're here for an education. Obviously they have leadership responsibilities and like things else they have to deal with. They have to take care of us and their subordinates. But it's not always their first priority like it would be for officers and people higher up than that."* (Female)
  - *"Because they have so much else going on it's not something they worry about. If it was brought to my company officer, my squad leader they would address it because I'm one of their own. But they're really not thinking about it, worrying about it because it's something they don't think is going on."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the upperclassmen leaders were invaluable in preventing sexual assault.**
  - *"I think the leadership making the best effort has been the upperclass midshipmen. I think a lot of older adults feel awkward about what do I do or try to make it super hardline. I know my firstie girls, I really trust them and the enhanced security watches, it saved my friends' backs a lot of time. I think that's really good."* (Female)
  - *"A lot of the company officers or SELs feel really awkward, even when they were going over the results of the survey it was awkward. I see my classmates, midshipmen are taking a lot more charge and getting more involved in that. Keeping people's privacy, and not talking about things and giving the power back to the victim so keep them informed, let them make decisions, not force them into areas. That's the kind of thing I would see a leader do that would, an effective leader do, keeping you informed and not pressuring you one way or another. And your privacy.*" (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the lower levels of leadership might not always handle issues that are brought to them first.**
  - *"In the military you have to go through the chain of command. If something goes past your CO it must be really serious. I know they take it seriously, but sometimes they try to control it on the lowest level possible before they bring it up. And maybe doing that might not help."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the lower ratings of leadership may be a result of women's lack of trust in their male counterparts.**
  - *"I think one of the reasons might be, and this is totally my opinion, because of some of the training. I feel some of the women here might trust men a little less. And since*

it's a male dominated school, I mean statistically we are the vast majority. That might lead to a disparity." (Male)

- *"I'm not surprised by that. I think women have a greater distrust in leadership in the system in terms of sexual assault. And I don't think it's necessarily just that, but I think in general. I don't necessarily trust my company officer to get something done when I ask him, 'Hey, sir, is there any way you could help me out with this?' So when it comes to sexual assault or sexual harassment, if I don't trust them to be 'Sir, could you help me with this?' why would I trust them with something more serious."* (Female)

- **Some upperclass male midshipmen indicated that the difference in ratings by men and women of midshipmen not in leadership positions might not reflect the degree to which midshipmen now take issues of sexual harassment more seriously.**
  - *"There is a large difference in men and women's views of midshipmen not in a leadership position. 11 percent. That's kind of shocking to me. Outwardly midshipmen might seem not to take it as seriously, just because we're all inundated with the training and we all end up getting tired of it. But I think if a situation were to occur we would react appropriately. It's something people actively think about now when making decisions. Versus in the past, in my plebe year, I don't think my firsties would make a crass joke and not care too much. But now people think a second and third time before they say things because of what the perception others might have of what they say is. And part of that is due to the training and then situations where people have had. People have gotten in trouble for things they have said essentially."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think the topic really existed. At least there was not such a focus on it like there is now. I'm sure there were programs back in the day and prior trainings, but not anywhere as intense now. Now that it's more at the forefront, of course there's going to be more gossip and more jokes about it, but also it's at the forefront of everybody's mind in a serious sense as well."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that women are more likely to be sexually harassed, possibly resulting in lower ratings than men of leadership's engagement with SHARP issues.**
  - *"The first thing I notice is the percentage of women is less than the percentage of men who agree with this in all of them [referring to the ratings of leaders at various levels]. And I think it's maybe because sexual harassment and assault is more prone to happen to women or more reported by women, so men don't know exactly what's going on or they don't experience it as much. So they think the efforts that leadership make are working and they're like fine. But I feel like it's not as accurate, so."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the ratings of leadership and their efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment might reflect the belief that the SAPR team is who they think of when they hear about these topics.**
  - *"On the news they released the statistics of sexual assault from all the academies and the Naval Academy had the lowest the past year, so our Superintendent was interviewed and his opinion, his voice was like basically announced through that article for me. Otherwise I feel basically the SAPR, the SAPR team and the SAPR people, midshipmen and SAPR team, they're the ones that send that message across."* (Female)
  - *"[Many nodding heads.]"* (Females)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Midshipmen were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and midshipmen were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the perceived sense of entitlement and lower standards compared to other students may translate into increased unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
  - *"Yes [athletes would be treated differently if in trouble for gender-related behaviors]. I fully recognize when I'm saying this it's generalization, it's a perception thing. I'm just saying that there is that perception of certain teams. And it's not all of our varsity athletes."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"I think some of the favorite teams on the yard that are favored by the leadership definitely get away with saying certain things and acting a certain way than the common midshipmen were. And you're, 'oh, well, he or she's on that team, that's just the way they are.' It also sucks because they're not all like that. But definitely the more popular the sport is on the team the more I think they're able to get away with in their behavior because they're not seen as the typical midshipman."* (Female)
  - *"If, just football as an example, a football player does something and he's the best player on the team and you decide to kick him out [for any unwanted gender-related behavior], there's goes all the income from all the football games if we start losing. It's like a cycle. I think it definitely has a part."* (Female)
  - *"I can think of a couple times that I know it's [gender-related behaviors among athletes] considerably worse."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the level of inappropriate behaviors varies by team.**
  - *"I think it depends on the team. I hear about some sports a lot more than other sports and behaviors on certain sports more than others. So we divide varsity athlete and not a lot, but I think you have to go a little deeper than that to understand why some, why that is happening. Because I don't hear about it happening on my roommate's teams, but I hear about it happening on the teams from the people who live across the hall from me. So I think you need to divide down more than that."* (Female).
  - *"I don't necessarily think it would necessarily be specific to sexual assault or anything, but I definitely think there can be a difference with some varsity teams. It's just something that they are set apart and they spend so much of their time together and not with their companies, that a whole different culture has developed."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they do not have the perception that inappropriate behaviors are more common among athletes.**
  - *"I think at a civilian college that's definitely way more applicable than it is here. Because there is a bigger sense of comradery here. I mean we're midshipmen first and then we're whatever we are, athletes or non-athletes."* (Male)
  - *"The stereotypes of civilian schools, you have the frat houses and all the athletes throwing these crazy parties where they are putting stuff in the drinks and stuff. We don't really have that here. Everyone is held to a much higher standard. But that stereotype, it carries everywhere. It's not like we're exempt from that stereotype either."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that perceptions that inappropriate behaviors are more common among athletes are based on treatment by athletic staff and stereotyping.**
  - *"I don't personally have any experience where that's the case, but I think that that's definitely more susceptible, especially because the athletic staff on here has the lowest ranking for effort. I think that makes sense because everyone else on there they don't have a negative effect of if they put an effort in. And I could reasonably understand someone comes to a coach and they are, 'hey, your star player did this, I need something to be done.' I could see he thinks for at least a second, 'Oh, no, I need him, he can't get in trouble,' and be kicked out or suspended or something like that. I'm not necessarily saying that does happen, but I think that's a vulnerability that the athletic staff that no one else really does."* (Male)
  - *"I think just with the way a lot of the sports teams work here, separated the way teams have different tables. Generally you don't see a lot of varsity athletes in company a lot, so you really don't get a lot of face to face interaction with athletes. So if you hear a bad rumor, it's a lot easier to tag that whole group of people, person*

X, I heard person X is bad, so the whole group must be similar to them because they all hang out together and I never see them. I think it's more a case of a lack of a lot of interaction with members of the team. It's a lot easier to paint that whole group, the unknown, it's just they are all bad apples." (Male)

- *"I'm just saying that there is that perception of certain teams. And it's not all of our varsity athletes. I think to be honest it is mostly football that that perception gets attached to. And I'm not saying it's right that it does."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that athletes are held to the same or higher standards.**
  - *"Before I came here I would agree [that athletes are held to lower standards], but now that I've been here I would say it's almost the opposite. Because everyone is expecting that of the athletes, that they are actually held to a higher standard."* (Male)
  - *"Personally I feel the standard is pretty universal."* (Male)
  - *"Sexual assault would be even across the board they would get punished the same."* (Female)
  - *"There isn't too much of a difference."* (Male)
  - *"I think there are people from a wide group of teams that might think that 'Oh, we need to have a little bit more privilege because we do this and that.' But I don't actually think that it is practiced or that's a policy."* (Male)
- **Other midshipmen indicated that the application of standards favors athletes.**
  - *"You hear cases where, not to rat on the football team because they do their job very well, but a football player will do something outrageous and they'll stay. But somebody who will fail a PRT [Physical Readiness Test] or will get kicked out, it's like which one is the better leader, which should we be focusing on."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the standards are more relaxed for sexual harassment, but not for sexual assault for athletes.**
  - *"I think sexual assault more than sexual harassment based on the situation."* (Female)
  - *"I think sexual harassment [is tolerated more] if it's within the team environment, I think might not be handled the same way as if it was outside the team."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that recruitment processes for athletes have lower standards in academics and character, which can lead to problems.**
  - *"I think also the standards for getting in here are different for athletes because a football player, for instance, of course there are smart football players, but they*

wouldn't have been as strong academically as somebody who is coming in here as a non-athlete. I think those standards are lowered a little bit so we can have good sports teams because we want the support from alumni and America and we want winning teams." (Female)

- *"They're probably not as closely examined by their morality and stuff because they watch the tapes of them playing. That's where some people slip through the cracks on the moral compass, where it's ambiguous if they will always do the right thing. They skipped over that in the process. That's where the problems come about because those people have slipped through in the process and then do the stuff."* (Female)

- *"I don't know how many times I've heard a recruit athlete say they had no idea there was military involved when they were recruited. I think that definitely plays a role because if they don't know there's going to be military involved, a kid over plebe summer had no idea there was a five-year commitment afterwards. If you don't know that's part of the package deal, then you don't know you're going to be held to a higher standard and you don't know that's not going to be tolerated. I think that's a real huge possibility."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that behaviors can result from the closeness of teams.**

  - *"I feel in the locker room or any close environment people forget what the boundaries are. You're part of a team, you're really close. And I think most of the time, I mean not all the time but most of time people are joking around when they do that kind of stuff. But it can cross a line and it really oversteps people's boundaries. I feel like that it makes sense a majority of that comes from a close team environment or someplace secluded or not around a public area."* (Female)

  - *"It's the same as any teams when they go to encourage or congratulate their other teammate by slapping them, everybody's used to it, it's a thing. Maybe somebody's not comfortable with doing that. Those little behaviors that people think it's the norm, but it could be affecting someone."* (Female)

  - *"There is a different sense I think when you're with your teammates that it's a little more of a loose atmosphere. And people come from all different walks of life and some stuff is more acceptable some places than other places, something the people just grew up and saw that as a normal thing, whereas other people it was highly taboo. Especially when we're drunk, people from all over coming together, it's going to bugle up some people more than others. But that's where it would happen, because you get more informal in that setting."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they have not heard from coaches about reporting sexual assault.**

  - *"No, I haven't had a coach talk to me about that."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen have received advice about reporting from athletic staff.**
  - *"My O-Rep for my sport is the S [SHAPE] officer, so yeah, my team does. I think that's a special situation."* (Female)
  - *"My fleet has, we have the SHAPE, one of the SHAPE representatives is our O-Rep as well."* (Female)

Culture

Midshipmen were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

General comments about Academy culture and gender relations

- **Some midshipmen indicated that sexual assault prevention receives the greatest emphasis.**
  - *"I would say it's the most emphasized thing."* (Male)
  - *"We spent I don't know how many hours from plebe summer through plebe year to this year just talking about that."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that sexual assault issues are not unique to the Academy.**
  - *"I think another factor to consider would be other civilian colleges and universities, seeing them in the media. Because at first it did feel like a personal attack on the Naval Academy. I know I had friends and relatives wondering what was going on when, all along I knew that all these state schools and big universities have the same problem. And it really is an issue that we have like in our age group in society. But I think with articles coming out about other colleges, I think we were able to realize the severity of it and take it upon ourselves to lead the way."* (Female)
  - *"I just think with reporting I know if we go to the Naval Academy here we are in this unique bubble, but I think the repercussions we have here, the resistance to reporting, it's exactly the same outside the Naval Academy too. A lot of what you said earlier is this happens other places and people face the same problems, the same fears. If I was at a regular civilian institution where would I go, the police department? I'm sure they have their own programs, but I can easily believe they are not available to them like they are here. I remember that in the back of my mind, yeah, reporting here kind of seems like a nightmare. But it would be equally a nightmare at any other place too."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they feel safer at the Academy than they believe they would at civilian colleges or universities.**
  - *"We're not perfect, but I feel a lot safer here than at a civilian college."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they feel safer from sexual assault and sexual harassment at the Academy, but not from sexist behaviors.**
  - *"With regard to sexual assault and sexual harassment, I think that's true. But I think you see sexist attitudes here a lot more."* (Female)
  - *"Definitely the sexist attitude. Here we have so many programs outlined for us and hammered into us, you can use these, these are always here for you. We have so much training about that. Other civilian schools, sure, there's an advocate there for you, but it's not made as obvious as it is to us here."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that for seniors the Capstone course addresses issues they will face as ensigns.**
  - *"Some of the topics bring up more obvious sexual assault things I'm pretty sure. Definitely different perspectives and ideas, different ways to handle the situation, because there aren't always right answers. I would say that for sure."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some midshipmen indicated that sexual assault prevention is an important topic and should be discussed.**
  - *"People will go there [training] and not pay any attention. But if you're not paying attention, you're going to get in the fleet one day and you're going to have that sailor or marine that has that problem. And that's when you're going to realize you should have been paying attention. It's completely individual. This place is here to plant a seed in your head and the seed will sprout maybe five years from now or maybe you're full growing a leaf or maybe it's starting to grow when you just get out. It depends on each person how much."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"So when I interact with my civilian friends, same grade, there is a difference when I hang out with them and how I approach the other gender and how I talk to them, compared to my friends. For four years you're here, you're trained to become a leader. And it's corny, but you are. That's your job and this is why you're here. And one day you're going to lead sailors and Marines and you've got to be able to know what is going on, figure out the problem and be able to solve it. Because if you cannot do that, you're failing your people, the people you lead. I think this institution is not just worried too much about what's really going on at the Naval Academy necessarily, but is helping you develop into a leader who could help manage things*

and make things better out in the fleet. Because out in the fleet there is a lot more sexual assault and sexual harassment cases out there." (Mixed-Gender Session)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the degree to which sexual assault is taken seriously varies among companies.**
  - *"I think each company may vary a little bit just based on the people in that, because a lot of them are groups in company, like a lot of our SHAPE training. And I think each one probably has a very different attitude or theme about them. My company's SHAPE sessions are often a bunch of guys attacking the person that's doing the education and saying what if this happens."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the emphasis the Academy has placed on eliminating sexual assault has affected the way male and female midshipmen interact with each other.**
  - *"I would say a lot of guys were scared that girls would 'SAPR' them. They will use it as a very negative verb. I think that definitely created a divide, at least in my company it did. So there's a lot of, 'Oh, I don't want to talk to this girl,' or 'I don't want to be seen being alone with her, because I'm afraid she's going to report me and I'm going to get kicked out.'"* (Female)
  - *"There is definitely some resistance among certain guys at the Academy to stay away from female Midshipmen."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
  - *"Guys turn it into a joke. They would half the time like with the 'SAPR' thing, if they're talking to me about another girl they would turn like, 'Oh, we're going to get SAPR'd.' It's not a joke."* (Female)
  - *"I think it's fair to say that females did it just as much as the guys did it too. I'm not saying I'm perfect and probably didn't say something stupid, but you know, women here have made just as many jokes I think about it as the guys. Like, 'Hey, watch what you're doing,' something like that. So I think I don't think it's necessarily one gender is not taking it as seriously as the other."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the penalties for committing sexual assault are a strong deterrent.**
  - *"And the stakes are a little bit higher here. You know you'll lose everything."* (Male)
  - *"For the perpetrator, here you don't just break the law, you also violate UCMJ and get kicked out of school. All that. Plus the [loss of] respect from your classmates."* (Male)
  - *"I think that if the offender is someone who is already signed and is required to pay money or service, then that's a deterrent."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some midshipmen indicated they would not step in to stop sexist behaviors as readily as they would sexual assault.**
  - *"I feel like they wouldn't necessarily step in that one as readily as they would for sexual assault. It's a major thing and you want to prevent that right away. For a sexist comment or crude joke that could have been a one-time thing they said in passing or they weren't really thinking about so they wouldn't necessarily mention about that because they don't know how often it's happening or how big a problem is it. So I don't think they would step in right away because they just don't know how prevalent it is."* (Female)
  - *"Just like in any situation it depends on that midshipman, because I've seen and heard about sketchy situations going on. And a lot of people have talked about it and how it makes them uncomfortable, how it's weird. But no one says anything except a few people that are like, 'Hey, what's going on, are you okay, do you feel uncomfortable?' stuff like that. There are a lot of people that are like 'It's none of my business.' You know, if it's a problem they will say something. I think that's the general consensus, if it's that big of a problem they'll say something, and I don't have to intervene. So if they're not saying anything it might not be that bad to them."* (Female)
  - *"I also think it's that the shunning effect again. Say someone says a crude remark and someone says 'No, don't say that.' 'Oh, like you're the weak one, why are you trying to fight back with me, when everyone agrees with a certain statement?' From that point on they probably won't treat you the same as your teammate."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the staff would intervene in sexual harassment or sexist behavior.**
  - *"[Multiple Agree]"* (Female)
  - *"I think the company officer, they're more professional with that kind of stuff and they will immediately act upon it. They know that's their job and they're more focused on that than midshipmen would be."* (Female)
  - *"I also think that midshipmen are more careful about what they say around their CO and their SEL, whereas like my squad is all boys and they'll say whatever they want at lunch. Sometimes they'll be 'Oh, guys, we can't say that, she's here.' But usually they say whatever they want. If the CO or SEL is there they tone it down a little bit. Some of the issues aren't even brought up because the CO and the SEL don't see what's happening."* (Female)
- **Other midshipmen indicated they would not expect faculty to intervene in sexual harassment or sexist behavior.**
  - *"It depends military or civilian."* (Female)

- *"I feel like we don't have much contact out of class with the civilian faculty. Besides academics there's not really much that we interact with them about, so I don't think so."* (Female)

- *"There's a general difference between your military teachers and civilian teachers. Definitely a general respect aspect and then you also feel like your military teachers get it and your civilian teachers don't."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated behaviors sometimes result from rules that are presumed to be true but are not.**

  - *"Sometimes the Academy goes to the opposite side of the spectrum where they put these rules that don't make sense to me. For example, I was told that I had to open a banana up and cut it up and eat it with a fork because it was too sexual to eat it as a banana. It's an actual rule [not true, but perceived to be true]. I was told that. I was like 'Is this making you uncomfortable, me eating a banana?' My squad leader told me. He told me it was a rule that he didn't want to get in trouble for not enforcing it. It was so outside the spectrum that I focus now on the sexualness of eating a banana. Like the Academy changes and goes too far in certain spectrums, be careful to offend anyone that we draw focus onto the actual problem."* (Female)

  - *"For some reason you can't like peel a banana and eat it, you have to, as a female, you have to put it on your plate. And only for females. Guys can do it, they can make awesome facial expressions."* (Female)

  - *"Just carrying with that, I feel it's hard to gauge because there's one side of the spectrum where the rules are and the expectations are so overcompensating for political correctness in a lot of things, not just this, but basically for this that it's taken as a joke, it's joked about. And people forget the seriousness of it."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that there has been a shift in emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors over the years.**

  - *"The rules of engagement are a lot more strict than they used to be. The little silly socials we did in King Hall we can't do anymore. It's punishable actions you'll be in the system. Preventing some of the crazy behavior has helped keep people in the narrow and straight mindset. They don't branch out in the little things like off-color comments and jokes. I feel like it is a lot more protected now."* (Female)

  - *"I don't want to say it's gone, but I think people are more aware of where they are, who they're standing around. And I'm sure my friends will say it behind their doors, they're saying dumb stuff to each other 24/7, but when they're out in the Hall, depending on who is around, they say dumb stuff to me, but my roommate they would never say anything towards. I think it depends who they're comfortable with. It's not necessarily okay, but I think they'll become more aware of others around them and how they would take it and how it would affect them."* (Female)

Role of peer programs

- **Some midshipmen indicated that their SHAPE program is effective.**
  - *"SHAPE is our peer program. I like it a lot. Okay, it's a mandatory training so I don't like that. When you get down to it on a level I think it's more effective than a high-ranking officer coming and talking at us. It's a discussion. And it's also strangely enough like a bonding exercise with your classmates. My company's pretty good about it. Our company really takes it a little more seriously, like we have a serious discussion."* (Female)
  - *"I think the discussion makes it known that your peers feel this way. And I think that's the key, not having someone talking down to you or having leadership talk to you about what they're supposed to say. It's what your peers think. So say one of your peers says this is not okay. That's when you know that that the action isn't all right, instead of reading something from a book. They're real life examples of the people that might be affected."* (Female)

Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed

- **Some midshipmen indicated that midshipmen leaders should take the responsibility to set the example for appropriate behaviors.**
  - *"I want to like add on to midshipmen leaders. Because company commanders go to the Gettysburg encounter where they get trained on a lot of things. And one of the things they talk about is the culture of the behavior. So the culture of an organization is the collective behavior of the leaders. So if you think about that, it's what you do as a company commander and what you do at a squad leader level. And we talked about Joke Fridays. And if the culture of the organization is a collective behavior of the leaders, and if the leaders are collectively communicating and behaving in a consistent matter, that does not happen. And it's really [disjointed], there is like no communication going on. So it's not consistent within the company. So it's your responsibility as midshipmen leadership to make sure you harp on that. You're training the plebes. Like plebes are learning that. And when they become leaders they are going to do the exact same thing. If you don't stop that, it's going to continue on."* (Mixed-Gender Session)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that their training does a good job sensitizing them to issues and increasing their awareness, and should continue.**
  - *"I don't know about the other Academies, but the Naval Academy specifically, I think we have the best training in this area. I think it's extremely evident when you go back home and you hang out with your civilian friends, at least for me, I feel like I'm constantly perceiving those things and remember what's going on. I feel like when you go out with a fellow midshipman, people are more aware, they are like what's*

going on. And you care more about leading the group than other situations. So I think they do an excellent job." (Mixed-Gender Session)

- *"I'm really excited that the Academy has put a lot more emphasis on this subject. We're pretty much one of the first classes to graduate with this much education in this matter and I think that will present a lot of challenges for us when we get out in the fleet. And it's kind of dissuading to me that there is a lot of people I'll be working with and for that have not had this training and maybe they don't feel the same way about sexual assault and women and men. And so I think that's dissuading, but I think by the time that the class of 2015 is the Commandant of the Marine Corps or the Commandant of the Naval Academy, the atmosphere will be a lot better than it is. I would hope that."* (Mixed-Gender Session)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Midshipmen were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the Academy was doing a good job with training and emphasis and did better than civilian schools.**
  - *"I feel like generally we can assume that we're better with sexual assault than a civilian college, and yet it feels like we're being trained even more."* (Male)
  - *"As long as we're getting paid to come here and people are paying for us to come here, it shouldn't happen [sexual assault]. And if it takes more training, then it takes more training."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that training received will be helpful to them as future leaders.**
  - *"I think that starting with the class of '15, their freshman year and going on, '16 and so on, I think that you might see maybe in five years when we're all lieutenants that we are going to be better equipped to handle stuff like this than our company officers are or were, and battalion officers, just because of the training."* (Male)
  - *"I think we're definitely going to be prepared."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen indicated they liked training that was midshipmen developed and led; but some questioned the need for an officer or SEL to be present.**
  - *"More midshipmen are teaching midshipmen. They have a different understanding of how we learn. So I figure it's better to learn from someone that goes to school with you and goes through the same things. Keep it that way."* (Male)
  - *"Whenever an officer or senior enlisted is in, it changes the mood ridiculously."* (Male)
  - *"If the SHAPE/SAPR sessions did not have the officer in there, I feel like midshipmen would be much more encouraged to discuss and talk about an issue."* (Male)
  - *"You could definitely see how if there wasn't some officer or senior enlisted in there how the conversation could turn south really quickly. And the 30 midshipmen that are in there gang up against the two presenters and totally blow them off. So there are definitely reasons why they are there unfortunately."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the larger reform brief sessions (brigade-wide assembly of midshipmen) are not as useful as smaller sessions.**
  - *"Specifically, this might just be me, but like the reform briefs we get about SHAPE and SAPR, I never retain any of that information, and they are always really long. It's the same information we get later on in the SHAPE sessions. Maybe cutting those specific briefs out."* (Male)
  - *"Maybe at that brief only say 'Hey, these are when your sessions are going to be, plan for it.' That's it."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they felt that the Academy needs to be careful not to "overemphasize" training.**
  - *"You don't want to do it to the point where the training is becoming ineffective, or it stops accomplishing its goal and starts becoming a hindrance. It creates cynicism more, I don't want to say polarize, but makes people standoffish to the training, to the point where people are just going to outwardly ignore the training and disregard it simply because there is so much of it or because they think it's like finger pointing or something."* (Male)
  - *"I think the more training you have, the less we're going to listen to it. So there might be a smarter way to go about it than just more training. That's the easy solution is more training."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that SHAPE and SAPR trainings are redundant, yielding too many trainings.**
  - *"One of the issues stems from there being SHAPE and SAPR. I think the Academy should align to the fleet and only have SAPR. SHAPE is the exact same thing, but*

then you have SHAPE and SAPR training. But it's the same thing. Why are we doubling the training of the exact same message. I know, it's sexual harassment, assault prevention and education, and then sexual assault prevention response. Well, both have prevention in them, and prevention comes through education. So it's totally redundant to have two different programs. Align with the fleet, SAPR only." (Male)

- *"Two different lesson views, two different guiding principles. I think that's actually one of the reasons why people get confused on maybe restricted and unrestricted reporting, because slight deviations in programs might end up leading to confusion."* (Male)

- **Some midshipmen provided feedback that some training they received was uncomfortable, but that they could see improvements.**
  - *"There were a couple of videos that were strange. Like a play thing they put on that was a little weird. I applaud their efforts to try all these different avenues to get the message out to us. I think they are still feeling their way around the best way to get us these briefs, and I think it's just growing pains with the program. Like it's only really been active and earnest for the past two or three years since the really big sexual assault scandal. I think given a few years, given some more time to refine what they are doing will get to a point where the training doesn't feel as forced or uncomfortable. It's just a matter of feeling that out."* (Male)
  - *"That one made me personally uncomfortable because the guys sitting around me were saying these comments that were off color. But I think just the normal SHAPE sessions with the peer leader talking with your company, I think there was one, and every time I see the guy that led the SHAPE session around campus, I always remember he was the best person that was a peer leader at a SHAPE session that I ever had. Normally they make me uncomfortable hearing all the things my company has to say about stuff. I think those are the most effective. It's peer-to-peer and you don't feel so much like you're getting talked at."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that training makes them skeptical and feel that they should not trust the system.**
  - *"The issue with the training, people walk out of the trainings thinking, wow, the system's out to get me, I'm going to get screwed no matter what I do, rather than thinking, wow, what an awful thing that some people have to cope with. I would want to do anything to prevent that from happening to someone. I think that's really the emotions or the thought process we need to appeal to. I don't think people understand that there are cases where someone is pursued, they're given drugs and sexually assaulted or they're violently assaulted. And I think people question whether that ever happens."* (Female)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some midshipmen indicated training should also incorporate new topics, such as retaliation, responsible use of social media, and victim blaming.**
  - *"I think it would be cool if the training talked about retaliation and social media and stuff. That would be interesting. Here is the first time that's really been talked about. Whereas the training does seem redundant. So obviously there are new things we can talk about but we seem to be talking about the same things."* (Male)
  - *"I definitely think the amount of training is pretty solid. Sure, sometimes it's long and sometimes it's even redundant, but we do go to a school that has you at that high standard and when you graduate you have to uphold that standard, so all the training is definitely for a good result. But I mean like I think one thing that SHAPE does right is that they do ask for constant change to make the program better, which is why I feel like we're doing better than we have in years past."* (Male)
  - *"I was actually sort of surprised when we had our first SHAPE sessions about some of the unnuanced, like opinions that some of my classmates had on things like the victim blaming and consent. I think if things like that were talked about more, like in-depth in the SHAPE sessions they would be good."* (Male)
  - *"I think the ethics of it, the blurred line between what people think is sexual assault and people think is joking is one of the most interesting and I think trainable aspects about it. So I think the very first SHAPE session there were three scenarios, and there were pretty even splits on whether people would act or not. And I think that was one of the most interesting and revealing things we've done in SHAPE so far. So more of that."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that small group training would be more effective than presentations.**
  - *"We've had SHAPE sessions when we have literally sat there and been talked at. And that's got to be totally shooting yourself in the foot on that. Like more group discussions."* (Male)
  - *"Getting people involved."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated involving the company SAPR GUIDE in training sessions would help people get to know the GUIDE better.**
  - *"I think maybe if the company SAPR GUIDE was more involved because usually most people don't know who their SAPR GUIDE is in their company. Or they don't make themselves approachable. And like I feel like maybe if they conduct their own session among the company with different classes rather than going to a SAPR brief with upperclassmen you don't know and they're reading off the paper about what they're expected to talk about."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated mixed opinions about separating men and women in the discussion sessions.**
  - *"I definitely would suggest separating the genders for some of the SAPR briefs. I know there are things guys won't say around girls. They can get pretty raw sometimes."* (Female)
  - *"Maybe it's my company but everyone gets pretty fired up in SAPR. Everyone is excited for them because it's usually a huge discussion within my company. And I think it's interesting to hear the guy's perspective. It's pretty insightful I think. It's probably insightful for them to hear our perspective as well."* (Female)
- **Some midshipmen indicated that the most important thing to convey in training is awareness.**
  - *"Honestly I think the most important thing is just awareness and it doesn't matter how that happens. Because in my opinion people come to this school from all walks are life, some people are prior enlisted, some people come straight out of high school, some people come from well to do families, some people come from very poor backgrounds, where they come from broken homes or we're associated with shady characters in high school. And when they get together, they have different mindsets about what's okay on the spectrum of sexual assault. I'm sorry, I'm not speaking to a specific way to train, I'm saying in general awareness, and what is acceptable. Just as a ground rule basis is important because people don't know the legal or moral boundaries of what is acceptable coming into the school. So to set that tone early."* (Male)
  - *"Especially as a future officer in the military. We're expected to uphold a much higher standard and to know what that standard is first and foremost is important."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen noted more attention should be paid toward sophomores, addressing the increased opportunity for experiencing unwanted behaviors.**
  - *"Plebes are off limits for any dating or any fraternization. So I think it's like, 'Oh, this is our first crack at the sophomores, like they are available now.'"* (Male)
  - *"The thing is after their freshman year you've gotten your feet wet and you think you know the ropes, so you go out and you're more adventurous. Adventure can lead to situations where you never could have thought you would be in, and that turns into unwanted sexual experiences."* (Male)
- **Some midshipmen indicated they would like more input into the training.**
  - *"I want to make a comment about ownership. I definitely do see the midshipmen owning the idea of improving the culture and saying sexism and all this stuff is not okay any more. But I don't think we own the training. And it's pretty clear that we*

don't like all the SHAPE training we have to do. The officers in charge of that do not listen to any feedback, even from the leadership within their organization. And that's pretty clear and it's a source of frustration." (Male)

- *"We have plenty of ways to give feedback, but they don't listen to it and acknowledge it. And I think that's a problem with the people in charge of the SAPR program right now."* (Male)

- *"I was just going to talk about the feedback system. I know the midshipmen who lead the SHAPE programs, specifically what we're talking about right now, they will often come back to their company and say 'Hey, guys, what did you think about this bunch of trainings we've had?' And they take all the gripes from company mates and send them up. So if they actually listened to the midshipmen and maybe let the midshipmen own the program a little more I think people would buy into it a lot more."* (Male)

- *"They [leadership] take what they are doing seriously, [but] they don't take our advice to try to change it seriously. I think they definitely know it's an issue and they are pushing what they have in place already to try to fix it, but for whatever reason I don't think they want to address the process."* (Male)

- **Some female midshipmen indicated training should address how to handle behaviors like sexual harassment or unwanted touching.**

  - *"A lot of what I see or what I believe to happen is in a context where it's a group of guys. There's really no one there to watch them and they get carried away. They horseplay and I don't think people realize there are boundaries and they'll cross them. And if you step up and speak out and say that's not cool they are going to judge you in some way. We have training that's male and female separate so I have no idea what they talk about. But in the group training I don't think that's ever really talked about."* (Female)

  - *"I don't believe our training consists of a lot with small incidents. We really focus on somebody gets raped or someone was drinking and say no. It's always a major event every time we have a SHAPE session. I understand they do occur and I understand why we do them, but a lot of incidents are a slap on the butt or rude comment or sexual comments. I've always been taught to defend myself. And I do, and I have before. And you know, it stops. So I feel like if we encourage behavior like that to stand up for yourself and for your fellow females or males if you see them at the lower level."* (Female)

- **Some midshipmen indicated that it would be helpful if training addressed speaking up against inappropriate behaviors and dealing with any backlash.**

  - *"I think one of the most valuable trainings we could have now would be something that teaches people or promotes the idea that you can go against the group mentality and teaching them to deal with the inherent ramifications like you're going to be less popular with that group. Probably just the training that stresses individuality and*

just standing up even though you know it's going to make you unpopular. That could probably be the most useful training right now and probably solve a lot of these problems." (Male)

- **Some midshipmen recommended bringing in speakers who can give examples of their experiences.**
  - *"I really like the idea of bringing in speakers and having examples."* (Female)
  - *"I definitely think so. That way you get both sides of it [referring to survivor and offender experiences]. Otherwise people will complain how one-sided it is."* (Female)

Chapter 5:
U.S. Naval Academy Faculty and Staff

Three focus group sessions were conducted at U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) from March 24-27, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. The three sessions were: faculty members, coaches and athletic staff, and military staff (Company Officers, Senior Enlisted Advisors). Each session had between 7 and 9 participants. A total of 23 staff members participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the faculty and staff participants the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix F, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USNA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rates decreased from 2012 (noting that the incidence rates for both women and men at USNA were statistically lower from 2012 to 2014), and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Participants were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Participants further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some staff members indicated they were familiar with the USC rates from the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"I did see them, the Commandant over in the Bancroft Hall side of the house, had a meeting a month and a half or two months ago to go over the results of the survey from the prior year. That included all company officers, senior enlisted, battalion officers, the direct midshipmen chain of command. So he went over these results and some of the trends we saw as well."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated they had heard some information about USC rates.**
  - *"I don't know if I've seen these statistics. I've heard some mention as far as community climate surveys and sexual assault prevention folks. They put up some type of statistics, but I don't remember exactly which ones. I know they do quote statistics."* (Athletic)

- *"I think the one that the Commandant briefed us on was the command climate survey, but a lot of it incorporated the sexual assault/sexual harassment type stuff as well. I believe the rates were similar to what we're seeing based on DMDC results."* (Athletic)

- *"I know they've been collected, I'm aware of the sampling, the polling going on, but perhaps not the numbers themselves."* (Faculty)

- *"I heard there was a drastic drop but did not see the numbers."* (Faculty)

Reasons for decrease in USC rates

- **Some staff members indicated that the increased emphasis and quality of training has affected USC rates.**

  - *"I think we're teaching the midshipmen what is appropriate and what is inappropriate better now. As the SHAPE [Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education] and SAPR [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response] programs have advanced the teaching has improved. We're finally getting to the point we're not teaching Navy processing and reporting; we're teaching them to talk to each other about what is appropriate and inappropriate."* (Athletic)

  - *"As far as the training, the tenor of the training I even saw in the fleet, it shifted from how to report it, how to talk about it as to real life scenarios and applicable and I felt it was more embracing by people to speak to what it is. It has to do with how it's being presented. It was really explicit how to present it as opposed to, 'You need to talk about sexual assault with your people.' The scripts were written out well to cover the scenarios that are pretty uncomfortable sometimes for people to talk about."* (Athletic)

  - *"Coming from a fleet perspective to here, I would say the education that they are provided here is greater than it is out in the fleet. And I think the education they are providing has to be contributing to this. Because they really cover a vast amount of information. And they bring in real life situations. They don't say who it is, but they bring real life situations into it. And the last one they did was a video. And the response from the mids was this really brought it to life for us, this made it real. So I think the SAPR office and the education and the resources that they are providing to them had to have helped with that."* (Military)

  - *"Not just awareness, but effective instruction. It's effective sessions that are getting past the very canned Navy sexual assault prevention training and getting more to dialogue between the genders as to what is appropriate and what's inappropriate."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that sharing data and addressing the problem have contributed to progress in lowering the incidence rate of sexual assault.**
  - *"On a positive note we wrap it back to training, the data that's being put out and how it's being displayed I think is becoming a little more aggressive. I think not only here at the Academy but even on the media, in our homes now, now it's coming into our home, we didn't have that four years ago. We as a society, we as an Academy, we've had these numbers and maybe we finally cracked a nut here and we know how to send the signal in. Give them the raw data, give them the truth. Tell them a real story, tell them how this is wrong. Now we're starting to increase in our GMTs [general military trainings] now, innocent bystander training. If you see someone horsing around, you know it's inappropriate, step up. Not that we haven't always sent that message to our midshipmen or officers throughout, but now we walk the walk, talk to talk. Hence, guys, there's a reason why we've been preaching this for years, here's the data. Now leadership is starting to take a look at it and go, 'Hey, we need an innovative way of training or communicating that this in inappropriate.' This is a turn, now we've got to get up to the blackboard and say how do I maintain 1.3 percent and keep it going down. There's always going to be the one person out there that doesn't get it, that one individual that is a sexual assailant. We talk about this in training, they're predators. That's the nut that's got to crack. How do I identify that individual, that's the guy, girl that preys on these people? Maybe we might get to zero for a short time. We've got to maintain this as well."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated the emphasis has resulted in some midshipmen choosing to avoid social association with other midshipmen.**
  - *"I wasn't here [years ago], so I only bring a very finite set of data points into this discussion. I don't know what it was like before I showed up. There is a huge emphasis on that. There is now the SHAPE program they developed here at the Academy. I understand its intent and I think it's a good program they have put together. But I also understand there has been some backlash from the training that they have experienced. And what I was really surprised to see was some of my male students said 'I don't even want to go out in town and have a beer with my friends who happen to be of the other gender, I don't even want to invite that,' which is disappointing because they're all in this together."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated the senior leadership emphasis in 2013 might have affected rates of USC.**
  - *"I think there was a big stand down because of they weren't happy with the rates. I think that might have something to do with it, even though the mids seem to hate it, it may have done what it was meant to do."* (Military)
  - *"There was a lot of training between now and then [referring to the stand down in 2013]. The whole brigade was addressed. Different programs were implemented and the SAPR office moved from piecemealed offices to one very large office, was*

given more space and a larger budget as well. Might have had some influence." (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated there might be several reasons why the rates in USC decreased, such as increased awareness and the impact of new leadership.**
  - *"I would look at it as all the data in front, why was the increase from 2008 to 2010, then we see a plateau, and then we see a decrease back down to rates that were similar to 2008. So this may be due to less of the actual act happening between 2012 and 2014, probably a good thing, or it could be better awareness of definitions, what they consider to be this unwanted sexual contact. Could be more reporting perhaps could cause the uptick. I think it can be any number of things. I think more awareness of what is and what is not acceptable is hopefully driving some of this to down to the levels we're seeing now."* (Faculty)
  - *"I don't want to take anything away from the training piece of it, because that probably has a big impact on that. But I don't think it's a coincidence, that in the middle of that timeframe there was a huge leadership turnover. The Commandant himself is such an outgoing type of individual and he brought a lot of energy to the Academy and a lot of focus on a lot of important issues. He was able to relate it to midshipmen in a way that it didn't seem like he was like cramming it down their throats. So I don't think it's a coincidence that you see a drastic shift in something like that when leadership, good leadership, is brought in."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that there is emphasis on sexual assault in the staff training they receive.**
  - *"I know there's been an increase in the emphasis, at least from my perception, I can't say when it started, several years ago I guess. For me perhaps it's been more of a discussion point, but I have absolutely no feel for what the midshipmen are seeing."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think there's been more discussion at new faculty orientation as well as the students having to go to training, that at least it's something that people don't just not talk about. There is more emphasis on talking about defining."* (Faculty)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[33]

- **Some staff members indicated they had not witnessed any forms of "locker room" behavior they would call USC.**
  - *"It didn't surprise me [the percentages of men who endorsed behaviors as part of their USC experience], but I wonder what that means. So some form of horseplay, locker room behavior, what exactly would they envision when they said yes to that, a towel snap? I'm trying to figure out what I've seen in the locker room. And I haven't*

[33]See Appendix F, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USNA Men" for the details shared with participants

seen anything that for me would trigger it. I wonder what their triggers would be to say yes to that question." (Athletic)

- *"I can't say that I've ever heard anyone talk about horse play or locker room type stuff. We are, I think, starting to neck down to the nuances, but I think we're teaching to the extremes."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that training could better address these issues among men.**
  - *"I see a lot of the trainings. I think we're still at the point where we're teaching to the extremes a little bit right now. So it's scenario you're walking down the street and you see somebody being raped, what do you do? Hopefully we all understand somebody should do something about this, or at least call the police or something. I think we're getting better at teaching to the nuances, but especially last year, the scenarios were these very extreme cases where it was like gang rape or roofies in the bar. Your classic cases I guess."* (Military)
  - *"I think the training focuses a lot on men and women together and not necessarily men and men or women and women. And I know that they try to say it is a thing that a man can experience too, but that always feels like an after-thought. And I've had some of the males in my company say when the SAPR office is full of women they feel that they might be a little less comfortable going to the SAPR office because there isn't that male representative there. I know that for some of the SHAPE sessions they split up men and women, but maybe that's something that could use a little more attention."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that "locker room" behaviors can sometimes occur and an authority might not be present to witness it.**
  - *"There are traditions around midshipmen's birthdays and they're not always good, and things that can get out of hand, horseplay."* (Athletic)
  - *"Just to add to some of the locker room and expand upon that. We don't have oversight in the locker room, and frequently they are probably on their own or maybe have a civilian coach or someone that's outside of the chain of command and someone that they see as authoritative within the military structure. So what I've seen from some of my younger midshipmen is, yes, some of that stuff is going on in the locker room and I don't really know how to deal with it."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated the survey findings with regard to behaviors experienced by men might be useful in educating midshipmen about inappropriate behaviors.**
  - *"Going back to education and being able to talk about dominance, but actually opening up communication. If that's where the majority of it is going on, men being men in the locker room is not appropriate. Just because it was done to you as a*

freshman doesn't mean you should do it as a senior to freshmen. Actually communicating some of that would be worthwhile. Our training never focuses on this kind of dominance." (Faculty)

- *"One of the great terms I've heard that, and we do this in the military a lot, is the process of 'other-ing.' The idea of building a cohesive group based on the fact of separating ourselves from those others, those other people. I think a lot of that happens in the locker room, and that has been an acceptable place for that to be displayed for a very long time. So I think it is much more of a cultural thing, I think you're right, that that would need to shift. And I think because that's been a place it's been okay to demonstrate those behaviors to enact those private thoughts. And it would be okay to do that there, so that's maybe the last stronghold. And again, I'm not going to go in there to change that. Maybe we can figure out a way to address that. Would introduce that into the training process, I think that's brilliant."* (Faculty)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[34]

- **Some staff members indicated that misuse of alcohol is an ongoing problem for the Academy.**
  - *"Alcohol is a problem with the Academy, it always has been. I think just the mechanism by which we have set up the Academy does not encourage any kind of socialization with alcohol. So midshipmen binge drink on the weekends. We don't really treat them like adults even though they're of legal age until they can blow the steam off. It's not surprising we have tons of alcohol-related incidents around here."* (Athletic)
  - *"I'm not surprised by it personally [that alcohol is involved in about 60% of the incidents of unwanted sexual contact]."* (Athletic)

Reporting

Faculty and staff participants were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix F, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Participants discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Participants were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more midshipmen to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with faculty and staff participants providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

[34] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some staff members indicated they are not familiar with reporting statistics.**
  - *"I haven't seen them."* (Athletic)
  - *"I've never seen the data like this, but I do see it individually."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that gaps between incidents and reporting fit expectations.**
  - *"I'm not surprised."* (Faculty)
  - *"I'm not either, especially after the latest Article 32 hearing, a major class discussions after that happened too. I wouldn't report after that."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated they do not receive information on unrestricted reports.**
  - *"Correct, there is no update."* (Military)
  - *"That's disturbing."* (Faculty)
  - *"This is news to me that there were 14 unrestricted reports. Or at least it feels like news to me."* (Military)
  - *"Unless it's in your company, because if it's unrestricted in your company, then you have to do the Superintendent thing. So if it was in our company we would know about it if it was unrestricted."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that reporting generally remains confidential but sometimes midshipmen discuss incidents on social media or talk about incidents.**
  - *"Stays pretty confidential."* (Military)
  - *"Unless a midshipman puts it on the social media, we have something called Yik Yak here."* (Military)
  - *"I think that's the case, not just social media, but just people talking about it. There is not an official, 'Hey, there was an unrestricted report filed yesterday.' I think the undertone, kind of this underworld of midshipmen life is something we don't really see a lot where it's like they're all talking about, I heard so and so is accusing so and so of doing something."* (Military)
  - *"In my short experience it seems like when the cases are midshipmen on midshipmen they are a lot more well known throughout the brigade."* (Military)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some staff members indicated that leadership encourages reporting.**
  - *"I think that absolutely leadership is behind it. I think everything we put out to the students says yes, if you feel comfortable with reporting you should move forward with it and here are your options. People are very good about conveying that information."* (Faculty)
  - *"Institutionally I think there's huge discouragement, but individually leadership does encourage reporting. It's just institutionally we have a lousy track record and we don't do very well by the people who report."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated they discuss and encourage reporting with midshipmen.**
  - *"What I think everybody's fighting against though is in weighing whether or not they should make a report is the backlash they'll feel, both within the brigade or just the trauma of having to go through that process again, or to relive their experiences. And the legal outcomes have not been very positive for survivors. [They think] so why should I even bother to make a report if it's not going to make any good and I have to be dragged through this all again. I rather move on with it, without doing that."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think we discuss it a lot. It's part of our training where we tell the barriers, we discuss barriers to reporting. And I believe we've done that in small groups with our mids. We have done it in a variety of ways, large groups, small groups, SHAPE sessions where they have a peer educator that teaches it to them. So I think they are getting that message."* (Military)
  - *"I feel these numbers explain that and we need to continue to align the message that your primary role is to not sexually assault someone, but you already know that. Your primary role is to watch out for things and be a part of the process. And if you see something or if something was done to you, you almost have a duty to report that, as opposed to your fear of social retaliation and things like that. I think that's the message that still continues to need to be refined. I think it's come a long ways in the past few years and especially it's come a long way from what we see in the fleet and what we'll probably continue to see in the fleet when we leave here."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that restricted reporting produces frustration without actionable information.**
  - *"So as a past commander, in the drive to zero [incidents] I understand the reasoning for restricted and unrestricted. However, as a commander, restricted reporting is brutal for us because the phone call goes something like this, 'I just wanted to let you know there's been a report about something that happened some time with someone in your command, I need you to address it.' I'm dead serious. That's exactly how the*

conversation went. That's extremely unhelpful for me. As a matter of fact it's actually less than helpful, because now I know I have a problem, I don't know what it is, I don't know who it's to. I have someone hurting in my command, I can't do anything about it. One recommendation, I don't know how to do it, trust commanders a little more with the data. All I know is that there's some kind of problem." (Athletic)

- *"What do you do? Anybody who's been a commander, executive officer, might have gotten a phone call about the hospital calling you regarding an individual's HIV in your command. You're the only one that's supposed to know. You got to let us address the problem somehow. If you want us to get to zero I got to know something. I use that as an example. I have received those phone calls. Here's the information, I need you to contact the guy. And it's only a one-on-one conversation and it's kept very confidential. We're good at keeping secrets."* (Athletic)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen would not report out of distrust of leadership.**
  - *"It's they don't trust the command is going to do the right thing by their reporting. You see it all the time, the victimization of the victim, you must have been complicit. A fear of conduct charges against them because there might be stuff that happened, not excusing the incident, but that they be afraid they might be caught up in misconduct of their own. Sometimes there's an amount of shame and stigma they feel that they don't want the command to know. I understand the reason for it, I think it's valuable for getting victims help. But is part of that secure, but how do you prevent, how do you get to that."* (Athletic)
  - *"Just if you go back to the, there was a trial in the news when I just got here about assault by some football players. And the questioning that the victim was submitted to and quoted and the line of questioning quoted in the press, I mean it was just totally uncalled for. They were making it out to make her the, make her as the perpetrator. And it was, I was shocked by what I read."* (Athletic)
  - *"It goes to your numbers also, coincidentally are dropping about the same time as all those newspapers articles are going. So, and I said it when it was happening, if I was a woman midshipman at the Academy there's no way I'm reporting anything like that, or at least doing an unrestricted."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that overzealous encouragement to report has undermined trust in the system.**
  - *"The SAPR program has been pegged in such a direction to encourage reporting that it over encourages. And the midshipmen at the peer level are self-diagnosing. They're self-training in their own sessions. They're driven by the SAPR/SHAPE program. But they're doing exactly what we're teaching them to do, to handle the*

problems at their level. And the first question is, is it an actual problem? And if it is it gets better attention. There's not a midshipman here who doesn't know the difference between restricted and unrestricted reporting. What we don't see is the true effects of this. What you see in your survey is showing that, that things are going down because they're smarter. And because the guys are scared. They're more scared now than they were a couple years ago. They're acting out their fears. You're going to see incidents even dropping too." (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that reporting can be stressful on the survivor.**
  - *"It makes it hard, you don't want to relive it."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that confidentiality of midshipmen cannot be protected after a report.**
  - *"I frankly have no confidence of confidentiality. Leadership can say we are going to hold it that way, but in practice it's not going to happen for any myriad of reasons. That is something I think that really goes into the numbers we're seeing."* (Faculty)
  - *"People know who the victim is and I think it follows them into the fleet."* (Faculty)
  - *"Social media is what causes a lot of these leakages I would say."* (Faculty)
  - *"I have worked with survivors who have shared that after they made a report they would come back and find sticky notes on their desk, anonymous ones, saying thanks, now so and so is leaving, all thanks to you, or just inappropriate ways to deal with that. I'm sure that information gets shared. And I'm sure there is a lot of backlash. I can't say for sure, but just based on what I've heard."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that reporting demands an unreasonable amount of time and might detract from other responsibilities.**
  - *"They might report it through a survey. I would just be surprised with how busy they are on a daily basis, if something happened in the locker room, I just don't know on a midshipman's table of priorities, I think they would just be like, well, that happened, I'll deal with it, because I've got a chemistry test tomorrow and practice today and whatever. They are so packed throughout the day that they might just say it's low on my priority to have to go to the SAPR office."* (Military)
  - *"The general consensus is I don't want to spend the time, I don't want to end up on the Yak, I don't want to be seen in a negative light, I've got too much going for me finally. Last year I was unsat in academics and this year I've got my stuff together, and I don't want this to interrupt that. Or I just don't want to deal with the time that goes into it."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen's loyalty to each other sometimes overrides their willingness to hold each other accountable.**
  - *"I think another issue is that they have this thing about loyalty to each other, instead of accountability of holding each other accountable. For certain actions or things they shouldn't do, their loyalty will sometimes override the very important need necessity to report something. So like a lot of things that happen in my company I find out more by walking the deck planks than I do they actually come and say, 'We just want to let you know this is going on.' It's things that I overhear, because they don't want to dime each other out. I think that's another issue."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen may not recognize incidents of USC as worthy of report.**
  - *"I think it can also be that they don't necessarily think of these things as reportable. So, some of the things that go on in the locker room may have occurred to fill out this survey, but when it happened they may have been like, 'Well, it's not rape so I don't go to SAPR' kind of thing."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that poor reporting of outcomes discourages others from reporting.**
  - *"The legal, the actions of the institution don't bear, don't support the individual reporting. That person is left without anything and the perpetrator continues or the alleged perpetrator continues unscathed."* (Faculty)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some staff members indicated that restricted reports enable repeat offenders.**
  - *"I think that that's, most of the time you're going to have repeat offenders because they get off on the power of it. The problem with restricted reporting is some of with restricted reporting it happens with somebody not involved in your command, that's one thing. But if it's your command, now you have a perpetrator in your command who is potentially a risk to other people, assaulting other people. And you want to be able to take action and get that person out of our Navy or Marine Corps."* (Athletic)
  - *"I've had a serial harasser that a while ago that fell into the crack like this. It took a person to report some really unwanted sexual advances. As we pulled the thread on this and found out it was 'Joe being Joe.' And he had done similar things all along. Had harassed women in every command he had been in. But some had restricted reported it, some had let it go because of the lack of trust of reporting. By the time there was now six or seven women over the span of five duty stations that had experienced it. It goes back to, how do you trust in the chain of command. But it took a brave person [to say],' I don't like the way you just talked to me and I'm going to say something about it.'"* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that survivors of repeated incidents are less likely to report.**
  - *"I worry it could be counterproductive, that somebody might be less likely to report something happening again. It's normalized and especially if they view unfairly or unjustly that the burden is on them and them solely to do this they might be less likely to do that, to report."* (Faculty)
  - *"They also probably then feel like I let this happen. Since I let it happen the first time it's my fault it's happening a second time. Which is not correct, but it's training the victim to understand they are victims."* (Faculty)
  - *"There are a lot of people that they know that someone will offend and that will more than likely offend again or has repeatedly offended them. And they feel guilt, but they don't feel like that that guilt outweighs the time or the scrutiny they are going to be under or the retaliation [for reporting]."* (Military)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen report out of a sense of duty to protect fellow sailors and midshipmen.**
  - *"So this doesn't happen to somebody else. This person has no business being in our Navy. If they are able to dig in and wade through all the legal stuff that happens that they will do that."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think the belief that the person needs not be commissioned would be a motivator. This is somebody who deserves to not just move along and be promoted."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen report out of a sense of self-preservation.**
  - *"I think maybe victims could think this is a way to take back some power and control because obviously when they're assaulted it is a lack of control. So it's a way to find yourself again by asserting that this happened to you not because of something you did, so to actually make a report gives you that power back."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that empathy for victims motivates bystanders to encourage someone to report sexual assault.**
  - *"What's been so successful I think is targeted training, targeted messaging. We're not just giving a broad kind of brush generic things, it's very targeted, like the video they just produced that had the anonymous mids with the 'I Was Harassed.' It's powerful. And you watch it."* (Athletic)
  - *"If you watch it [the video] you can't help but really have empathy for them. That's the first step is empathy and then respect. But to see actual mids doing that, it brings the problem home. If I go, hey, I know there's been a problem of something having to*

do with sexual assault, we're going to have stand down training and talk to you about, I can do that, but it's more effective if I have some context to the problem. You want the leadership to do something about it, we all want to, but without the knowledge it's very difficult." (Athletic)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some staff members indicated that improving confidentiality is crucial to encouraging reporting.**
  - *"Leaks to the press, releases to the press are certainly unhelpful to say it mildly. We have closed sessions about all kinds of things that are sensitive in nature that the press doesn't have access to. I would rather have transparencies protecting individuals, close it up."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that harsher and more public punishments might restore confidence in the system.**
  - *"Lower the boom on some of the offenders. I haven't sat in on any of the hearings, Article 32s, but actually lowering the boom, kick a certain fraction out of the Navy, commissioned or not."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think it's [publicizing punishments] just not happening."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that sharing more information about outcomes would help encourage reporting.**
  - *"I think if it did happen, a midshipmen XYZ case, at least that would be the information put out and it would be a data point that could be held up as actually sometimes we don't always get the desired outcome we would like, but here is one case where it did go through and it did. So maybe understanding that it's not an entirely lost cause would be very helpful in encouraging people to say, 'Wow, at least I have a chance.' Right now I think that is, have you seen what the records look like, why should I even bother."* (Faculty)
  - *"I would concur with all that. I would also add if there's any way to both formally and informally diffuse the responsibility for reporting so it's not solely on the victim. I think a lot of times because of some of the issues folks had talked about earlier people that might want to come forward will let's say not put the burden on another victim who doesn't want to come forward. But in a certain sense what happens then is the burden for reporting is pushed solely on the victim, in a certain sense the responsibility as well when it should be shared by others. If there's some way that can be done in a nonthreatening way I think that would be beneficial as well."* (Faculty)
  - *"They tried that [publicizing incidents] a little bit last year, and I think what we found is the institutional memory and the scope of the publicity on these things. Like that midshipmen underworld I was referring to, is a lot longer than just somebody*

who jumped over the wall and got in trouble for it, and we publish that as a case." (Military)

- *"With the XYZs you need specific permission from the victim to be able to publish that, and they don't want to see this incident posted on the wall or something like that, the re-victimization and things like that."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated engaging peers to identify problems might encourage someone to report sexual assault.**
  - *"If three or four people could go and say we worry about an incident or something, you could either do it without naming the victim or the accused or either. [Reporting] should ultimately be up to the victim, but I don't think that you should let everybody else off the hook more for reporting and being aware of the issues. Maybe four people in a squad could say we're worried about potential for an issue in our squadron, or we're worried for issues in our locker room or something along those lines. If they could do that and say I myself am not a victim of this, but I'm worried that maybe it has been. And maybe that person would say, no, there hasn't been. Maybe no one will come forward. You don't want to create witch hunts, but at the same point recognizing that someone that is aware of the possibility of these issues has more responsibility than not to do harm I think."* (Faculty)
  - *"You want to be careful because you don't want one person to be able to put another person, to force them through the reporting process. At the same point there may be some way for people to say we're concerned with what's going on."* (Faculty)
  - *"The ultimate decision to pursue reporting it or not should be their decision."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that for bystanders to encourage someone to report requires controlling potential backlash against them.**
  - *"I think backlash would probably be the reason [for bystanders not being more involved]. That's something we deal with bystander intervention. It's oh, gosh, I'm not really involved, how is this going to come back, I'm not sure I want to get involved with that. So I like the idea. I don't know how it would be feasible. There are SHAPE GUIDES within each company who know the process, who are familiar, they are the point of contact if something happens, or if you observe something you can go talk to these folks about it. Would it be like via Facebook like anonymous, would there be a place you could do an anonymous, 'Hey, I think something yucky went down here, could we do some more research, investigation?'"* (Faculty)
  - *"I think part of this reason, part of this backlash is because of the concern about trying to make that decision for someone and hoisting it on them. I think there's good reasons not to hoist that on someone. At the same point I think you can't wash your hands and say that's between them."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that discussing fleet experiences with midshipmen might be useful because experiences at the Academy take a long time to achieve closure.**
  - *"Maybe we can bring in fleet experiences."* (Military)
  - *"It just takes a while to go through the [fleet adjudication] system because it has to be finalized and a lot of times those things take a really long time for everybody to be said and done with it."* (Military)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
>
> 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a midshipman would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some athletic staff members indicated that retaliation occurs among midshipmen.**
  - *"I think that's happening more since I've gotten here."* (Athletic)

- *"Retaliation-wise I would say, this is so hard to say, it depends on the character of the person who is coming forward and how she is perceived in terms of sexual assault, I'm being frank, in terms of how she is perceived."* (Athletic)

- *"Another female in their company, for example, may turn on them, not be their buddy anymore because, 'Hey, you brought this to my institution.' That's the way they look at it, right or wrong. Is that retaliation, I don't know."* (Athletic)

- *"Midshipmen don't have any control over the demerits. If you're talking about midshipmen-on-midshipmen retaliation, which I think when we talk gender relations, it's hard when you talk company officers, enlisted, midshipmen. We should be focusing on midshipmen-on-midshipmen. In some of the boards we run I see conduct reports that actually talk to those things. So it is happening, I don't know how pervasive it is."* (Athletic)

- *"Or their peer rankings might plummet, their aptitude may plummet as a result of that, and I think that would be up to the company officers to look at and say, 'What's this all about?'"* (Athletic)

- *"I would mention too sometimes not the overt retaliation, that goes on too, but also in our business our culture is the ostracizing, the shunning. It's the subtle, 'You're not part of the team anymore, you hurt the unit, you hurt the squad,' stuff like that. I think that can be more damaging perhaps than the overt attack which is bad enough. I think that's an element that happens too. Just not the Academy, but certainly will happen here, our subculture of military."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that professional retaliation from leadership would not likely occur.**

  - *"No, I don't think. Not for the mids."* (Military)

  - *"I've never seen that."* (Military)

  - *"So professionally, frequently when there is an assault, one or the other person are moved companies. So you could actually tie together that professionally now they are going to be moved to another company that they haven't been part of and are going to be challenged to take on leadership roles, and now maybe because they are nervous of social retaliation and what people know so they may not be stepping forward."* (Faculty)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated examples of retaliation.**

  - *"Social media."* (Military)

  - *"Yik Yak."* (Military)

- *"Cyber bullying."* (Military)
- *"I've seen things on the Yik Yak where it's like 'This person got this person kicked out.' And it's like the victim got the assaulter kicked out. When I don't think, and across the board with a lot of things, a lot of midshipmen don't really take accountability for their actions."* (Military)
- *"Like compared to other colleges, there are so few students here and they live in such a confined area and they interact with each other so much, it's really hard to keep something like that a secret. Very easily I think they would be socially ostracized. I haven't seen that on a sexual assault case, but I've seen it on alcohol cases and things like that. Very, very easily to be socially retaliated against."* (Military)
- *"If somebody does a formal report you may be moved out of your company, if you are there or the alleged perpetrator will be. And if you are moved out mids are going to talk, 'Oh, we have a new company mate, why did you get here?' Or company talk, making assumptions which may or may not be correct. I think that spreads."* (Faculty)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated they are given little guidance about reporting an experience of retaliation.**
  - *"No."* (Multiple Faculty)
  - *"Call SAPRO."* (Faculty)
  - *"Something along those lines."* (Faculty)
  - *"I don't think we talk about retaliation at the faculty. We talk about if a student comes to you and tells you this is what happened, here are the resources, here are things you can share with them, direct them to SAPRO. We haven't talked about retaliation, but I think that's something very valid in our training to learn, gosh, retaliation."* (Faculty)
  - *"I direct everybody to SAPRO, but I think if they were made aware of that and they were able to identify that they are being subjected to that, because many of the mids not even know. They're experiencing it, the shunning, the whatever, but they may not know that they can stand up and say this is not right. They may not know that's something they can do."* (Faculty)

Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated they were aware of the definition of retaliation.**
  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Faculty)

- *"I will caveat that in here, it doesn't capture the second order of facts of that legal definition of retaliation. I think retaliation is any unwanted change in a victim's life as a result of having gone through this. I think that's a broader definition, might not fall under what retaliation is, but that's really the effect of what is happening to them in their life."* (Faculty)

Leadership awareness of retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated how confidentiality relates to retaliation.**
  - *"It's hard because this place is so porous and there's so many different chains of command and people involved. In an institution this large the confidentiality veil is really hard to maintain here. I think all the women are well aware that while I may save my confidentiality I am going to go on the report that's going to have this large group of people in the room that's going to go out and so that's hard. Is that in itself a form of retribution that everyone in your company knows that you're the one that reported? I think sometimes it's not a direct retribution. I look at you differently because you did this. But I know you reported. So I think in itself it's hard for the women to say, there's no way if I report this that everyone's not going to find out."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated how shunning/ostracism relates to retaliation.**
  - *"The shunning thing, say I notice somebody walks past somebody and doesn't say 'Hi.' And I've had somebody in my office say 'I'm being treated differently.' It almost might make it worse for us to go in and say you need to treat so and so the same. Now you're just exacerbating the situation. Some of it self-corrects. Egregious forms of retaliation, absolutely. That's actually when I've seen the leadership step in and take care of."* (Faculty)
  - *"I almost feel the shunning is more insidious."* (Faculty)
  - *"The official retaliation is easy because you can prove it. I can prove that here's a report and your pro/cons are down here. Here's a report your fit/rep dropped or we removed you from this position and put you over here. There's easy ways to prove that, right. To say that I was retaliated because I wasn't socially involved anymore, how do you get to that?"* (Faculty)
  - *"Especially if it's in the Hall. Everyone will know the story. It comes out in the report, 'Oh, so and so reported, oh, I was there.' Or 'Oh, I heard it' and the rumor network goes crazy."* (Faculty)
- **Some faculty members indicated they would be unlikely to witness retaliation in their courses or in day-to-day interactions with students.**
  - *"I don't think we would. In the classroom I wouldn't say that's where we'd see it. I think we're seeing most in Bancroft Hall, which thankfully I'm not privy to that."* (Faculty)

- *"It's going to come under the same rubric that a lot of other things come under. A student is acting differently than before, why? And it's on the teacher to understand, to first notice and then to ask."* (Faculty)

- *"I would say from an instructor standpoint if there's any kind of retaliation going on in my classroom I don't know the cause. So in terms of me dealing with retaliation due to reports of that sort of nature, I don't know I would have any clue, other than that if anything like that were happening in my classroom I would step in because that's my job, at least within my classroom which is what I have control over."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated actions they would take should they witness retaliation.**

  - *"Let's say I was walking past, and I saw it. I think there is a good enough resource between the company officers and SELs, I would walk right over to your SEL and go 'This is what I saw.'"* (Military)

  - *"I would say we're actually empowered to take action on something like that. I would say that even more for than we know what to do or know who to report it to, we are the person we report it to and take action with it. We're the acting authority on it I would say."* (Military)

  - *"We're all just a phone call away or quick e-mail away. We all talk."* (Military)

- **Some staff members discussed if any students have ever approached them to talk about retaliation.**

  - *"Not for sexual harassment or a sexual assault."* (Military)

  - *"If they're reporting anything to us in this room, I think it's an overwhelming feeling of 'I'm a whistle blower,' not 'I'm confiding in leadership.'* (Military)

  - *"I would say yes, I've encountered that, and there is only so much we can do to a point."* (Military)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, staff members were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among midshipmen and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Participants were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some staff members indicated that the following sites are most often used.**
  - *"Twitter."* (Faculty)
  - *"Yik Yak was a big one."* (Faculty)
  - *"Any public forum which allows you to express an opinion anonymously or with some ability to trace back. There are plenty of ways to do that."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that though there are many negative posts, there are also some positive and beneficial posts.**
  - *"I think they use it for everything. But that's one positive instance [where a midshipman received needed support]. He got a lot of positive vibes. But other than that I think frankly it should be banned. I think it's a toxic way of spreading pleasantries among the brigade."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think that's true in all campuses. It's racial issues, there's a lot of issues that get brought up which are not appropriate. It's not all sexual. Some of it is really dumb. But some of it is supportive. There were a few suicide mentions and people did support and gave numbers and say I'll meet you here. But for the most part it's awful."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the use of social media is ubiquitous.**
  - *"Not just students. Not that we get on Yik Yak, I can't make that work either and I don't do Facebook. But we all use social media in some way, either to receive information or deliver information. How many times do we get on maybe Facebook to say something about our family, it's become ubiquitous."* (Faculty)

Use of Yik Yak[35]

- **Some staff members indicated that Yik Yak is perceived to play a role in retaliation due to anonymity.**
  - *"It's the anonymity piece."* (Military)
  - *"They are not putting it on Facebook because their name is on it, but they're putting it on Yik Yak definitely."* (Military)
  - *"They use names, company. This person ratted on these people because she was not invited to the party. And they will get rather graphic."* (Military)

[35] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

- *"The only thing that happens sometimes is there will be arguing back and forth like 'This person did this. Well, you don't understand. I don't care, this person did this.' So people from both sides will post in response to it. But you don't know who is posting what."* (Military)

- *"Yik Yak is the fastest way to send toxic information out about anybody. And it's a very, dare I say, cowardly way because it's totally anonymous to do that. But, it's spread, the rumor mill in the brigade is ridiculous of how things get turned out and turned around in there, so. I think the gossip travels very quickly."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that some staff members follow Yik Yak.**
  - *"They monitor it."* (Athletic)
  - *"We're all on it."* (Athletic)
  - *"I'm on it. I'm not actively on it. We can also use it too."* (Athletic)
  - *"They retaliate against us on that too. They say things about us that they would never say to our faces. They complain about policies or things that we do in company. So they are communicating to each other or to us on it as a way. But we as the administration, the big picture, we are listening."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that Yik Yak provides a way to measure the pulse of the Academy.**
  - *"True pulse of the institution."* (Athletic)
  - *"It gives you the unfiltered pulse of the brigade."* (Athletic)
  - *"The administration, in very high levels of the administration do really take it into account. Like with other issues as well, 'There is not enough food in King Hall today.' And then you're the watch officer, you get called in the Deputy's office, 'Why isn't there enough food at King Hall today?' I didn't know there wasn't enough food at King Hall. Well, it's on an Yik Yak post and it's got 102 up votes on it. 'So 102 people aren't getting enough food at King Hall, what are you doing about that, Officer Watch?'"* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy can use negative posts as a teaching tool for how to better use social media.**
  - *"A bunch of mids were out doing training and made some hyper inappropriate comments, they were out doing some training. [An officer asked], 'Listen, did anybody do it?' No hands go. And [the recipient of the comments] came in and said here's how this thing made me feel and I don't appreciate it. And so made it a teaching moment as well."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that the problem with Yik Yak is a lack of accountability.**
  - *"Yik Yak is, in aspects like that, almost a coward's voice. There's zero accountability. You can't figure out a way."* (Athletic)
  - *"It's like the Ring of Gyges. You put your invisible ring on, what can you do. Yik Yak is essentially our invisibility ring. You put that on, no retribution. What do you do with it, what do you say? It's not a force for good unfortunately. Do we curtail them, do we micromanage them, do we put a geo fence around here so they can't Yik Yak? Do we go that far, no."* (Athletic)
  - *"That's something that's always amazed me, this person is not worthwhile as a midshipmen, will not be a good officer. Yet we remove that character issue by allowing them to post without knowing who is posting."* (Faculty)
  - *"When you take away somebody's ownership of a comment by giving them complete [freedom], they will say the most outrageous things. And they're not going to get caught for it."* (Faculty)
  - *"Our challenge as leaders is to practice intrusive leadership. We have to start holding our students accountable for the things that they say. And we have to start teaching them. This isn't a civilian school; it's a military school. Social media is here to stay. It's how we track people when we can't find them anywhere, and God knows how many times our government computers go down. We have to deal with the issue of character. We have to tell them this is what we expect of you. They're 22 when they get out of here at most. That's still very young. And we have to do better at this. I'm not saying telling them what to believe, I'm saying they need to think critically about what they're saying, about the effect of what they're saying, about what that is supposed to do about what they want to do."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that Yik Yak can be used for cyber bullying.**
  - *"Cyber bullying which it turns to more or less because people are called out individually by name for doing a task."* (Athletic)
  - *"It's like 'She looks hot in her shorts.' It's very inappropriate. I know a lot of my students have told me they have been cyber bullied on Yik Yak. There are some inappropriate, some crush page on Facebook, but there you're at least posting who you are saying it, where this is who knows."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy should embrace the use of social media.**
  - *"Our institution is ignorant and naive unless we embrace it and use it."* (Athletic)
  - *"We said the same thing about Facebook for five or six years. We're like, 'Hey, we should start using these too.'"* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that it may be beneficial to ban the site.**
  - *"It's a bold move. The advantage we have over a typical civilian institution we can actually take steps in that direction if we wanted to. I'm not saying it's easy to do, I think if we want to get out front in a leadership position on this and take real, real measures, we look at banning it. Even if you can't stop it you make it an offense to post anonymously."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think it would have to be a ban."* (Faculty)
- **Conversely, some staff members indicated that banning the site may not be beneficial since another site will just replace it.**
  - *"The problem is once you ban one thing another thing will crop up. You still have to deal with the character issue. Just stamping out something is not going to make it go away honestly."* (Faculty)
  - *"And that if we take it away they will just come up with something else."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that it is important to stress the damage negative social media posts can cause.**
  - *"Bringing in your ethics classes using X, Y, Z cases, it's not something, if you know that was followed through and there could be punishment, it's just acknowledging how damaging that is."* (Faculty)
  - *"Clearly you can't track who posted what. But we should make it a joint effort to tackle that and to discuss the damaging effects that are the ripple effects from posts like that."* (Faculty)

Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy

- **Some staff members indicated that instead of banning sites such as Yik Yak, the Academy should treat midshipmen as adults and teach them how to use it properly.**
  - *"I thought it was more we want to treat them like adults and we want them to fix their own performance on it. And that if we're taking it away then we're treating them the same as the high school students where the high schools are putting that block radius around it."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that restricting sites may make them more appealing.**
  - *"I can tell you exactly what happened with Yik Yak. So late last April, one person posted something offensive on there, and a couple people were talking about, and I remember very distinctively walking around, and I think somebody sent an e-mail in the staff about it, it was like 'Watch out for this.' That day I asked ten midshipmen 'What is Yik Yak?' Nine of them had no idea what it was. Then a certain battalion chain of command sent out to all of their midshipmen 'No one is allowed to use Yik*

Yak.' By the next day I asked another ten midshipmen how many knew what Yik Yak was, eight of them knew what Yik Yak was, and six of them were checking it. So it was almost like the restrictiveness of it made it more popular." (Military)

- *"They feel it's like an outlet and now the faculty has become their audience. So I just don't pay attention to it. I don't talk to them about it, I don't pay attention. Unless someone comes to me for advice. Because they will say, 'You're not on Yik Yak anymore.' And I said, 'No, I'm not going to entertain that, I don't have time for that nonsense.' And it's shut them down."* (Military)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy should monitor these sites.**
  - *"Yes."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that if there was a way to hold midshipmen accountable, it would decrease the use of such sites.**
  - *"[Holding midshipmen accountable] would shut it down."* (Military)
  - *"That's the basis for it, being anonymous. Once they find out it's no longer anonymous, it won't exist anymore."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that since Yik Yak will not be banned and it is anonymous, staff can only provide counsel.**
  - *"The Deputy Commandant at some point came out and said we're not going to try to ban the Yik Yak, it's freedom of speech, it's the exact thing we defend. And because it's anonymous there's really nothing we can do about it, so you can choose to stay on or stay off of it. So there was like an official statement put out about it, and we're just in a position to provide counsel if someone comes to us. It's like 'I'm pretty sure so and so is doing this. All right, let me counsel you and tell you how different ways to handle it.' But officially we can't go to the conduct system for it because it's anonymous."* (Military)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Faculty and staff participants were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix F, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some staff members indicated they think the ratings for leadership are too low.**
  - *"Part of me says they are good. The other part of me then says like do some percent of people not believe that I or we in this room make active efforts to stop sexual harassment and assault? Because I think everyone in this room really makes a very hard effort to stop sexual harassment and assault and promote dignity and respect throughout our companies."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated they believe that leadership is serious about SAPR issues.**
  - *"I see the Superintendent and Commandant in the video saying 'It's on Us,' I have no reason to think they're not. I think honestly they're behind it. It's a question if they can be sustained with that kind of momentum."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated they are doing what is required in order to deal with SAPR issues and are unaware why midshipmen may not realize this.**
  - *"We're scheduled to talk about it several times a year. We're mandated to talk about it a few times a year."* (Military)
  - *"They are always looking, they are always watching, they are always checking us out. So I think our example is we're trying to be professional and show them how we want them to interact with each other as well. I don't know where the disparity is, but everybody in this room I confidently could say that I've seen them be the example in their companies or in different groups that I've encountered with them. So I would have to agree that it might be the people that aren't around to experience that or connect to that."* (Military)
  - *"I think we do with the fleet mentors, company officers, SELs, we're required to give training. And I think, being at some of those briefs they have too, just those kinds of things, I think we're doing what we can by doing that kind of thing. Whether they notice that we're a fleet mentor for another company possibly during the SHAPE discussion or whether they notice that, outside those briefs is another question, because they are a lot of times wrapped up in their own little world, so the only time they might see it is when we do get in front of them and do the brief forms."* (Military)
  - *"I don't know how we haven't reached our saturation point on exposing or proving that we make efforts to stop sexual harassment and assault. And it's very concerning to me that midshipmen in my company by this standard don't think that I do that. I have no idea how we could possibly get that out."* (Military)
  - *"I also think it's in the plebes. The plebes don't know what they don't know yet. A lot of times the plebes are a little more ignorant still to the ways."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen are not aware of much of the work they do on SAPR issues.**
  - *"What they don't see is not happening for them. They don't think it's happening. Especially people that are out of companies, stripers that are out of company, athletes that are not around during meal formation when we actually do engage or cannot attend this or that. Training that has to do with sexual assault or harassment. So, I would say that's where you get your disagrees. People are just unaware."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that women may have less faith in leadership because there are fewer women in leadership roles.**
  - *"I'm no statistician, but I think it's fascinating that across the board women are less confident in leadership than men, and that the gap closes at the top where we have one woman and one man, which I think is reflective of how many women are in the leadership positions in the brigade, that maybe that's a correlation, which would explain those. That perhaps a woman feels more comfortable when she's got a woman as SEL or CO."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated they were not surprised that the civilian faculty received lower ratings than other types of leaders.**
  - *"Not surprised."* (Faculty)
  - *"Not [surprising] at all."* (Faculty)

- **Some faculty members indicated they do not feel as trained to handle SAPR issues in the same way as are military staff.**
  - *"We're not taught the intrusive leadership. I think the midshipmen also don't view us as somebody who is going to intrude as much when you're appearing off between six and 12 weeks."* (Faculty)
  - *"Yes [agreeing with the previous speaker]."* (Faculty)

- **Some faculty members indicated that the ratings received by faculty could be the result of the environment in which faculty and midshipmen interact.**
  - *"The other issue is simply that we see them in, other than the occasional one-on-one interactions, we see them in an environment that is super controlled and does not lead itself towards inappropriate behavior such that we would be inclined to intervene. I don't think many civilian faculty take time out of the classroom to discuss this. Although we could, I don't think that's a common topic. If I'm talking about differential equations it would be really awkward to suddenly shift gears for some reason, unless I had some external motivation."* (Faculty)

- *"Certainly more training is always good and more incorporation into classes designed for that issue. But in all issues of ethics the more it can branch out in classes, like talking about the role of women in arts and science, that's a class where it fits. The more it can be diffused in any issue the better off that you are."* (Faculty)

- **Some faculty members indicated that midshipmen may have a sense of familiarity with civilian faculty that affects how they view their authority.**

  - *"Interestingly, one of the things I was discussing with some of the civilian faculty in our department, we were talking about how midshipmen address faculty members. And I was really surprised to hear that 'Doctor' is not how you guys are addressed, especially women is 'Ms. So and so.' I actually asked my students about this. Where I'm going with this, the cultural understanding that while in Bancroft Hall the midshipmen have to stand tall for a lieutenant because that's their company officer and if they see a commander over there, they're in big trouble because that's a battalion officer and nobody wants that attention. You come over to the academic buildings and we spool back from that because we want to facilitate their learning. Some people may be spooled back from that too much. And the mids get very comfortable very quickly and, which on the one hand is good for their learning but for their professional development as future military officers is not good at all. I think what would serve is to have from the highest of our leadership is to put out and maybe put out at new faculty is, this is really how you should be addressed. And if you're not being addressed you need to assert yourself that this is how you should be addressed."* (Faculty)

  - *"I was trying to correct a midshipmen's behavior. He said he went to go see Jennifer Waters. I was like, you mean Dean Waters, I'm sorry, you do not rate her first name. I was astounded that this was the behavior that they meant this. But I've noticed it is specifically with the civilian faculty and it is the female civilian faculty. And so coming out and holding a higher standard from, I certainly wouldn't want to task the Superintendent, but that office, it needs to be addressed. The midshipmen need to understand everybody here for the most part with a handful of exceptions, all the civilian members are all doctors, and they should be addressed as such."* (Faculty)

- **Some athletic staff members indicated that the athletic staff do not have much interaction with most midshipmen and so the midshipmen cannot effectively rate them.**

  - *"The commissioned officers in charge of the unit, company officers, they're the ones getting all the face time with the midshipmen and making clear their expectations and talking about what's going on on the yard. So there really isn't a widespread forum for athletic staff to address midshipmen about what their expectations are in sexual assault and stuff. We may each have influence over our own specific team. I would not anticipate getting the response that the athletic staff is making the top effort to stop sexual harassment."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipman might not see their midshipman chain of command being responsible for dealing with SAPR issues.**
  - *"My thought is so we're taught to have a good balance of we interject some of our fleet experience and who we are, but also that we're supposed to work through the midshipmen chain of command. I agree with that because they need to learn, be empowered and learn leadership skills, but I think something this serious at times for them to tell us to work through the midshipmen chain of command might be where we're erring, because maybe they are feeling like this is something that should come from us, we definitely should be the ones that speak. I think that might be part of this disparity as well."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that midshipmen may not realize the purpose of SAPR training.**
  - *"I think maybe there could be confusion with the question. Maybe some of them don't actually see the training that we give as an effort to stop sexual harassment. Maybe it's just a check in the box to them. So when they read this question they're like 'I don't know.' They give us training once a semester, if they remember the training we give them."* (Military)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Faculty and staff members were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and staff members were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some staff members indicated that there is a perception at the Academy that athletes are treated differently, often to a lower standard.**
  - *"There is definitely the perception athletes are treated differently."* (Athletic)
  - *"Leading to these issues though is the question are they treated differently here, absolutely. Varsity sports more than any other level of athlete. The other midshipmen note that. There is a level of segregation here."* (Athletic)
  - *"The problem is, they're treated differently at every university. But the expectation here is we are all the same, right. So midshipmen have this expectation I should be treated exactly the same. Athletes are treated different everywhere."* (Athletic)
  - *"Only in that there is an active perception that athletes are held to a lower standard than the rest of the brigade."* (Military)

- *"So maybe held to a lower standard when it comes to behavior associated with sexual assault."* (Military)

- *"That's a general consensus among the mids, the ones that aren't athletes. The non-athletes think the athletes can do whatever they want, get away with whatever they want, they get preferential treatment."* (Military)

- *"I would like to say though, I agree the midshipmen have that perception, I think if you closely look at how things actually plan out, I don't know that that argument holds a lot of water."* (Military)

- **Some faculty and military staff members indicated that coaches and athletic staff have different priorities for application of rules and standards to their athletes.**

  - *"[T]he athletic staff is not bound by the same UCMJ or maybe the same type of standards that a military member is held to. So I couldn't imagine asking one of my male midshipmen after a weekend, 'Hey, did you get lucky?' But I guarantee you that that is being asked by a coach when they step into a locker room or step into a meeting room or to go watch film."* (Military)

  - *"We have a system for the mids where we go in and say who can go on weekend liberty or whatever, or we're approving movement orders and excusals. I'm fair across the board whether you're an athlete or non-athlete. I'll immediately get the call from the coach about 'We will take care of this part when they're out on the road with us, can you just approve it?' I should be consistent, but now the athletes go on the movement because this coach called me up and said we're going to take care of it, or by NAAA rules you can't do this, you have to send my athlete with me."* (Military)

  - *"I have several of those, really good student athletes. And he had a movement order issue that allowed him to miss Monday and Tuesday, which incorporated two of the classes out of the three he was failing. It actually says, 'Are you eligible?' No, he's not eligible. So I said I'm disapproving. And I immediately got an e-mail saying I need to talk. I was pretty blown away by the reaction that I got from a military member who said, 'You cannot deny that movement order.' And I said 'Why not?' And they said 'Because he's an athlete and sports make money. And money is what makes this place operate.' I'm like 'You're telling me that I have a mid who is failing three classes and I can't tell him he can't miss classes to stay here and do his work and in two months you're going to turn around and say he's at Consat and he's going to the academic board, and you want me to stand there and justify why I'm fighting to keep him here when you're telling him, without actually saying it, that sports is more important than academics?'"* (Military)

  - *"The military here, all the civilians here, we're not going to lose our job if we actually lose games. If something bad happens we're still going for the most part unless you're inappropriate with a student, you'll be taken out of the classroom but not out the Navy, they have a different goal set. I have sat down with head coaches and said I don't care if you want him to travel, I want him to graduate. I want him to*

be a Naval officer. They're only looking at how can I keep my job so I'm going to turn a blind eye so I can keep my job." (Faculty)

- *"It's okay for a football player to be 90 pounds overweight because they're needed on the line to do that. The wrestlers have some crazy standards as well, but no, I think the standards are different for the varsity athletes. And based on the requirements of what they do in those particular roles."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that staff and leadership would not treat athletes differently and would stop inappropriate behaviors if they saw them occurring.**
  - *"I've got confidence that all the SELs and COs would hold each of their people accountable."* (Military)
  - *"Zero tolerance."* (Military)
  - *"It's a double edge sword for us, because we're the ones that have to be in those boards then and saying whether we think they should be retained or not. It's a tough call."* (Military)
  - *"I'm not saying they would overlook that, what I'm saying is that complacency and those small little things of what they think they can get away with can lead to bigger things."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that athletic staff would hold students accountable.**
  - *"I'm not sure that we're being fair enough to the athletic association. Maybe I'm being naive, I cannot imagine a coach that would hear their player sexually assaulted someone and try to sweep it under the rug. We're talking about going on movement orders and missing class. That's completely different than sexual assault. And I cannot with full confidence say that a coach would overlook that."* (Military)
  - *"I don't believe that it's across the board. I did have one experience where I disapproved a movement order and that officer actually called me on my day off and said 'We're getting ready to go but I noticed that you disapproved this. Why?' And I said 'Because she's at Consat, she is a plebe, and she hasn't done X, Y, and Z, what she was supposed to do.' And she said 'I support that, she's not going.'"* (Military)

- **Some members of the athletic staff indicated that leadership would hold athletes accountable, but size of a team does matter.**
  - *"I've had issues where they're in an isolated environment and sometimes a group thing takes over in a small unit and stuff. And the women are isolated or feel there are things that are going on that are not acceptable but they can't, because they're in such a small unit they're isolated on that team, so I've had issue with that."* (Athletic)
  - *"In my experience, I have a really large team. Matter of fact the standard is pretty high about conduct."* (Athletic)

- *"We touch on this but the brigade as a whole there is the separation between varsity athletes and nonvarsity athletes and they're entitled to so much more. With regard to behavioral standards, I think it might be a little worse for the teams because if somebody does get in trouble on the team, then that reflects on the entire team. An entire team might lose its ability to represent the Naval Academy. But whereas someone that isn't involved in a specific ECA [Extracurricular Activity] or sport, if they get in trouble that reflects poorly on them, and maybe their company. But if it happens on a sport team then usually the punishments or the effects of that would have a larger effect."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that there is a lot of pressure on student athletes to participate in their sport.**
  - *"There is so much expectation of the student athletes."* (Faculty)
  - *"We have a system for the midshipmen, where we go in and say who can go on weekend liberty or whatever, or we're approving MOs [Movement Orders] and excusals. I'm fair across the board whether you're an athlete or non-athlete. I'll immediately get the call from the coach about 'we will take care of this part when they're out on the road with us, can you just approve it.' So immediately a non-athlete, who as the chief I should be consistent, but now the athletes go on the MO or movement because this coach called me up and said we're going to take of it, or by NAAA [Naval Academy Athletic Association] rules you can't do this, you have to send my athlete with me."* (Military)

Culture

Faculty and staff members were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy could improve the focus on sexual assault by providing more role models of appropriate behavior and more examples of proper behaviors.**
  - *"I think they do a good focus. One thing they don't do is giving positive models, or how am I supposed to interact with somebody socially so that I know what not to do, but holy cow, I have no idea how am I supposed to behave. So coming up with a place where that could be made more accessible part of the discussion of, 'Okay,*

we've covered what not to do but let's talk about how can you behave appropriately.'" (Faculty)

- *"I think there is a lot to be said too in transitioning to those more nuance situations. When they talk about they're going to their brief, they are saying 'I'm going to get taught not to rape again.' They get that and maybe more of those nuance grayer area, that education, would bring it home a little bit more and would be useful."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault is an important issue at the Academy, but the attention loses its effectiveness with repetition.**
  - *"I feel like the midshipmen start to get numb to it. Just because of how much training they have had and how sometimes they feel like they are being yelled at. I sat down and talked with them when we had some results come out from the Command Climate survey, and from that they just said that everyone knows about it, but the way the message is put across can sometimes be numbing. But things like SHAPE help."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that, while midshipmen might joke about some of the emphasis, the message still gets through.**
  - *"I think ultimately it has had a positive effect. But the midshipmen might take it and use, like the word SAPR, start using it as a verb. Like 'I'm going out tonight, going to get hammered. Don't get SAPR'd.' They use it as a verb. Which ultimately that's not what we're trying to get out of SAPR. But if they are using it and it's on their minds, then maybe it's working, because they are thinking about that now. Even though they are not using it in the way we want them to say that term, they are still talking about. So ultimately isn't that what we want, awareness?"* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the emphasis from senior leadership created a reaction of resistance among midshipmen.**
  - *"The 'us versus them.' That's big with them, they don't like the 'us versus them.' I think it bonds them."* (Military)
  - *"Creates that underground."* (Military)
  - *"I think it affects the way they regard each other, it prevents them from stepping up, out of that group or going against someone in that group."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that SHAPE training is effective.**
  - *"And their SHAPE sessions, they think they get a lot of training, but essentially I sat down with one of the SHAPE leaders, who is awesome at what she does, and they get four hours each year. By the time they graduate they get 16 hours over four years. That's not a lot. And they change up the theme every year. The first year is plebes, they learn about the sexual harassment, what defines it. Then the next year they learn*

more about bystander intervention. They're not learning the same things in those four hours a year, 16 hours over their career here. She takes a lot of feedback from the fleet mentors to change it up, to make it better. So it's a great program, it really is." (Military)

- *"I agree it's a good program. And it always is fairly positive, but there's always an officer or an SEL sitting in the back. I wonder what it would be like if it was truly just midshipmen?"* (Military)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy could do a better job of teaching midshipmen how to treat each other with respect and cooperation.**
  - *"First, some of the students I asked, they'd like to see some positive interaction. But in other conversations I've had with other students, there doesn't seem to be much focus on how we deal, how we live as adults, how do we drink appropriately as adults, how to interact with the opposite sex as adults. It's just don't do this, don't do that."* (Faculty)
  - *"We still approach the problem of sexual assault as a problem, even I say it. We don't talk about the positive side of interaction between human beings who are united in a single mission."* (Faculty)
  - *"I would say our military in this school is absolutely better served by the diversity that we have, by the women, by the different races, by the different religions. I think it's a shame if anyone feels that way otherwise. So that is something for all of us to strive to and be better. It's a cultural thing. I keep coming back to that, that really is it, you dig down into that, into what's okay, what's not okay. It's not an easy thing, it's not an easy fix. That's what you have to chip away at is get down to mutual respect among all of us as professionals."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the treatment of women has improved over the years.**
  - *"One thing, a positive note, I think the culture toward women as a whole has gotten much, much better. I wanted to say one of the little phrases I think could go to serve both undergraduate women and those of us who work here, it gets frustrating when captains refer to 'girls' or even here hearing another faculty member, like the 'girls working in the research office.' It's a subtle bias, but I think the more we as faculty use more respectful terms..."* (Faculty)

- *"I think it has to do with the fact that 25 percent of the incoming classes has been women. And that makes a huge difference over the way things used to be. One of the things I think is really interesting, there was a great article written by a guy who taught at the Coast Guard Academy, it was how can male leaders, how can they foster gender equality. That was one of the things he said is we are all, come about, we've been raised in this patriarchal society and we need to be aware of that. That based on that we have biases. And it's okay to have the biases, but you need to acknowledge them and recognize them so you can make changes. I think you're right, you 'girls' may understand what that feels like, but so raising awareness of that I think will make a huge difference."* (Faculty)

- *"The men have learned to be much more respectful of women. Example, in common nomenclature just two or three years ago there were terms such as WUBA [derogatory term]. And then there's the DUB. And those terms are not seen or heard anymore. That's noticed by the midshipmen who were here, who are just graduating this year. It's accepted culturally that those are not accepted terms anymore. And when you hear a mid referring to a female as a 'fe-mid,' that's the new term. You'll hear some guys correcting them. It's really interesting to see that happening. So they're self-policing in ways that it's much more robust now. The peer led education is working."* (Athletic)

Role of peer programs

- **Some staff members indicated the peer program, SHAPE, is effective.**

  - *"I have a couple of my athletes who are, I forgot what they're called, but they're the ones that give the talks, et cetera. I have one or two that do that. It sounds effective."* (Athletic)

  - *"I think the peer-led education is the most effective part."* (Athletic)

Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed

- **Some staff members recommended a balance between preventing inappropriate behaviors and not helping midshipmen develop healthy relationships.**

  - *"I think the second or third order effects in developing immature males graduating from here is very significant, who are scared to date women, who are afraid of being 'SAPR'd' as the verb is used, who don't want to relate to women here because they're afraid of getting into any of these situations. So you're developing a generation of young men who become young officers, who will be exceptionally intelligent, who will be emotionally intelligent, they'll be good leaders. But it will take them years to develop a real relationship because they have not been taught how to deal with women in a real life way because they've been scared to. They've been scared to make mistakes. They're scared to get into trouble."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated a male presence in the SAPR program might help men feel more comfortable discussing issues unique to them.**
  - *"The fact that it is a program run by women, some people may have that perspective it's a fear-based program and maybe there are steps that could be taken by incorporating some men into the programs because there are men that complain they were sexually assaulted or harassed. So they may probably feel more comfortable talking to somebody of their gender."* (Athletic)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Faculty and staff members were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that there was a particular training that was effective because it was made by students and gave real scenarios.**
  - *"SHAPE did a video made up of midshipmen here, both men and women. You could only see their hands. After that particular training, every midshipman in that class was quiet. It really hit home for them. When they finally did talk about it, they said 'Now that's something we can learn from.' So I think real experiences, that particular training was the most well received and the one I heard that feedback from the second classes that they learned the most from. Real scenario."* (Military)
  - *"It was a powerful video."* (Military)

Chapter 6:
U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets

Seven cadet focus group sessions were conducted at the U. S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) from April 20-22, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. There was one session each for men and women held for freshmen and sophomores, where juniors and seniors were combined. A single mixed-gender session of juniors and seniors was also held. Each session had between 7 and 12 participants. A total of 66 cadets participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the cadets the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix G, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USAFA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rates remained unchanged for both men and women from 2012, and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Cadets were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Cadets further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some cadets indicated they had <u>not</u> seen the rates of USC from the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"[Multiple No]"* (Males and Females)
- **Some cadets indicated they had seen the results.**
  - *"I think General Johnson [Superintendent] mentioned it a couple months ago."* (Male)
  - *"I'm part of the PEER program [Personal Ethics and Education Representatives] here, so we cover all of this every month."* (Male)
- **Some cadets had mixed perceptions about whether the *2014 SAGR* survey USC rates would have been higher or lower for their Academy.**
  - *"I would have said below five [for women]."* (Male)

- *"I would be concerned that they would have been higher."* (Male)
- *"I would agree with that [expected USC rates to be higher]. I've heard statistics at other colleges, and it seems higher sometimes."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated there was a relaxation in closed door policies several years ago that could have caused USC rates to increase, but the emphasis on improper behaviors appears to have mitigated that possibility.**
  - *"I find it interesting that it went down because our class was the first class to have a closed-door rule implemented. If a male and a female are in the same room, they had to leave the door open. But that changed our freshman year."* (Male)
  - *"To an extent [cadets self-police behaviors behind closed doors]. People are like, I'm not going to mess with it, when they throw around the word 'presumptive disenrollment' for anything after taps behind closed doors."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they would expect USC rates to go up in the future.**
  - *"The number is going to go up."* (Male)
  - *"We're at an alarmingly high number of cases. There are a hundred open cases."* (Female)
  - *"When you hear the number of sexual assaults that have occurred and whether it's going up or down, isn't it hard to know what the impact is because you don't know whether more people are reporting or more people are attacking or vice versa?"* (Female)

Discussion of USC rates[36]

- **Some cadets indicated that there has been considerable emphasis on sexual assault prevention.**
  - *"I think part of it is thinking of sexual assault, not just rape. It's more of a broad spectrum of things. And I think people are realizing it's not just rape. It goes far beyond that. And I think by understanding that, people may be [aware] I'm doing things that are more towards sexual assault, 'Oh, I should have watched those actions."* (Female)
  - *"The Secretary of the Air Force definitely made it a higher emphasis once she got into office, spurred a whole other round of focus on it. Because she has it as her number one priority to eliminate it from the Air Force. That's the biggest change that I've seen in the years that I've been here. It's been an emphasis item as far as prevention and everything, but I think we're getting into more specifics."* (Female)

[36] The handout for cadet focus group participants showed a slight decrease in USC rates from 2012 to 2014 for both men and women, but it was noted that the decreases were not statistically significant.

- *"I think it's all the briefings. That topic is always brought up. It never goes away; it's always something that's fresh in our mind. I feel like a lot of the times when these things come up, the people who doing it, now people are becoming aware of what actions are considered improper. I know in the past, I know in high school, we used to think whatever, we're just being guys. Whenever we come here, we're more aware of it."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that changes in policies and rules (new sign out policy and enactment of a buddy system while on trails) might have positively impacted USC rates.**
  - *"The policy changed spring of 2014. Our new signing-out policy. It used to be much more restrictive, in that pretty much only juniors and seniors could leave after school. But now sophomores through seniors can leave, and seniors can even stay overnights. Or if you're not trapped here and have other options [for reducing stress]."* (Female)
  - *"There were a couple of events on base where somebody was getting people while they were running the trails. So they enacted the buddy system, which at first, it may have been inconvenient, but it just showed that something had to be done against us. And then we didn't see any more of that, so that was effective."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they expect USC rates to decrease.**
  - *"Hopefully."* (Male)
  - *"Now the pendulum has switched to being hyper-focused on sexual assault [USC rates will continue to go down]."* (Male)
  - *"Culture here has gotten nothing but better. Even now, my squadron and I are very close. Because of that, we know we all go to bat for each other."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Take Back the Night program had a powerful impact on cadets that might lead to lower rates of USC in the future.**
  - *"I think the hope is that it would keep going down. The only thing is we have to take the training that we're having to heart and actually use it. I mean, for Take Back the Night, there were a couple of really well-done videos. It was STOP, and there were different things for each letter in the word. And essentially, one of them was plan ahead, and it showed two guys making plans to go out drinking or whatever. And they were like, 'Hey, if I get too rowdy, can you keep me accountable or whatever?' Realistically, that's something we can do. I feel like the numbers could drop down if we continue to just hold each other accountable and not just be a silent bystander, but be an active bystander."* (Female)
  - *"I think with all of the things that we're doing with Take Back the Night and all of the sexual assault briefings, it might have another slight downward trend. It might not be significant, but it might be there. Things might be starting to get better. I don't think it will go back up."* (Male)

- *"You could have heard a pin drop in the auditorium [Take Back the Night]. I think in addition to Take Back the Night, just the general attitude of the Cadet Wing towards sexual assault is we're very hostile toward it. I remember sitting in Mitchell Hall and an announcement came on over the news channel that was playing, and it said that there was nothing confirmed, but allegations that a cadet had committed sexual assault, and you could tell the entire room was just in outrage. We couldn't believe that someone among us, someone we had trusted, leadership over us, would do something like that. I think just that feeling of hostility tends to discourage the behavior."* (Male)

- *"The story was really powerful. The woman who told it, she told her story around and stuff. So when she told us, not most of us had heard about it, and when we realized this actually happens to people, like the story behind it is…"* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the USC rates might increase if the emphasis fades over time with changes in leadership.**

  - *"I think that would fade with time. Just the way that the Academies are built, there's a 25 percent turnover every year, plus the permanent party [permanent party refers to faculty and staff] are turning over. And we've always got something new to worry about and focus on. And the academies are never the best that they could be. When something seems that it's fixed, our attention gets shifted to something else. If the Naval Academy had so much attention for a year, or for two even, eventually that would get shifted off, and whatever undercurrent, whatever culture, allowed that to happen is still going to be there."* (Male)

  - *"We do need more of that continuity from leadership as it progresses."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated the emphasis by the Commandant has had an impact.**

  - *"I think the biggest impact was the new Commandant coming in this year. He'll come up on the staff tower every so often for lunch and say this happened, this happened, and so it shows that it's still happening, and he's taking it personally. He gets upset with all of us that one of us did something that occurred. So I think his attitude towards it, is what helps us to really take it…"* (Male)

  - *"General Williams [Commandant], you can see him in his role as a father and his family, and he considers us as his family as well. So it's like he's upset when one of his children offends one of the others."* (Male)

  - *"I definitely would say I wouldn't feel comfortable bringing it up. But if it was already on the table for discussion I would engage. As long as permanent party is paying attention to it, as long as the Commandant is still saying, 'Hey, this is something we don't do,' as long as the attention is still on that, I think all of us will, or at least I will continue."* (Male)

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated they feel more comfortable confronting inappropriate behaviors.**
  - *"Now that I'm a upperclassman, it's easier for me to speak out against that kind of thing. In a briefing in my squadron about sexual assault, somebody said something, and I was like, 'That's not appropriate.' I felt very confident to be able to call him out for that, and I don't know if I would have felt confident as a freshman calling out a random kid in a briefing. Not necessarily that the culture has changed, but more my position being at USAFA."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the abundance of resources (training, PEER program) has had an impact on USC behaviors.**
  - *"I know there's a lot of training that's been going on that's either creating awareness or letting the guys or girls know that people have resources that they can use. Not everyone is ignorant to the fact that there are people that can help them and there are places they can go, like the SARC office and stuff like that."* (Female)
  - *"I'm a PEER, so a lot of people come talk to me, sometimes it's about issues like this, and they feel comfortable talking to me about it, but they don't feel comfortable reporting. So that could also be why the numbers are down, people don't feel comfortable coming out with it because they don't want to deal with ramifications after the fact. I think the numbers could be down just because people aren't going to report in an official manner, because they don't want to deal with what's coming afterwards, and that's what most have come to talk to me about it."* (Female)

- **Some female cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault has affected relationships between male and female cadets.**
  - *"Guys are also very scared. I was talking to a junior and she said some males have told her, I can't work with you on group projects because I'm so afraid of getting 'SARC'd.' I just can't work with people. And so I think guys are also very hesitant to do anything now, just because of all this stuff."* (Female)
  - *"I remember talking to a lot of guys, or overhearing them talk. They would think about dating a cadet girl, but they're absolutely petrified that they're going to be 'SARC'd' because that's what's preached to them, is that you are a rapist."* (Female)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[37]

- **Some cadets indicated they think horseplay and locker room behaviors are a component of USC among males.**
  - *"I'd say I expect that."* (Female)

[37]See Appendix G, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USAFA Men" for the details shared with participants

- *"Yes. We have hockey, basketball, football, and soccer. I have a couple of buddies who will joke around about what happens in the locker room. I feel like a quarter is probably a decent estimate for how many might feel uncomfortable with it. Three-quarters of the males in the locker room might be like, 'Oh, it was just a joke,' and a quarter might go along with it, but not feeling entirely comfortable with it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated men might tolerate unwanted behaviors as part of the culture of belonging to a team.**
  - *"I feel like you could actually be a pretty big influence just because it's like a culture that they're instilling in the guys. It could help instill a culture that I need to be associated with the team, even though there's no one actually telling you, 'Hey, you need to do this.' It's a subtle peer pressure and they want to be a part of the team."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that horseplay and locker room behavior are more likely to occur on sports teams among people you know.**
  - *"I would say probably more with the sports teams than in the squad or down at the gym, just because with a team you feel more comfortable. I know, especially in the gym, it's get in there, take a shower and leave. You don't know anybody."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that horseplay and locker room behavior might occur due to the openness of the locker rooms.**
  - *"The showers are just a lot more laid back in the men's locker rooms. Just in discussions, a male will walk into a shower and be like, 'Here I am, world.' Whereas women go to their individual shower and will be much more discreet. I haven't seen a shower curtain in three and a half years."* (Male)
  - *"Stuff goes on in the locker room. You don't know everybody's comfort level with playing around. Not like you're doing sexual contact or anything, but maybe some guy is shaking it around, I could see where some people might not like that type of act."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that horseplay and locker room behaviors are generally spontaneous.**
  - *"I can just tell from my roommate that it's not unwanted in his case, but they just goof around so much, hug each other, tackle each other and play around and stuff. They're fine with it. But someone who gets introduced into that environment who is not used to it, who maybe the other people think is okay with it, you don't ask someone before you horseplay, really."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they believe many horseplay and locker room behaviors occur and are unwanted, but no one discussed them.**
  - *"I think that's the majority of it."* (Female)

- *"When we talk about sexual stuff, like training or whatever, we don't talk about male-to-male very often at all. So people think they're just jokes and stuff, but I've seen people bothered by it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated their training tends to use examples of women as victims.**
  - *"Not as a women's issue, but it affects women more than men. You're more likely to be a victim if you're a woman."* (Male)
  - *"Nine times out of ten, the scenarios they give, a woman is being sexually assaulted. But they tend to use the same exact scenario for a man to be sexually assaulted. There are a lot of other situations that it can happen, and they don't give us that."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that horseplay and locker room behavior might be a way for a man to initiate sexual contact with another man.**
  - *"I think because oftentimes, if the perpetrator is a male, with the locker room scenario, then that would be an easier way for a man to attack another man. For a woman, I think it's easier for the man to be like, I could overpower her if I needed to."* (Female)
  - *"If there was a serial perpetrator, if that was a man attacking other men, I think they could write it off as one of those things, easier than a man attacking a woman. It's easier to get called out for it. You can say, 'Oh, I was just messing with you,' without being perceived as 'Yeah, this is what I'm trying to make happen.'"* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that horseplay and locker room behavior is motivated by something other than sexual gratification.**
  - *"I think for men, a lot of times it's more you're picking on the person, you're screwing with them. You're not touching them because it feels good; you're touching them because you're messing with them."* (Male)
  - *"Motivation is kind of different. Sometimes it is, but I think overall with guys, it's not to get a sexual gratification or stimulus out of it. A lot more joking around and pushing the limits too far."* (Male)
  - *"I had a roommate who was an athlete. I think that some of the things he did in the locker room, they might have happened outside of the locker room just when he was joking around, didn't quite know what limits and what I was comfortable with. But once I said, 'Hey, I'd prefer you didn't do that,' he backed off, and that was that."* (Male)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[38]

- **Some cadets indicated they thought alcohol would have been involved in a large percentage of USC incidents.** [39]
  - *"That seems low."* (Multiple Males)
  - *"I would have thought it was higher."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that preventing alcohol involvement in USC incidents is difficult because cadets go off campus where there is less supervision.**
  - *"I feel like it's really hard because here alcohol is such a taboo. We can't have it on campus. Other college campuses, it's more tolerated, and I feel like there's more awareness and teaching about alcohol on campus. At a civilian school they would never call the police for underage drinking or anything, but more like looking out for each other. So people leave campus and go up to wherever, Denver, Boulder. They don't have anyone telling them that it has to be controlled. And they're getting it out of their system, and they take advantage of situations or even just getting out of hand. They don't know how to deal with it."* (Female)
  - *"Maybe one of the contributing factors, as well as the fact that most of the time we don't drink here. We drink on the weekends."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that even though drinking is not allowed on campus, cadets sometimes find a way.**
  - *"If it's in the cadet area, alcohol is involved. I think people are really impulsive with alcohol here, because you're stuck on base, or you're underage, if you're a freshman or sophomore, and you can't leave every week to go drink. I think people if they have an opportunity to start breaking rules and drinking in the dorms or whatever, I think they're a lot more willing to take that chance because they're a lot more receptive."* (Female)
  - *"It could also be from the fact that the alcohol policy is so restrictive. I'm not a person who likes to drink or anything, but there are four-degrees or priors who want to be drinking, and so they make really poor decisions because when they have the opportunity to finally drink, they make horrible decisions. Or other upperclassmen."* (Female)

[38] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.
[39] Per the *2014 SAGR* survey, 53% of women and 37% of men who responded that they experienced USC indicated alcohol was involved in the incident with the greatest effect on them.

- **Some cadets indicated that the proportion of incidents involving alcohol might differ depending on the type of behavior experienced.**
  - *"I think another thing, too, is the separation between how much of this is just slap-assing and how much is full-on sexual assault versus what percentage of alcohol. If it's sexual assault, it seems the alcohol would be higher. Versus horseplay, alcohol would be lower. Since those are put together for the statistics, it might be a little skewed."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that drinking is part of the culture.**
  - *"It's the culture that we're in, going out, partying, drinking and then talking to other people and stuff."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that some people use alcohol as an excuse for improper behaviors.**
  - *"I feel like people will lean on it a lot, like 'Oh, I didn't realize it. I was just so drunk.' It's just something that people will always generalize, that, sometimes things get out of hand when we're they're drinking, and people don't want to admit that things get out of hand when they're level-headed as well."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the general perception is that alcohol is typically involved in USC.**
  - *"I'd say with all of the briefings we get, they almost always involve examples of people doing things while they're under the influence. So for people who haven't experienced anything like that, that's just the image that we form in our heads when we think about it."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that use of alcohol is more likely to occur off campus, but USC occurs back on campus.**
  - *"I think people will often go out to drink at a bar and then come back at night. If they use alcohol, it would be more likely to occur off, but then maybe the [sexual assault] incident would be more likely to occur on."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that more effort is needed to educate people on responsible drinking.**
  - *"I for sure don't think that alcohol should be allowed in the barracks. When people come back drunk, that's already a bad time. So if it was just readily available all of the time, I just think those problems like the sexual assault or harassment due to alcohol would go away in the dorms. They need to be around it more often so they know how to handle themselves. Even the people who are of age, though. I've just heard so many stories this year about not knowing how to use it. You want to drink*

and stuff, but there's actually a time to do that, there's a place to do it, and you need to be responsible about doing that stuff." (Female)

- *"I think they just need to be trained on how to use it in small amounts versus just waiting until one party weekend and going at it."* (Female)

- "*They tried to do it at Haps, and it was drink and then get behind the wheel of a go-cart and they could tell you. I just felt like that was a really bad way to educate on the alcohol because it was like, 'Oh, yeah, let's see how much we can drink.' But it became more of a let's drink as much as we can to see if we can still drive in a straight line, and just see how much they can push the limit. So then they go, 'Oh, my God, when I go out drinking, I can have four beers and still technically drive straight.'"* (Female)

- *"When you have an alcohol hit, you have a rehabilitation period. You have to go through and they have to figure out if you're an alcoholic, do you know how to handle your liquor. If you're put in this situation, are you going to know what to do. And a lot of cadets don't. That's why they have to do journals on it and they have to learn and meet with counselors so they know how to. So yeah, we probably would be super cynical about the training, but I'm sure that it's a necessary thing. Because someone I know just almost got felony charges because he doesn't know how to handle his alcohol. He doesn't know how to handle his alcohol; it makes him crazy. And now he's still here, but he has to go through all of this rehabilitation to make sure he's not going to do it again, and he's going to learn from that experience. I don't get drunk all the time. I don't have any experience. But, if I got in trouble, I would probably want to know, wish I had known, wish I had known my limits of what I can and cannot do."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that everyone knows the consent policy and it would be unlikely someone would use alcohol as a vehicle for obtaining sex.**

  - *"We're told that alcohol, ever since basic training, our briefings, if somebody drinks alcohol, then legally, they're not allowed to say yes or no. It's illegal for you to take advantage of them. So purposely using alcohol, we know better. I'm trying to think of the good side. I think we would know better to not use that to our own advantage. If somebody is purposely doing that, they're going to get called out, there is no doubt. It would be looked at bad by their peers, and they wouldn't want to stay."* (Male)

  - *"I don't think that alcohol is maliciously used to get a hold of somebody, to take advantage of somebody else. Maybe this is just really altruistic, but I don't think there are very many people who manage to make it and stay in here that are that selfish and will go to those lengths to defy somebody else. Maybe I take somebody on a date, we go to a bar, I buy her a few drinks, but my end goal is not to get her drunk so I can…"* (Male)

- **Other cadets indicated that, while unlikely at the Academy, there might be some people who engage in intentional behaviors that lead to sexual assault.**
  - *"Absolutely. You see it happening. Not at the Academy."* (Male)
  - *"I think there are some people who are repeat offenders, who are malicious and they have malicious intent."* (Male)
  - *"I think that's not even just cadet culture. I think that's American culture. Stuff like, 'Hey, let me buy you a drink.' What are you trying to do? If you were interested in this person, you can have a relationship with them without alcohol. If you need alcohol to instigate a relationship, it's already sending a message, it's okay to do that, it's okay to involve alcohol if you're trying to have sexual relationships with someone."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that when alcohol is involved in USC it is more likely someone taking advantage of the situation than intentionally planning the action.**
  - *"Taking advantage."* (Male)
  - *"We're one of the only Academies that has a bar on base. We can't have alcohol in the dorms, though. So I feel like it lends itself to when cadets go out to drink, they drink a little too much. I feel like it's more or less just part of the situation as opposed to go out looking to do that. They might have an expectation that's based they're my date or something like that. For example, ring dance, a lot of situations tend to happen sometimes because their date might expect more than what the girl or guy might be willing to give. But unfortunately, there's sometimes alcohol involved in that, too. So there's always different situations based on different circumstances, and unfortunately, it can happen without alcohol as well. It all depends on the person, I guess."* (Female)
  - *"I haven't heard anyone say, 'Oh, I'm going to get her drunk. She's not planning on drinking, but I'm going to get her drunk,' or anything like that. But I have heard of situations where people have been drinking, there has been alcohol present, and when they see that she's going to drink, then they are a little pushy, more alcohol. But I haven't heard, like, 'Okay, I'm going to get her drunk tonight.'"* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy instills a sense of responsibility toward each other where a cadet would step in if they observed someone trying to use alcohol to facilitate a sexual encounter.**
  - *"We come into the Academy with all of these preconceptions and the culture that we've grown up in. And for a lot of people, it's a big shock or a big change, like all of these rules, and just finding out what you've been receiving in the culture all these years is not exactly the right thing. The thing that they focused on this year was looking out for each other, if you see something about to go down, where there's a*

guy trying to goad someone into drinking for the purposes of sex, I think that might be a potential solution. I'd say we have a culture where we want to help out." (Male)

Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates[40]

- **Some cadets indicated that education has increased understanding of what constitutes inappropriate harassing behaviors.**
  - *"People are recognizing what can be considered sexual harassment. Maybe the culture is changing, and that's a good thing."* (Female)
  - *"Maybe the education, maybe them not feeling more comfortable saying that it shouldn't be done, versus where it used to be an all-male Academy before, class of 1980 where they probably told a lot more."* (Male)
  - *"Definitely more empowerment. Women feel more comfortable speaking about it. It's not like they fear getting in trouble, so let's do something about it."* (Male)
  - *"I think if there was greater education as to what sexual harassment actually is, what's included, then I could see the sexual harassment increasing [for women]."* (Male)
  - *"I don't have an explanation for why it has gone up as much [for women], but part of it could be that we're talking about it more. So there's a bigger chance that you might know someone who has gone through an experience. Between freshman year and this year, I definitely have known more people who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment and have been really hurt by it. And so I think that has raised my standards a bit, in terms of what I would qualify as sexual harassment, just because I've talked to people and I know more people now who that's occurred to and I understand how that actually could affect somebody."* (Female)
  - *"I feel like the reason that it could have gone up is because they understood through our training that what's actually said is a sexual harassment comment, instead of, 'Oh, she's just joking, they're just messing with me.' There have been times where I would be uncomfortable with the situation, but I would rather not say anything so I would feel included. Versus 'Hey, man, don't say that because I'm uncomfortable in the situation.' So training and also providing a more aware culture."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the perceived sexual harassment rate is higher because most of the emphasis in training is on prevention of sexual assault.**
  - *"We've probably focused so much on the assault itself that, especially in my squadron, they've overlooked the harassment and that kind of stuff. I hear stuff like that all the time. Even after those briefings, guys will pester girls about things that have been said in a briefing about it."* (Male)

[40] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 48% of women experienced perceived sexual harassment (4 percentage points higher than 2012) and 9% of men experienced perceived sexual harassment (unchanged from 2012).

- *"I think they need to go hand in hand. If you're going to bring up assault, bring up harassment. Because I know freshman year, I was always taught creepy dudes pulling you into the woods. So I think that kind of opened my eyes to what sexual assault actually was. You can't just have them separate. I think if you talk about sexual assault, you should also talk about sexual harassment and explain what the difference is and how sexual harassment is not as, I don't know how to put it. It's kind of at a lower level, if you want to put it that way. People see it every day and don't realize it's happening, if that makes sense."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that it is difficult to change attitudes of what is considered inappropriate.**
  - *"I was at one of our training things this semester, and we were talking about using offensive terms like bitch and stuff like that. It became very apparent that all the guys didn't have an offensive attitude towards derogatory terms. They do not understand how they're inappropriate. And I think that's part of the issue, is that a lot of cadets have this idea stuck in their head, because it's what society tells them, that certain terms or certain ways of acting are appropriate when they're not."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the culture has changed to reflect less tolerance of sexual harassment behaviors.**
  - *"Before we came here, the sexual jokes, even freshmen and sophomore year, they were still prevalent. They've engrained that in us so much, that that's still a part of the problem, that we actually know it still exists."* (Male)
  - *"I know in our squad, the first semester we have to sign up for sexual assault awareness. Freshmen/sophomores would say, I got raped by the GR. People would always say something like that. But I don't think I've heard that at all in the last year. We specifically said, you don't know who might be hearing it. It helps to have speakers come in, but we have peer-led discussions which make us bring it up within each other. This is coming from within us. Everyone feels this way, and people do feel uncomfortable."* (Male)
  - *"You get something out of when a superior tells you something at sit-downs, but it's not until people in an individual group, like your peers, sit down and say, 'No, that's crap. You can't do that.' I've personally seen situations, a sexist joke or whatever, and a bunch of people got on them and were like, what the heck is that for? And it actually changes the culture. And if your friends are getting mad at you for something you say, then that holds a lot more weight than an officer giving you a briefing."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that confronting inappropriate behaviors should continue to be encouraged, even if it involves an upperclassman.**
  - *"One way to stop that would be encouraging people to end that conversation. Don't let it get to the next conversation. End that conversation, say something about it*

there, because it might catch them off guard. Everyone can react differently. But if people get told right then, 'It's not okay for you to say a joke like that or talk like this in front of anyone." (Male)

- *"I think also the environment that we have with the classes also makes it difficult. When I was a freshman or four-degree, at my lunch table if somebody were to say something, I did not say anything. I would sit there, because who am I to go up to somebody that's been here for three or four years and tell them that that makes me uncomfortable? But now I definitely don't have a problem with that at all. But I think that that needs to be addressed too. Not necessarily empowerment of lower classes, but letting everybody know that there is rank and there's a structure, but we are also supposed to be doing the right thing, and you do need to bring that to light, regardless of how much power you have in the wing."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that one's comfort in confronting someone depends on the relationship with that person.**
  - *"I feel that ties into communication, in the sense that if we are more comfortable just being aware of what makes us uncomfortable or what makes other people uncomfortable, we're more willing to speak up about it and/or report it. Because, honestly, we live with one another, as well as work with each other, so we are constantly around these people. It's like you develop a sense of how this person is, how their humor might be. And if it makes you uncomfortable, you're so used to being around that person, you'll either be like, okay, I'll get used to it or I'll say something. And some people are more willing to say something because they're more comfortable. But I feel we aren't helping the climate of feeling more comfortable to be able to come out and say, 'Okay look, this make me uncomfortable. You make these jokes but this goes too far or something like that.'"* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the context is important to understanding when comments and behaviors are perceived as sexual harassment.**
  - *"I feel like there's this atmosphere of a lot of people will say we're the military. Why are we worried about hurting people's feelings? I feel like it happens a lot less, at least in my circle of friends or when I'm with girls in general. I'm not saying that it's a guy thing or anything like that, but I'm more likely to hear it if I'm hanging out with guys than if I'm hanging out with girls."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think that most of the guys here do this sort of stuff, make the jokes or whatever. I think everybody does every once in a while. I don't think most guys are really bad about it. I think when there's one guy around who does do that stuff, they always are saying things that are just not politically correct at all. It pressures other people to look at things as they're all right even though they're not."* (Male)
  - *"Sometimes it's hard for people to draw the line because we live here. It's joking around with your roommate in the room, in the hallway you make a comment, or it's in front of someone. You really shouldn't be making that comment, but you feel like,*

oh, well, this is where I live, so I should be able to say what I want. I think that's probably the biggest difference where looking at active duty, where no, I'm in the workplace now, so I know that behavior. The line is a lot more blurred." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that it is difficult to challenge inappropriate behaviors.**
  - *"We have a very rigid idea of what masculinity is, especially here at the Academy. It takes a lot of courage for a guy to say, 'No, that's not okay.' One of my friends, he says every time he says something, he feels like he's being marginalized as the little guy who speaks his mind a little bit too much. Some of the good ol' Southern boys who say something that's racist and sexist will write him off immediately. He's concerned he won't be able to stay in the military because we are creating officers, and if we have a lot of people who say things or are unwilling to step up and say that that's not okay, then people like my friend aren't going to be able to go through a whole career having a good conscience, dealing with those kind of people all of the time."* (Male)

Discussion of sexist behavior rates[41]

- **Some cadets indicated that sexist comments are often based on perceived inequity in standards for men and women.**
  - *"I think maybe the physical standards. Since it's different for girls here at the Academy, a lot of guys seem to be hurt that they have to do so much more on the PFTs [physical fitness tests]. But I don't think that's unfair, just because we're built differently and we're meant to do different things differently. So I think that's probably the main reason why that happens."* (Female)
  - *"I think that happens a lot regarding the PFT. I know I've heard several cases where a lot of guys think the girls' test is too easy. I think there isn't a lot of clarification as to why those are the specific standards. It's an easy target, I think, for behavior like that. Where it's like, 'Well, you only had to do eight pull-ups, and the minimum for the guys is seven.' I think that's an issue."* (Male)
  - *"The different standards, the guys don't see the difference and why they're different, so they don't understand it, so it makes it hard for them to change their opinion on that. Also, I think until women are actually proving themselves that they can hang with the boys. Just like the women at Ranger school now. It's going to be a while until they start realizing that some women really are capable, and so we just really need to shut our mouths."* (Female)
  - *"I think some of it is just in the nature of the Academy. When girls have different PT standards, no matter what, I just think sometimes that can lead to guys thinking, 'Oh, they don't pull their weight or things like that.' So I think just sometimes the nature of the Academy makes it harder."* (Female)

[41] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 84% of women perceived experiencing sexist behavior (unchanged from 2012) and 38% of men perceived experiencing sexist behavior (unchanged from 2012).

- **Some cadets indicated that sexist behaviors occur due to "group think" attitudes.**
  - *"I think it's also still a part of the ratio. Because we are such a minority here at the Academy, it's easy for all of them to agree with each other."* (Female)
  - *"I think, as a guy, it's easy to remove yourself from that, just everyday things. And I'm not saying this is a military thing. It's just men in general. Stuff you'll say, you'll not even realize that it can be offensive to a woman. And I think that unless you actually talk to women and get close to them, this is the stuff that offends me, this is where you're coming across as sexist. That does a much better job if it is personal rather than seeing a PowerPoint. To me, I think it's personal interaction."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that some people come to the Academy with sexist attitudes.**
  - *"Well, I think as far as terms go, it's hard to eradicate something that you grew up with. I knew a guy, and he just liked using the word 'fag,' and it's completely erased from his vocabulary now after coming to the Academy just because the culture is so different. But for some people, that doesn't change. So it depends on who you're associating with and who you're hanging out with."* (Female)
  - *"Growing up, a lot of guys who come here tend to be more traditional. Like women who serve in the military tend to be more modern, so we're more aware of those issues and everything. The guys that come here tend to fall into the 'Oh, I'm the man of the family, we're the head.' So I think that's where a lot of it comes from. It's just their upbringing and everything."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that sexism is part of the culture in the military and the Academy.**
  - *"We're experiencing sexism. It's super, hypermasculine, hyper-sexualized here. There's no way that you couldn't experience sexism in some form."* (Female)
  - *"We've heard a lot of the guys talk. I want to bring light to the girls too. The girls will be around those conversations and then adopt their way of speaking, their way of being. So now it's no longer a conversation piece with men, but now the women will talk like that too. Now they're talking like that to the guys, and so everybody is okay with it. Another thing that contributes to that is not necessarily because it's a coping mechanism, but the same way guys have been that way, the girls have been that way too. So I don't think we think about it. If a guy grew up in a military family and grew up having that mindset anyway, sometimes that happens with the girls. They come here with that. They're like, you speak the same way I do; we connect."* (Female)
  - *"I think that's how a lot of women view it. I could rock the boat, but women are making a lot of advances right now. Not even think about the fact that it could have downrange effects, what effect that could have."* (Female)
  - *"If you call someone out on doing something wrong, especially if you're a girl, then you're sensitive and you need to grow thick skin. So a lot of girls, I stopped calling*

people out, upperclassmen in my squad, because I get called sensitive. I get told I need to grow thick skin. I'm just like, 'Okay, I'm just trying to do the right thing.'" (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that while they hear sexist remarks frequently, often in the context of joking, the comments can still be offensive to some.**
  - *"You didn't have the specification of it was in a joking manner [in the survey question]. It's like if it's happened at all, that you're bound to get those numbers. Even if the guys are just joking or if they actually mean it, there's that caveat that has to be separated. I'm not saying they're okay. I'm just saying there's never a caveat when we tend to be answering survey questions. Usually, you know, has this ever happened? Unfortunately, yes."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think it matters if they are joking or not. If I make a joke at the table like, 'Oh, I want to have sex with you,' that's still not okay."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that sexist behaviors might contribute to sexual assault.**
  - *"My biggest problem is the sexist jokes or comments that you hear around school. It's not so much it's going to hurt people's feelings, but I feel it really does help to make people who are capable of sexual assault feel comfortable here. This is a completely safe space here, despite the number of reports we have."* (Female)

Reporting

Cadets were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix G, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Cadets discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Cadets were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more cadets to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with cadets providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some cadets indicated they were familiar with the number of official reports.**
  - *"My AOC [Air Officer Commanding] mentioned it."* (Male)
  - *"I thought we had a briefing with General Johnson."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they had not seen the number of reports.**
  - *"No, I didn't."* (Male)

- *"No."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the number of reports was lower than expected.**
  - *"Lower than I expected."* (Female)
  - *"I think that's really surprising, given the amount of training we're given, and we're given all of these resources to talk to. And so, I think that's a pretty surprising difference."* (Female)
  - *"I think it would be higher because everything would get reported. But I think it makes sense that people are unwilling to come forward with that kind of information."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the numbers were consistent with their expectations.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some cadets indicated that leaders appeal to cadets' sense of duty to their classmates to encourage reporting.**
  - *"They just say you're not helping your classmates by not reporting it. General Williams said, 'I want you to report it if you experience this behavior.' And they say, 'Please make it unrestricted. But if you must, make it a restricted report.' Because they can do the most with the unrestricted reports. They can catch the offender."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that permanent party leadership consistently encourages reporting, while cadet leadership is less consistent.**
  - *"I think all permanent parties all say the same things."* (Male)
  - *"I think it's all from permanent party. I've never heard of cadet leadership [encouraging reporting]."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think they [cadet leaders] necessarily make any moves to make people more uncomfortable, but they definitely don't go out of their way to make them comfortable. If anything happens, they might say blanket statements, but it doesn't ever feel very personal. They're checking another box, kind of like, I'm supposed to say this. They're not like, don't bring this stuff up to me. Like I don't want to deal with this, but they don't also say, if something happens, sincerely, come to talk to me in my office or my room or like whatever. I feel like they could maybe make more of an effort."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the abundant resources made available reflects leadership's emphasis on reporting.**
  - *"We have the reporting hotline that's available everywhere. Our resources are taped on the bathroom stalls. And they just did an update on our computers. Now on our home page, everyone has it, USAFA Help Resources. And they updated the numbers. There are a few civilians not affiliated with the military, resources, which is really good. We have a few programs that aren't associated with the Academy at all."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that one's relationship with permanent party leadership matters in being comfortable reporting to them.**
  - *"The AOC plays a really big role, because then you become very involved if it is unrestricted. My AOC is also very kind and very involved in our lives and tries to be really helpful. Where if you don't have an AOC that's supportive, you're probably not going to come forward."* (Female)
  - *"It differs as far as both our leadership personalities. It's also just whether or not we feel comfortable going to them. And a lot of times, too, and obviously we do go to school with 70 to 80 percent guys or whatever. Our leadership reflects a lot of that. I have known girls who have said, I would never go talk to my male AOC or my male AMT [Academy Military Trainer] or anything like about that. And they may not have a female AOC or AMT that they feel comfortable talking to because they don't have that either in their squadron or they don't know one in a fellow squadron that they would feel comfortable talking to."* (Female)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might not report sexual assault because they incorrectly assume some responsibility for the incident.**
  - *"I know a lot of them feel guilty for what happened to them. Obviously, that's not true, but that's how they feel."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might not report sexual assault for fear of self-incrimination for other infractions, but there were mixed understandings of the policies on this.**
  - *"I think, for example, if you're underage drinking and a sexual assault happens and you report and they find out you're underage drinking, you'll get slammed for that."* (Male)
  - *"I also think there are reasons people wouldn't report. A lot of people wouldn't report it because they were using alcohol in the dorms, and you'll still get in trouble for that. Or if there's any kind of fraternization incident involved with a freshman probably won't be reported."* (Female)

- *"I think one major contributing factor is underage drinking. A lot of men and women that this happens to, if there's a situation involved where there was underage drinking, then they're reporting, but they're also self-reporting for alcohol. So it creates a whole other mess. So I know that that's two major factors."* (Male)

- *"A lot of reports are not being made because of trouble that you could get in for reporting. You might be involved in alcohol, or if you're hanging around with an upperclassman. That's a big fraternization hit. Yes, they might have assaulted to you, but you might also get hit for fraternization because you were hanging out, expecting nothing to happen, and then something did happen. You're still going to get in trouble because you shouldn't have been there. I feel like that might be a huge deterrent for people to come forward."* (Male)

- *"I've seen cases where that's been used as blackmail [a cadet offender threatening to turn someone in for underage drinking to deter reporting]."* (Male)

- *"We're getting different messages, then. I've heard they will hold off on punishment until all of the reporting is done."* (Female)

- *"You're given amnesty, and if the person is innocent, then you can be punished for those behaviors. So it's perverse incentives. I know that doesn't make it okay for someone to sexually assault you if you are breaking the rules, but at the same time, if we don't hold people accountable for drinking in the dorms, then I don't know what kind of environment we're encouraging here."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might be reluctant to report sexual assault for fear of getting someone else in trouble.**

  - *"One of the things that come into play when you talk about actually starting reports, it comes around and works against that, because you don't want to be the guy that turns in your squad mate. You don't want to be the guy that's getting people in trouble and getting people kicked out. I think that works kind of counter purpose to 'I need to report it.'"* (Male)

  - *"Basically, you want to be cool. You don't want to correct someone. You don't want to get someone in trouble. There's a negative connotation with holding someone to the standards militarily. And so that also just leaks into the wingman concept in general with sexual assaults or any other issues. Just that type of thinking. I'm a wing man, so we're best friends and we'll keep each other's secret and we won't get each other in trouble, where the wingman concept is supposed to be about holding each other accountable."* (Male)

  - *"I also think that this is one of the cases where leadership can come up in a bad way. If you file a report, the person that did that to you is going to get in trouble, and basically you're ruining their career. And I don't think any cadets really want to do that, and I think that stops a lot of people from reporting, just because they know it's*

wrong. They hope that the person doesn't do it again, but they honestly don't want to know that they're the person that ended someone's future." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated reluctance to report sexual assault because they believe reporting could end their career.**
  - *"I think a lot of the guys that are here, it's supposed to be a really positive thing for reporting and everything, but everybody is like, 'Oh, this could end my career as a cadet, so they're really afraid and tiptoe around it.'"* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that people make a subjective determination of the severity of an offense when deciding to report or not.**
  - *"If it wasn't rape, if it was just something else, I don't want to get that person in that much trouble. And so other things like that. Because it's handled so seriously."* (Male)
  - *"I think a lot of the behavior people experience is not a huge enough deal to report it. And there are a lot of other sources we have to deal with problems like that, that you have your friends and you have your peers, your AOC or whoever. There are maybe a lot of people who said they perceived sexual harassment or sexual contact, but it was easy enough for them to deal with it on their own."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that reporting might damage their professional reputation.**
  - *"The other thing, too, might be a black mark on your record. They record everything. They know everything about you. So what happens your senior year when you want to go for like an intel job? You've got that on your record. They say it's not going to matter [but] we don't know."* (Male)
  - *"I would never want to talk about sexual assault with my AOC. Like my AOC basically controls my life. I would never want to talk about sexual assault. So I wouldn't want to do an unrestricted report, and then at that point, what's the point of a restricted report."* (Female)
  - *"A lot of people who come to talk to me about it have said they just don't want to experience the backlash from other cadets who are angry that they reported it because that's their friend, who don't believe they actually had whatever occur. And they also don't want to deal with the ramifications of trying to move up militarily when you've always got people treating you differently because knowing what you have gone through."* (Female)
  - *"If I was assaulted, I don't think I would want, I know that I should, just for myself and everything, but I wouldn't want to talk to anybody in my direct chain of command about it."* (Female)
  - *"I have the perception that no matter how much I wanted to keep this quiet, no matter how much I wanted to hide this, it wouldn't happen, because I know that my AOC is*

going to hear about it, and he's going to look at me different in the hallway. And then when that happens, other people are going to pick up that something is different, and then they're going to press me for it." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that reporting might damage their personal relationships.**
  - *"You know the person's family who you're going to report, or you know that if you report, you're going to be the girl who cried rape, and that's not always fun. So those are just a couple of things."* (Female)
  - *"Going off the girl who cried out, a lot of the guys here are like, 'Oh, we won't date cadet girls because they'll call SARC or something.' The girls are like, 'Oh, gosh, nobody is ever going to want me again.' Not because it happened to her but because she spoke out."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that someone might be reluctant to report for fear of being challenged.**
  - *"Whenever it's an IC [Inter-Collegiate athlete], you're just afraid to say something, because I now know that the teams are going to come after me, and even the coaches are going to come to me and say, 'Are you sure?' Give you that talk. So you don't want to poke the beast, is a good way of saying it."* (Female)
  - *"It wasn't sexual assault, but they got someone on a team in trouble, and so then they got guilt-tripped. Well, I can't go to this and that. So I can't even imagine if that had been sexual assault. And then you have rumors of the girl being a slut or whatever, on top of the fact that they can't go to practice and they're ruining how we represent ourselves to other schools and stuff."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that someone might be reluctant to report for fear of gossip and rumors starting.**
  - *"This place, my AOC calls it the biggest rumor mill he's ever seen. You can't keep anything hidden for any amount of time. It doesn't matter how hard you try. Something is going to get out to somebody, and then everybody knows about it. So if the person doesn't want anybody to know about it, they're not going to say anything."* (Female)
  - *"It's hard when you live with people 24/7. Even if you have restricted reporting, the people that you live with will notice that something is wrong, and you're bound to tell somebody that you trust. The people that you live with 24/7 are going to notice that something is wrong."* (Female)
  - *"As far as rumor spreading goes, a female cadet was raped and she didn't tell anybody outside of her squad about it. But she told her first sergeant in her squad, expecting that he would keep it to himself, and the next day everybody in her squad knew about it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might be reluctant to report for fear that people will become uncomfortable interacting with them.**
  - *"[Describing a situation] Obviously, something happened, and it was awkward to be in the squad around that because you want to give her privacy, but at that same time you need to make sure that everything is all right because she's somebody that you have been through a lot with. Everyone was tiptoeing around her and trying not to do anything that could make her upset about something. I felt bad because, okay, I don't want to know the details, but at the same time, I want to help you. It was a restricted report. We don't know any information, but you know something happened."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that someone might be reluctant to report because they believe once someone goes to the hospital over an incident, an investigation begins and everyone finds out.**
  - *"If you have a completed sexual assault and you go to the hospital, it becomes unrestricted, and you don't have a choice because OSI gets involved. I've seen that happen twice here. I think that that's something that we should look at because that makes women not want to go to the hospital. If it's that serious, it does become unrestricted, and then everybody knows. I know that that would prevent me from wanting to go get help."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that survivors of USC might choose not to report if they felt the incident was resolved through other channels.**
  - *"A common thing is a butt slap. If it was just in the middle of a game and you're like, oh, I didn't realize. I hit a girl or whatever, but she felt it was that way, then I don't know. I feel like these numbers aren't really [She didn't appreciate someone butt slapping her, but she's not going to go report it either.] Exactly. So it was unwanted, but either she had said something or he had said, 'I apologize. I did not mean it within that context.'"* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that some cadets might not report because they do not recognize their experience as USC.**
  - *"People who might be doing these acts probably don't know the true definitions and doing something they think is correct, whereas it might not be. Because your definition of something is very different from my definition, and I think that can impact on what people report as well."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that fear of victim blaming discourages reporting.**
  - *"Because there's a whole lot of, 'Oh, she just regretted it.' People say that all the time. Some of the sexual assault cases we've had, a lot of people say, 'Well, why isn't the victim's name out too? The perpetrator's name is out, his name is slaughtered, but the victim isn't out there too.' There's a lot of defending of the person that has*

been accused of it. People are quick to defend or protect whoever has been accused." (Female)

- *"A lot of times they feel like they might be blamed for it. If they were putting themselves in a situation where they were vulnerable, then they might have to shoulder some of the blame, and that's what stops a lot of people from doing it."* (Male)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some cadets indicated they are aware that perpetrators of sexual assault are frequently repeat offenders.**
  - *"I think that's something they touch on a lot when they talk about sexual assaults, the fact that it's usually a repeat offender. And that's why it's important to talk about it more, to know that it's not cool."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that early intervention might reduce repeat offenses.**
  - *"Telling people about how it was the same offender, that would be effective. Because a lot of people play this game, if I just ignore this person or if I avoid their approaches, it will go away. I just have to ignore this person. And this might give people the encouragement to go up and talk to that person and directly handle it, which is how you have to handle it."* (Male)
  - *"Teach people confrontation. People avoid that. If you can avoid confrontation, you're going to. But in a situation like this, you just walk away, then if nothing's said, it's like, 'Okay, I guess I can do it again.'"* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that better understanding of serial offenders would make people aware this occurs and motivate more cadets to take issues of sexual assault prevention more seriously.**
  - *"I think it's very useful. A big reason this sexual assault training doesn't work is because people say, 'Oh, well, it's not me raping people.' I think this shows it's not you, it's a small group of people. I think the best way to deal with stuff like this is just to alienate the crap out of people like this, if it's the same person messing with people over and over again. It says that people who aren't doing that, the majority of us, should get together and actually care about it."* (Male)
  - *"I think as it's brought up more, it will [help]. People are so reluctant, it was just a one-time, there's no one else. It would just happen to me. That's kind of that stigma. But I think just knowing that people here at USAFA seeing that."* (Female)
  - *"That would definitely help. I think you definitely have to frame it a little bit, not just give people the numbers and say, 'Hey, look at this. Hey, think about this.' And maybe even incorporate it into what we were talking about before, where we have like a talk in a smaller group. Let's look at these numbers, guys and girls. What do*

we think about this percentage? How does that make you feel about the people that are around you and stuff like that? And I think that could definitely do some good." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that better understanding of serial offenders would encourage people to come forward to stop someone else from experiencing USC.**
  - *"I feel like it would because a lot of people don't want to come forward because of all the things we just mentioned. If they would stop and think, like, 'Oh, I could save a friend from going through this, because this person is likely to go rape again.' Like one statistic that General Williams was saying to us in one our PEER meetings that if someone rapes, they're likely to get away with it six times before they get caught. So if people know the statistic, I feel like maybe they might have more courage to do it."* (Female)
  - *"It's probably already happened to someone else. Maybe they didn't want to say it, so you have to say it to open up a case. Because I know a lot of cases here, when they're doing the OSI investigations, a lot of people get called in, like a lot of people who've had a history with that person or whatever. They all have to testify to their character, or like say, 'Hey, yeah, this same thing happened to me.' I know it would be helpful."* (Female)
  - *"I think the possibility that they're saving someone else makes them come forward. I want to go unrestricted because I don't want him to do this to anyone else. He's already had problems in the Academy, and he's going to go out in the real world and have more opportunities to do it."* (Female)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some cadets indicated they might report sexual assault to prevent further incidents.**
  - *"Stop them from doing it to others or [themselves again]?"* (Male)
  - *"For others, awareness of others? It's not really emphasized."* (Male)
  - *"The speaker we had the other night, she mentioned that it wasn't her cause to come forward, but it became her cause because she didn't want somebody to do that to other people. It resonated with me, and I think it would resonate with the rest of the Cadet Wing, at least to some extent."* (Male)
  - *"Or if they know they're not the first person."* (Female)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some cadets indicated that developing a culture of support to a survivor would encourage more people to come forward and report.**
  - *"I think having a support system really helps. That affects a lot whether or not you're even comfortable talking about something in general, whether it be sexual assault, anything that happens here, but especially something as touchy as sexual assault here. Having that support system in place, some people don't think they have that. If they don't, it's going to be hard enough dealing with it on their own, let alone dealing with any backlash and retaliation. The whole investigation itself can bring up a lot of stuff. So if they don't have those people they are comfortable trusting or talking to, then they're not going to report."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that self-incrimination is a concern and protection would encourage reporting.**
  - *"I think that they have actually cracked down on alcohol a lot harder this year. If you're underage drinking in the dorms and this happens. If you're underage drinking, period. You're going to go through the process. OSI is going to come in and they're going to investigate it, it takes a really long time, and then everything works out the way it's supposed to, but when it comes down to it, in the end, you are still underage drinking, which is an alcohol hit."* (Male)
  - *"When General Lengyel [previous Commandant] had crack down on the no sleep-overs policy, if it's occurring after that taps point, you could also be in trouble for that as well. It's a laundry list of different rules that you're like could get hit here and here. Now my demerit count is up, and people think, is it worth it?"* (Male)
  - *"Amnesty when they report. That shouldn't really weigh on their conscience if they're a survivor."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the policy about self-incrimination is unclear and could use clarification.**
  - *"Is that [guaranteed amnesty] possible, though? That's my worry."* (Male)
  - *"I think one of the issues, is that if you ask in the group, nobody is actually sure what the policy is. Could you get an alcohol hit if you reported sexual assault on yourself when you were underage drinking? I wouldn't report it just if there was any chance I could get in trouble for it. There's a big gray area that no one really understands."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that addressing and diminishing victim blaming will encourage reporting.**
  - *"I think our focus right now of no victim blaming is actually probably going to help a lot, especially because we want to prevent the rumor mill. We want to prevent people*

from being like, 'Oh, well, she was asking for it,' for example. The Superintendent is really adamant about the climate of respect. As long as we maintain that, we're going to be able to communicate better and regardless if it's a restricted report or unrestricted report. Even if they're just telling their friend to make sure that somebody knows. If we are preventing that victim blaming first and foremost, that's a big step in the right direction. And that's one focus that they've started having this year, and honestly that's really positive in my mind. I think that's probably helping a lot." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that training could be improved to reinforce survivor care and diminish negative reactions.**
  - *"Something that struck me about Take Back the Night was when she talked about when she called her parents and their response. With a lot of people who get in these situations, they're embarrassed by the fact that it even got to that point. They don't even want to let people know that they got to that point and they reported it. If our training is a lot more towards reactionary, how to help a victim, then they will be a lot more willing and comfortable to report it."* (Male)
  - *"One of the presenters that we had a while back, he advised us to stop referring to them as victims and more as survivors. And I think that might be a better approach towards the situation, if we stopped thinking, 'Oh, they're a victim of this horrible tragedy,' and started saying, 'Oh, this bad thing happened, but they're tough, they're resilient, and they're going to get through it.'"* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they would benefit from clarification regarding mandatory reporters.**
  - *"Another system that's adding to the confusion a little bit, in addition to the restricted/unrestricted stuff, is like the mandatory reporters versus the non-mandatory reporters. Because until recently, I thought even chaplains had some things that they were mandatorily supposed to report. I just found out a couple of days ago, if you ask for it, they have to keep everything a total secret, even if it's illegal or you're going to hurt yourself or hurt somebody. They have to take those secrets to the grave. So I think maybe trying to simplify that system of who is actually going to turn this into an official legal issue and who is just going to be there to listen would help a lot."* (Male)
  - *"I think permanent party should be the only unrestricted, right? They should be the only mandatory reporters. When I think of people who are going to tell other people, it's my chain of command and permanent party. Like even my element leader, I can tell him stuff, and I don't think he's going to blat it out to the whole world. Permanent party is unrestricted; everybody else is restricted."* (Male)
  - *"I get confused by the different helping agencies, though. If you talk to an MFLAC [Military and Family Life Consultant], you're talking mental health again, the Peak Performance Center. I think that's where a lot of the confusion comes from. The*

MFLAC has to report if I self-harm, and they're all different categories of what they have to report. So I think that's probably the biggest source of confusion." (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they would benefit from clarification regarding restricted and unrestricted reporting options.**
  - *"The whole restricted/unrestricted reporting thing, in all honesty, it confuses me, I don't really know. So if you put yourself in that situation, if you're a survivor, it's a lot of red tape to go through in order to just tell someone what happened. I can't even remember what the difference is between unrestricted and restricted, I'm sorry. I think when you're in that emotional state, you can imagine what just happened. All you want is you don't want to worry about any red tape. You just want to find someone to talk to."* (Male)
  - *"One other thing with all of the different helping agencies and all the different rules they all have, if I decide to go to someone, I may not have the power to decide how they act. Whereas, let's say I was sexually assaulted. I want to be able to go to the SARC and say, okay, I just told you what happened. I want you to help me get help from a chaplain or someone in mental health or something like that, but I don't want you to take it up to the chain of command. I don't want you to make an investigation. So empowering the survivor to make the choices rather than 'Oh, I already went to the MFLAC,' so they have to do whatever."* (Male)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
>
> 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed

Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a cadet would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated that professional retaliation for reporting sexual assault is not likely to happen.**
  - *"Not with permanent party."* (Female)
  - *"Not really."* (Female)
  - *"Nothing officially, because people would know that they would get in trouble for that, but just socially. I know there was someone who was sexually assaulted, or claimed to be at least, in my freshman year, and a lot of people didn't believe them. It was really a questionable situation. Socially, I think there's more retaliation."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that subtle forms of professional retaliation can occur.**
  - *"A lot of it is a popularity contest. So if your in-training officer likes you, then he hires you. It's so subjective that, if you report something, how they see you will be different. It's the small things."* (Male)
  - *"It's happening today."* (Male)
  - *"They go through and rank every single person in your class. In the semester after you made the report, all of a sudden you dropped ten places, you have no way of proving that there's a connection."* (Female)
  - *"For instance, you're graded based on how your leadership sees you."* (Male)
  - *"It depends who you accuse. I know an AOC who honestly might be irritated if you accused one of their better cadets. So if you're a bad cadet and you're accusing a good cadet, I could see how that, even subconsciously, could affect their judgment."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that people are supportive of others who have had a bad experience rather than reacting negatively toward them.**
  - *"I saw the opposite. The person I was mentioning, I feel like people were in the room were like, 'How are you doing?' The Academy, even though it is very competitive, people support you when it comes to stuff like that."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated the treatment of accused cadets is a form of retaliation.**
  - *"Every time there's an investigation, the victim and the offender are put in different buildings, and all of the offenders live together. So you have dooleys [freshmen] living with firsties [seniors]. So if they're innocent until proven guilty, I'm not quite sure how that is conveying that message."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that social retaliation is more likely to occur.**
  - *"I've also seen it where if somebody that people really do respect is being investigated, then people will be like, wow, that girl is all kinds of words. Look what she's doing to this good guy."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that cadet leaders would not engage in professional retaliation.**
  - *"Not within the cadet realm, I don't think."* (Male)
  - *"I don't see that happening."* (Male)
  - *"I think that the cadets are usually picking those [leadership] jobs as seniors. So if someone did do something like that [report sexual assault], we're not going to hold that against them. I don't see people holding that against someone. But I do see the whole cadets talking. Word gets around the Cadet Wing."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that decisions can be influenced by knowledge that someone reported.**
  - *"Even if it's not a direct retaliation. I'm going to not put you in the position because that kind of makes me uncomfortable, and because of that, I can't work with you, so I'm not going to pick you, even though you might be the best."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that ostracism can occur to avoid becoming involved in a situation perceived as negative.**
  - *"I think the ostracism happens out of people's own fear. You hear person X in your squadron that you know is sexually assaulted, you might just say, 'Oh, that freaks me out. I have no idea how to interact with the person.' So it might not be you are trying to retaliate against the person. You're basically just scared and you're afraid, and you just don't know how to interact with them, so the easiest thing for me to do it just not to talk to them. It's not like you're taking negative action, but I think that's also an issue."* (Female)
  - *"People would just want to say to themselves, 'I don't want to get involved. If I keep my hands clean, I won't get in trouble. I'll walk away from this, and it just won't be my problem.'"* (Female)

- *"They try to keep things quiet whenever that happens. But when you have someone move into your squadron, it's pretty obvious that something is going on. And then a lot of people would be wary of interacting with them because they don't know what happened, why they moved in."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that it would be difficult to stop ostracism.**
  - *"Yes, it is much more likely [social retaliation]. Also, I feel like that's something that's so hard to enforce just because if there's people spreading rumors about somebody, how are they supposed to be like, 'Don't do that, that's not allowed.'"* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that cadets choose sides when someone has reported sexual assault.**
  - *"Reputation going into it is a big factor. [Describing an incident] Automatically, without knowing the details, everyone said, this kid is a piece of crap for reporting on this kid who didn't do anything. You don't know the details, so you can't really judge what people do, but people do anyway."* (Male)
  - *"I remember an instance and without knowing any of the details, all of our group of friends just jumped on the case and blamed the female because she's ruining his career here as an athlete and hurting the team. And it was seen negatively, even without knowing anything. And we jumped to his side just because he was an athlete and he was one of the better players on the team."* (Male)
  - *"I think that with lack of information, people will naturally try to pick a side. The biggest thing that I tell people is do not tell anyone that you don't have to. It spreads like wildfire, and all kinds of things pop up."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated a tendency for others to fill in the blanks or make stereotypical assumptions regarding a report of sexual assault.**
  - *"I think a big misconception that a lot of males have is that they hear about cases where a female falsely accuses a male to get back at him. 'Oh, girls do this all the time.'"* (Male)
  - *"I think a big reason that happens is, in a false accusal, that guy is here. He's like, this is what happened to me. But in an accusal, the investigation goes through and, yeah, this guy did that. He gets removed. He doesn't have that opportunity to tell people about it. In a restricted report, all they're doing is helping the person that got assaulted. Even in an unrestricted, chances are there will be no announcement, nothing made, other than one guy going to prison. That's all that you could see coming out of that."* (Male)
  - *"I think a big thing is if we're told something happened, but there's no definite resolution or there's no like this is actually what happened, this is the verdict. Then it's like people's imaginations will go crazy. And then as much as you try to forget*

about it and see them as a normal person, now you know that there's something going on there. People would probably try to distance themselves from that. And then I think that kind of ostracizing would make the person in question feel isolated." (Female)

- **One cadet indicated the cadet chain might engage in retaliation because the situation reflects negatively on the unit.**
  - *"Anyone really in your chain, because it can make your squadron look bad within the Wing and you start saying, 'Oh, my gosh, they have a bunch of SARC issues or whatever.' So if it's a squadron commander, or in my opinion, anyone you can assign an MPA [Military Average Performance]."* (Female)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **One cadet described a situation where forms of social retaliation occurred.**
  - *"[Regarding a situation] Everyone was like, wow, you reported on this guy, you tried to ruin his life. This girl got torn apart. But then a few weeks later, she reported again. And they investigated it again, and they realized that they had missed something in the first one and this girl had been assaulted twice. In that case, this girl got ripped apart."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated there are situations where actions were viewed as retaliatory when in fact someone was trying to be helpful.**
  - *"They were in their room a lot more, asking them how they were doing. If you go from having one person in your room a night to having 15, and they're all asking the same question, you know what they're asking about. None of those people are having malice when they're doing what they're doing. But the combined effect of all 15 of them makes them more high visibility than they want to be."* (Male)
  - *"Or they're not given a position because 'They need time to recover.'"* (Male)
  - *"I saw the person get completely removed from the Academy for a year because of a situation. You just lost a year of your life."* (Male)
  - *"And I think then also people feel like there's a fine line between trying to give the person the space that they need to make sure they're getting help and dealing with it appropriately and everything like that. So there's a fine line between giving them their space and making sure that you're not aggravating the situation versus ostracizing them, especially when as many messy feelings can be involved in stuff like this. I can see that it would be perceived as one way or the other when it's not."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that transferring someone to a different squadron can start rumors.**
  - *"It's a cadet rumor mill. If you hear that a cadet is being taken out of this squadron and put in this squadron, it's such a big event that pretty much everyone knows about it. So now suddenly no one knows what to think about you, and everyone starts questioning that behavior and things like that. So I understand the purpose of maybe taking somebody out of that squad to help people deal with it and things like that, but it can just so quickly be perceived negatively throughout the Wing and that goes through the Wing."* (Female)
  - *"There really aren't that many reasons why people would switch squadrons in the middle of the year. It's obviously for their health and welfare, but it's just more proof that unrestricted reports really aren't that private."* (Female)
- **Some cadets described both positive and negative effects resulting from expedited transfers.**
  - *"If the assault occurred between two people in squad, obviously it would make for a very uncomfortable living situation, if they're right down the hall from you and you are going through a legal battle against each other. I feel like that's pretty obvious. I know oftentimes it's the accused who's moved rather than the perpetrator."* (Male)
  - *"I know one situation in particular. He was accused and he was moved out of the squadron. That makes sense to me. That would be very awkward, I would say. And it sucks for him, because how is he going to explain to people, why were you moved out of your squadron?"* (Male)
  - *"I think there's almost a stigma with reporting because it does come off as it probably was her fault. That's what I hear about a lot of cadets that switched squadrons. From what I've heard, it's her fault. That's always the rumor I hear about people. If you're switching squadron's, it's probably not your fault. I think culture is a huge thing in all of the things that we've been talking about."* (Female)
  - *"I feel like if someone is assaulted and gets switched to another squad, I feel like that's kind of like punishing the wrong person."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that a person should have more say in being transferred to have some control over potential retaliation.**
  - *"I could definitely see how someone could definitely perceive that it's retaliation, and I don't know how you could avoid that. I would hope the AOC or whoever was in charge of that would explain to them, 'We're transferring you because of this.' I would hope that was already a part of the process where they told them that. But I could definitely see how they could misinterpret that."* (Male)
  - *"I think that's something where if you empowered the survivors, that would be extremely helpful. Instead of the AOC saying, 'We're going to move you to a different*

squad so this doesn't happen again.' Like the AOC saying', Hey, listen, I know you went through hard times. Would you feel more comfortable if we had you living in a different squadron right now?' They should be in charge of their own fate, their own destiny." (Male)

- *"Informing the person why and not just shipping them off, which seems like it's alienation. There are some squadrons that will ship that person off to a different squadron to sort out the issue, versus keeping them in squadron."* (Male)

Aware of prohibitions against retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated they know retaliation for reporting is improper.**
  - *"I feel like you know that you shouldn't retaliate against someone like that, but it still happens anyway. You may just feel more pity for the person, and you may feel like, if someone were to have adverse actions towards someone who reports, that's not something that is tangible enough to be able to stop. I don't know how you would do that."* (Male)
  - *"I heard it, but at the same time, it's just like discrimination in the workplace. It's not something that can really be totally avoided just because of the way humans are."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they were not aware of official regulations that prohibit retaliation.**
  - *"I didn't know that."* (Male)
  - *"I did not know that, actually."* (Male)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated they would report retaliation for reporting sexual assault to the SARC or their AOC.**
  - *"Either the SARC or AOC."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated not being aware of retaliation being something you can file a complaint about.**
  - *"No."* (Male)
  - *"I didn't know you could make a complaint official."* (Male)

Leadership awareness of retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated that the reaction to retaliation by leadership varies from leader to leader.**
  - "*Depends who it is, I think.*" (Female)
  - *"I think you can talk to leadership about stuff so much, and it really just depends on how much they truly care about it. If you're like, 'Oh, I feel like people aren't talking to me because I said this.' They'll be like, 'No, they probably just aren't talking to you.' I don't think they'd actually care that much."* (Female)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated the Academy could better handle retaliation through improved communications.**
  - *"Again, I think just communication. They don't have to give huge details. 'Hey, we had this many cases, and this is what happened out of them.' This is a big thing right now. It always is, but I think that's another way to open people's minds."* (Male)
  - *"The Academy tries to be hush-hush about it. That's true [in response to there are a lot of privacy issues involved], as far as specific names goes. Honestly, for me, I find it hard to believe that that's going on around here to that extent, that many people, when they show us the possibility. At least where I come from, sexual harassment to me was the same level as murder. You wouldn't see it as common as you think. I know an element leader who was accused and went to jail for it. This is someone we looked up to. You tend to see the good in people. He wasn't actually the person that we thought he was."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that leadership being open about a situation would capitalize on the family mindset among cadets.**
  - *"I think maintaining an open environment. We had someone recently come into our squadron. It wasn't for any of this. Her upper leadership wasn't on the same page as she was, but people might have assumed things. But honestly, we had two different roll calls on it before she even moved into the squad, to make sure that everyone understood that we were not going to ask any questions if she didn't want to share, for example. So honestly, just maintaining a familial environment, to the point where we welcome whoever comes in with open arms. I know it's kind of an eternal optimist type of view, but it seemed to work really well. Because honestly, we did welcome her, and then it turned out that it wasn't for any of this. We all heaved a sigh of relief. We could potentially ostracize one another, but I feel like more often than not, we try and welcome each other, try and put that aside and get to know them as people first. That's an optimistic viewpoint."* (Female)
  - *"I can remember that one kid in our squad was having an issue with sexual assault, and I guess he reported it and everything, and our AOC was very good and said, 'Just*

treat him like normal.' You can do all you want, leadership can do all you want, and you can't blame them when things don't go as they plan. That was the most you could do in that situation. And whether that worked perfectly, no, it didn't. You can't blame them. I don't know what more you can do, to be honest." (Male)

- *"I think going back real quick to the question you asked before about what leadership can do, I think this is more from cadet leadership, especially cadet squadron leadership, is making it a family and team environment. Because if you really care about someone and you hear that something happens, you're not just going to ignore them, because you care about them. They're not just an acquaintance, where something bad happens. It's someone you care about. And there's no prescribed way you can do that."* (Male)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, cadets were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among cadets and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Cadets were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some cadets indicated that posts are generally about daily occurrences at the Academy.**
  - *"I don't think it would get that evil. It's more like, 'Oh, we had a parade on Saturday' and stuff."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that social media allows for dissemination of information quickly.**
  - *"The culture of the upper leadership also fosters that use of social media in a way. If you look at the cadet who just passed, and social media was the first to know. But when permanent party is using social media in the same way to get information out, then it can't be expected that we'll never use social media in your free time to get things out."* (Female)

Use of Yik Yak[42]

- **Some cadets indicated that social media, such as Yik Yak, plays a role in retaliation of various forms as it is anonymous.**
  - *"I think Yik Yak is definitely a retaliation."* (Male)

[42] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

- *"Definitely retaliation on there. People are very ignorant and use it for wrong reasons."* (Female)

- *"You're completely anonymous. You can make posts about pretty much anything. And then anybody that reads it has the ability to up or down vote it. After a certain number of down votes, it will get taken off. For instance, when the Wing Commander for this semester got posted, you couldn't find a positive thing on it. You could find a whole bunch of negative things, but not a positive thing. That wasn't about sexual harassment or unwanted sexual contact, but it was definitely retaliation."* (Male)

- *"It's like people just have to have something to gripe about, they put it on there so they don't have to deal with the negative comments being seen for what they are in actual conversation. And they complain about everything on Yik Yak, and then people agree with it, and it's like, 'Oh, yeah, that's horrible.' They up vote it."* (Male)

- *"[In an incident] someone reported something against him and it got out; so then the Cadet Wing completely retaliated against him. And although all the facts weren't out and we can't say for certain that this cadet was, in fact, the criminal in this situation, we still condemned him for being one."* (Male)

- *"It's so easy when it's anonymous. You like to think the guys and girls who are doing this wouldn't do it if people knew their names. But it's so easy when somebody says that's funny, to just encourage it."* (Female)

- *"Because of the fraternization thing, freshmen can't be friends with upperclassmen. Yik Yak is the only place where everyone is [accessible/equal]. Permanent party and adults, they can't control that because it's anonymous. But we can't be friends with sophomores or juniors or seniors on Facebook, Twitter, anything like that. That's the only one I can think of where everyone is [accessible/equal]."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the lack of anonymity of other sites is a deterrent for using them to make negative posts.**

  - *"On the other social media sites people know will be there forever. So you don't want to post something under your own name that could get you in trouble. People are generally smart about Facebook posts and stuff."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that sometimes Yik Yak is used in a positive way.**

  - *"There was one instance where my AOC brought up a good thing that was brought up by Yik Yak. Because one person posted and said, 'I need help. I'm having a really rough day, and I need to talk to somebody.' And all the comments were like 'PPC [Peak Performance Center] is here. The phone numbers to the chaplains are here. If you need to talk, tell me where to meet you, and I will be there,' or something like that. There are certain times where it's a good place because someone feels open enough to anonymously say, 'Hey I'm having trouble' or something like that, but it's*

really rare, unfortunately. So there are good things and there are bad things, but there are mostly bad, unfortunately." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that Yik Yak is a good way to share opinions.**
  - *"I know some people say Yik Yak is bad. I honestly think it's the best tool we have for getting opinions. Yeah, there's that jerk that posts really ignorant stuff on there, but take a picture of the Yak and post it up during a brief, because that person is going to feel like they are an idiot whenever the whole entire Cadet Wing sees what a stupid thing they posted."* (Female)
  - *"It's whatever is on the cadet conscience. Whatever is going around. Whatever anybody wants to say and doesn't feel like they can say; that's what Yik Yak is for."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that Yik Yak provides a forum to make complaints.**
  - *"If they're being called out on it, it's not quite as funny, even if nobody else knows. But that's the only freedom of speech we really have here, and that's why people act out a lot, because we literally have so few total freedoms, and that's something where we can voice up. Because we know permanent party is on there, we make complaints. This is stuff that we actually have a problem with. Why don't you hear us out?"* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that posts on Yik Yak could be tracked.**
  - *"It's like an IP address; you can still track anything you put out on the Internet. Everything is trackable. And honestly, we have a lot of methods that we could use to either stop it, take it down or track who did it, and we're not."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the lack of accountability due to anonymity is a problem.**
  - *"Especially Yik Yak. I'm very opinionated about Yik Yak. There are some positives to it, but I think it's a huge negative, and it's a huge thing on the Cadet Wing, because people don't feel like they will be held responsible for anything. People who post it tend to be very, very strongly opinionated. They'll go off the cuff and yet they'll say something, and someone will read that, whether a cadet or permanent party in Colorado Springs. They will say, this is what cadets think. I think it's a huge detriment to our culture. Fundamentally, I think it's a problem."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated there is self-policing of the site.**
  - *"I have seen people go in the opposite direction after Take Back the Night. People were making jokes about it, and it got down voted off."* (Male)
  - *"You don't see as much negative as it was before. I saw a lot of positive stuff on there. And a lot of stupid stuff is being down voted."* (Male)

- *"I feel like the Cadet Wing as a whole does a pretty good job of holding people accountable. If people post something on Yik Yak, that's not acceptable, or they'll down vote it and it gets taken off."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual harassment occurs on the site.**
  - *"People definitely sexually harass other people on there, and because it's anonymous, supposedly. Nothing is anonymous, by the way. Because OSI hasn't done any investigations yet, people think it's okay. It's good in that it shows what kind of behaviors and models of unprofessionalism that are really going on. And it's bad because you're supposed to be an officer and you can't even say something nice about someone else or just keep your opinions to yourself. It makes a new norm. So if people think it's okay to talk about [name] and having sex with him on Yik Yak over and over again, and everyone thinks it's funny. But when you talk to him, he's incredibly offended by that. That's the norm that we're setting, because it's funny to an acceptable amount of people. People don't understand that they just lowered their toleration for what's acceptable, and what's not."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think sexual assault comes up on Yik Yak. Harassment does."* (Male)
  - *"Over the summer, I wasn't here, but with Yik Yak, there was a girl tanning in the squad. There was a Yik Yak about it almost daily. 'Check out so-and-so in the quad.' They would use her name. They would refer to what she was wearing, certain assets, things like that. It happens."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that only a small number of cadets contribute posts from the student body and the application's popularity is decreasing.**
  - *"Small [number of people who post]."* (Male)
  - *"People are getting bored with it. It's so negative."* (Female)

Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated that there are some restrictions on the use of social media.**
  - *"We're [freshmen] restricted from being friends [on Facebook] with upperclassmen, but we're not restricted from using it."* (Male)
  - *"Only freshmen can't be friends [on Facebook] with upperclassmen."* (Female)
  - *"You can check when you became friends with people on Facebook and Instagram and things like that. Because I have a few friends who I knew before the Academy who are upperclassmen, and it shows, 'Been friends since May 2011.' If you've been friends with them for that long, you knew them before you came to the Academy."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy cannot control use of social media.**
  - *"It's too hard to control."* (Male)
  - *"If they say you can't use your Facebook, it's freedom of speech, something like that."* (Male)
  - *"They let us. As long as we're discreet about it."* (Male)
  - *"Permanent party is trying to dial that down and say you shouldn't be doing this, and things like that. But there's not really a way to restrict that unless they actually restrict that usage."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy has suggested being careful about posting on social media.**
  - *"Not officially. They certainly suggest that we don't post too much. Technically if you're posting your personal opinions on things, in all technicality we should probably say, '... and I do not represent the Air Force or the government in any way in saying this.' People don't do that necessarily and they still post their opinions on Facebook, for example. Then Yik Yak has been a big problem because it's anonymous, quote/unquote, but it provides a forum for people to be less censored."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that controlling the use of a site such as Yik Yak would drive cadets elsewhere.**
  - *"A lot of people feel because they're anonymous that they're immune to any, they're invisible, backlash from it. If people tried to regulate that, then I feel like there would be more retaliation issues, to try to get another website where they couldn't be regulated. Because we're regulated literally every second of our day, so having one outlet that's not, people kind of let loose there."* (Female)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some cadets indicated that Academy staff follows social media sites.**
  - *"They can go in and check."* (Female)
  - *"If something happens, they can go in and be like, 'They're having an unprofessional relationship.' I don't think it's something they seek out on a daily basis, to see if we're all friends."* (Female)
  - *"Yik Yak. How can you regulate something that's completely anonymous? I think that's been a problem the entire Harmon Hall [leadership] has been trying to deal with. Apparently, what we've been told from our AOC and stuff, is that they have people just reading through cadet yaks and then trying to pinpoint, based on descriptors, what squadron it could be from. Apparently, my AOC got a phone call*

'Hey, so we read a Yik Yak; we think it might be from your squad; you might want to deal with that' and stuff like that. So they're trying to regulate it, but it's really hard." (Female)

- *"So there's a difference of having it and contributing to it versus having it and observing it. Upper leadership, they have it to observe. And I know permanent party leadership has it to observe."* (Male)
- *"I know the Commandant taps it for the mood of the Cadet Wing."* (Male)
- *"There's an ongoing rape trial, and I've seen some really, really juicy gossip on it. So that stays on there a while because people don't want to down vote it. I think weighing the good and the bad with Yik Yak, I think the fact that permanent party actually listens and you actually see them make policy changes, which is mind-blowing to me. They listen to Yik Yak more than us."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the restriction on fraternization on social media sites is cadet-monitored.**
  - *"It's a cadet-monitored thing."* (Female)
  - *"People can report it if they were looking through Facebook."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that such sites should be used to see what needs to be changed at the Academy.**
  - *"I would watch it as a litmus test for what's going on, and what I need to address."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy is inconsistent in addressing behavior on social media.**
  - *"General Williams [Commandant] asked us if we wanted to shut it down, and we had a long discussion about it, because you can shut it down in the area. I think the issue is revealing on what we're actually creating here. But at the same time, people post things about General Johnson on Facebook that are inappropriate in 'my life as a cadet,' and we take it down within hours. People post inappropriate things about cadets on Yik Yak and no one takes it down. So it seems like a double standard to me. You have rank, you're supposed to be respected, but because you're a human, you're not held to that same standard."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy should monitor social media and address those few cadets who are responsible for inappropriate posts.**
  - *"I feel like 99 percent of cadets are great people. And I really love hanging out with cadets. If there was a way to monitor people and make sure we understand who these people are and replying to that in some way, that would be huge. The vast majority is*

just willing to say that's not okay, but not publically go out and say that was objectionable." (Male)

- **Conversely, some cadets indicated that there may be negative reactions to identifying individuals who post on social media sites.**
  - *"I think if we started identifying them as individuals, that would just increase the cynicism. And I don't think that would actually deal with the problem culturally because I think that if more people responded and say, 'Hey, that's not cool' or whatever, more down votes, if they got a lot of down votes. People just say, 'Don't make comments like that.' I think that would help them see it's acceptable. Than 'Hey, you posted that, now you're going to get in trouble.'"* (Male)
  - *"It would be pretty detrimental to be chasing them down and going trying to figure out who this is and going on a witch hunt and who sent this. It begins to get into a lot of blurred lines about free speech and a lot of things that are very tricky. If you say it on Yik Yak, it's one thing, but what about Facebook? It is just very difficult. The bottom line is it should be a cultural thing, where we focus on changing the culture and we target everyone and make sure that we try to get everyone thinking on the same page. There's still going to be outliers, but they'll be highlighted, because they're just that, outliers."* (Male)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Cadets were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix G, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some cadets indicated that leadership is engaged on sexual assault issues and takes it seriously.**
  - *"Honestly, I think this is pretty accurate that they're willing to step in. Because I don't know if they're screened for this, but I have met a lot of faculty and permanent party here who have personal experiences or have someone who is really close to them who have had an experience with sexual assault. So they're more aware of it, and they know, not how to deal with it, but how to get you help, for sure."* (Female)
  - *"I would say the upper levels [take USC seriously]."* (Female)

- *"That's the first thing our Commandant talked about when he came in. He genuinely cared about it. Because he's the father of three daughters, he brings it up. It's not something that he goes, 'Okay, I think sexual assault is bad,' and then we don't hear about it for the rest of the year."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that leaders could show that they are serious about preventing USC by sharing personal stories related to USC.**
  - *"You had asked how you think that our leaders can come across as not being the person that, 'Oh, they're talking about sexual assault again.' I think something that could really help the training is, if AOCs have personal stories, to open up and actually tell them. I've had experiences with AOCs who tell in-depth personal stories, and it doesn't sound great because it's the truth, but I think some AMTs can be too scared to open up about it. As the leaders, it's their job to not be scared to do that."* (Male)
  - *"[For example] the most effective alcohol awareness briefing is when I hear people's personal stories. 'This is how I got in that situation. Looking back, it was funny, but thank goodness I had my friends there to help me out and it turned out okay.'"* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that USC should be punished more severely to show that leadership is serious about preventing USC.**
  - *"I think punishment needs to be more of a thing. I heard of this case where it was an upperclassman with a freshman who was touching her, but then they didn't know if it was frat or sexual assault. So then he got kicked out of the squad for three days, and then he was back, so there wasn't any punishment."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the perceptions of leadership's efforts to stop USC are based on the relationships cadets have with individual members of leadership.**
  - *"I would say that it depends on how personable and what kind of relationship you have with your upper leadership and stuff. Because there are certain AOCs that I definitely feel like if I had a problem, I could go talk to him about it and I feel like he would get something done. Whereas other AOCs, I haven't had a great relationship with them, and so I don't really know. I don't know if my confidence would be as high up with them."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that leadership may be perceived as less aggressive in addressing USC because they believe cadets should take the lead on such issues.**
  - *"The hands-off approach too. Sometimes they say, if you have questions, we'll help facilitate; otherwise, this should be coming from you. They should have it cadet led."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that cadet leaders could do more to address sexual assault.**
  - *"The problem is really within the cadets. I've never thought that my AOCs or AMTs were making this worse. I'm sure there are some that are like that. There's that 8 percent or whatever."* (Male)
  - *"My personal experience, I've never had an AOC or AMT say anything other than go to Take Back the Night or don't sexually assault people. I've definitely never had any cadet leaders talk about it."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the effectiveness of cadet leaders is contingent on relationships within in the squadron.**
  - *"I think [the ratings of] cadet leaders depend on your squadron, how close your squadron is."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that cadets do not have regular interaction with the civilian faculty or athletic staff and would be less inclined to discuss personal issues with them, which could account for their lower ratings.**
  - *"I think the commissioned officers, like our AOCs, they're around our squad all the time, so they know the feel of the squad and they know who is in the squad. But someone like athletic staff, there's a stigma against them. We don't really like them as much, so we're less likely to trust them with something like that. It's like the list goes down with how often they interact with cadets on an equal-footing level. Like our AOCs, they always try to get to know us, so you feel more comfortable around them. As you go down this list, it's how much exposure they have to cadets on a personal level."* (Female)
  - *"I think less familiarity. The two that stand out to me are the athletic staff and the civilian academic faculty. Personally when I think about that, I don't have much interaction with the athletic staff, and I have maybe a couple of civilian teachers a year, but they're just not as present as the other options."* (Female)
  - *"For physical development and other PE classes, you're only there for eight lessons. You might not have a lot of time. They have to teach you what they're trying to do. They have a specific schedule they have to follow. I had mine in the very beginning of the year, like August or September. It's not really sexual assault awareness month."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that female cadets are likely to have less confidence in leadership as they experience more USC than male cadets.**
  - *"I would say these numbers make sense. It also makes sense that the women's numbers are lower than men's. Because if you think about it, a higher percentage of women are experiencing unwanted sexual contact. So it makes sense that they would have a lower level of confidence. So I think the numbers make good sense."* (Male)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Cadets were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and cadets were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some midshipmen indicated that the perceived sense of entitlement and lower standards compared to other students may translate into increased unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
  - *"Yes [there are certain teams that may be committing these behaviors at a higher rate]."* (Female)
  - *"I think it might facilitate it [more unwanted sexual contact behaviors among teams]."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they believed athletes would be more likely to get away with unwanted gender-related behaviors.**
  - *"Definitely."* (Multiple Females)
  - *"It seems like they can't get kicked out, a lot of the times. I remember hearing a story a few years ago. There was a big sexual assault case that went down. It was two athletes, but they made a big deal of it because they were athletes, and then they were eventually allowed to stay. That is frustrating because it seems like a lot of different things, not just sexual assault, they are held to a different standard just because they are good at sports."* (Female)
  - *"I know a guy, an IC athlete that got an honor hit, which is a huge deal here, and his coach did all of the intervening. Per precedent, the kid should have gotten kicked out. I'm personally glad he didn't, but his coach ran interference enough and they got him to stay, and he'll be able to play next season."* (Male)
  - *"A lot of them think they're invincible because they go out and they can party and get a girl and don't have to deal with this because they go to CSU or Boulder."* (Female)
  - *"I've heard before, 'I cannot go to this military duty, because my coach will back me up and they'll make sure I don't leave and they'll fight for me.' And that's a big thing. The athletic department will fight for me, so then it creates a gap between ICs and non-ICs because the non-ICs, you're actually doing your duties. And the ICs are trying to get out of it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that hazing occurs among some athletic teams and can be perceived as sexual assault if it goes too far.**
  - *"I know that in two teams this year there were allegations that were found to be factual of hazing and other types of behavior. I know that sometimes in those situations, somebody can get pushed to their limit and feel they were sexually wronged, even if everybody before them had done it. Also, the smaller the team and the tighter knit that they are, I think the more, probably especially male, the more free and open that they are. I know you better; therefore, I'm not willing to push the limits with you."* (Male)
  - *"There are different initiations. They're not all, in regards to sexual abuse, but there are some really stupid traditions that they do, and that gives them a negative light sometimes. And so then people tend to blame random things on athletic teams."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that athletes are often perceived to be involved with these issues and there is a perception that these behaviors occur more with athletes**
  - *"Being an athlete, when something comes up, you hear about it more. We have that perception. And some teams have houses, and I think that facilitates."* (Male)
  - *"Power in numbers. They're seen as a group, so they're not getting singled out. Among the Cadet Wing, athletes are praised, no matter what their flaws may be. They may be the worst student here, but they're still praised for being an athlete. They have so much going for them."* (Male)
  - *"I think at the very least, there's definitely a perception that there's a pocket of problems. Whether or not it's based in any truth is another question."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that a few "bad apples" cause negative perceptions about the teams with which they are associated.**
  - *"I don't know enough about any individual teams. I think part of the problem is that when you are on a team and you do something, your whole team is associated with that action. So when you hear an Air Force Academy cadet raped somebody, the whole Air Force Academy is associated. It's the same thing with teams. So I don't know if there's actually statistical evidence there that athletic teams have a worse culture and environment, but I can see where the perception would come from, as far as athletes go."* (Male)
  - *"I know a lot of great athletes who are awesome people, but unfortunately, when I have noticed people who have been using all those sexual harassment terms, microaggressions, before they became microaggressionists, people who were just not really on board with all this, they were, in general, athletes. Like I said, they're probably outliers. Most athletes are great people. But I think that's probably where the concentration of the bad people might be."* (Male)

- *"When there is an incident with a certain team, it might be publicized more, or more people know about it because, maybe it's this vicious cycle where there's a presumption that a team does something, and then when they do it, everyone is, 'oh, they're at it again,' and then it drives the perception and then it happens. When some random person who isn't in a group commits sexual assault, this person did something. But when they belong to a group, then people will maybe make them be representative of their group that they belong to."* (Male)

- **Some male cadets indicated they believe that athletes are more likely to be involved in these behaviors, possibly because of locker room behavior.**
  - *"If you look at horseplay or locker room behavior. I think the point is, you get around your buddies, your team, you respect each other a lot, you're good friends, so you don't censor yourself as much, and so maybe everyone feels comfortable making certain types of jokes. So it's very much a locker room culture, where it's, 'ah, it's okay if I joke around about this,' and so that might encourage a culture where it's acceptable to make actions acceptable."* (Male)
  - *"I hate to generalize, but definitely in my experience, it seems that people who are on intercollegiate teams tend to buy into some of the integral parts of the Academy less, in terms of military standards. It starts in freshman year, where there are these very strict standards, and then you go to practice, which is more lax, which you have to be in order to compete and be a team. And then you come back and you're encouraged not to uphold the standards and teased as a NARP [slang meaning non-athlete regular person] or various terms if you do uphold that standard. I think that by and large, the athletes do tend to buy into some of those things a little bit less, and I think that also might apply in terms of all the briefings we get."* (Male)
  - *"I have some really good friends who are athletes and are some of the best cadets I know. But then also you have the counter examples, and I think the issue is that in the Cadet Wing we have this culture, and we're trying to discuss how we'd like to change that culture. And then the ICs [Intercollegiate athletes] have a subculture basically going off the Tzo gap [term for the difference between athletes and non-athletes]. They just have a different culture because they're together all the time, they're practicing all the time. You feel a different bond with your teammates than you probably do with just an individual in your squad, which is totally understandable, based off of the amount of time and what you go through with your teammates. And because of that, it's hard to bridge a gap between those cultures. Also, because the culture is smaller, if something starts happening, it might become more widespread or it might be easier for people to become more acceptable with that behavior."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they did not believe these behaviors were more likely to occur for athletes.**
  - *"I'm close with a lot of football players and a lot of people in ICs, they have a lot more training than we do on sexual assault. They have personal talks with their*

coaches about this stuff. Their jokes are very different. Their culture is very different. When you get down to the issues, I think they're just as scared, honestly, as everyone else. People do assume they cheat more, and they do this more because they're watched a little bit more. That's just from what I see." (Female)

- *"I think it can change. I think it varies year to year. Maybe one team one year might have more of that or have more issues, but it changes."* (Female)

- *"There's one specific team. When they were threatened with sanctions or removal of the team, the culture has completely charged. Because they were brought up on stuff like this. And I'm sure people probably know the team I'm talking about. They're a completely different team now, and it was that threat. And then the senior leadership this year has just pushed it so much to say we are going to be different. I've seen the big change."* (Male)

- *"The coaches said, if you want this team, it's up to you seniors to make the difference. They owned the problems and they fixed it themselves."* (Male)

- *"If I have someone who is a great athlete, can really help my team, but he's got this character problem, you want to convince yourself, I can rehabilitate him, I can help him. There was that whole thing that came out recently about one of the teams and sexual assault problems, and I think the Academy has addressed that, and it has become a lot better. The difference in my freshman year to this year, I've seen, the quality of character I've seen in a lot of sports teams been a lot better."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that "group think" within the Athletic Department and teams contributes to inappropriate comments and behaviors.**

  - *"I've seen a lot of that group-think. I was on a team as well, but there was a lot of locker room group-think. Not necessarily horseplay too much, but a lot of sexist stuff going on and pretty inappropriate stuff. Just getting together and saying, 'Oh, there's a new freshman girl on the team, I'm going to get to her first.' So that premeditation, that negative stuff."* (Male)

  - *"A team environment is a family environment, and it could be where your close friends are at, and so it might even insulate the team from a lot of the things that are going on at the Cadet Wing level, just because it might be your circle of friends."* (Male)

  - *"I know that the whole mentality of the athletic department is get their mission done, make sure the PFTs are administered properly, and make sure people do well on it. That's why they're more abrasive. Nobody likes the athletic department because they're very abrasive and they're primarily focused on getting the job done."* (Female)

  - *"I think we can all agree that you know there's a culture. During the fall semester, if you walk through ramps during football, you're going to hear, 'Let her know.' It's just*

the culture. But when you get into that group mentality, they just feed off each other. They really do." (Female)

- *"I think if it happens to someone on a team, it's more likely that it will be from someone within that team because they spend so much time together. I think it's more of a proximity thing more than anything."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated Division I athletes are treated differently compared to other athletes.**
  - *"If you've got a rock-climbing club of three dudes versus a football team with 120, there's definitely going to be. Statistically, yes, just given the culture of that sport."* (Male)
  - *"The difference between what we're allowed to do and what the guys' IC team is allowed to do is ridiculous. We have no funding. They have games every weekend. They have so much nice stuff. It's frustrating because I'm playing on the best level that I can and I'm representing the Academy well, and at the same time, some of these IC teams are terrible and they're getting all this funding for nothing."* (Female)
  - *"The football team, they're self-sustaining, so they bring in a lot of money, and a lot of clubs don't. But at the same time, a lot of the IC teams don't do that either."* (Female)

General perception of athletes and sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated they believe admissions and behavioral standards for athletes are less stringent.**
  - *"The admission standards are different."* (Male)
  - *"There's a different standard. You go through a different process. I know the Academy application getting in here was super long, super arduous, and it's five other applications combined after all of the interviews. I just think sometimes the commitment might be different if you don't have to go through as long of a process."* (Male)
  - *"The thing that comes to mind about the athletes is I don't think they go through the same senatorial nomination process. I'm not an athlete here. But they're more oriented to this is a sport. How good are you at this sport? I think there's perhaps less focus on your character and your ability to be a good Air Force officer in the athletic department admissions, as there is for a senator to say, hey, I'm signing my name saying this guy is going to make a good officer."* (Male)
  - *"I really respect ICs for what they do. They put in a lot more work in representing the Academy, a lot more than I ever could. They do get in on easier standards, and therefore they think they can stay on easier standards because they play sports. So*

unfortunately, they're naturally going to think, 'standards need to be lower for me.'" (Male)

- *"I think it all comes down to where the commitment lies. And I think with a lot of ICs, in their mind, they're going to play sports at a Military Academy, where it should be they're going to a Military Academy to play sports."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that recruited athletes might come to the Academy with a misunderstanding of expectations for requirements other than those associated with their sport.**
  - *"I've heard when one of my friends came for his recruiting visit, he was told that he wouldn't have to participate fully in basic training."* (Male)
  - *"I think that could be something that could go a long way, be very up front about what it will entail, and that's very challenging, to continue to recruiting people at the high level that's expected of the coaches to keep their jobs. And also be up front about what the job is going to entail. I think that might go a long way to make sure that the people that come are committed."* (Male)
  - *"My friend claimed that he was completely deceived about the entire basic training and all of freshman year. He said the person who was recruiting him told him he wouldn't have to go through basic training, he would be exempt from all the freshman traditions that we have to go through, and he ended up leaving on his own because of all that."* (Male)
  - *"I think a lot of the problem with IC recruitments is that when they're brought here, they're told first and foremost, you're going to be a Division I athlete, not, you're going to be part of the United States Air Force. Our mission first is to commission cadets to be second lieutenants. Almost everybody who came here played some sport in high school. But that's in the background of what the big goal is, and I think they switch it around. They were enticed by the idea that they're going to be a Division I athlete and going to go for school for free."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that some athletes can change even if they come to the Academy misunderstanding requirements.**
  - *"Most of my friends who were recruited, they said that it was a complete, almost, lie. You do basic training when you come in. But I don't think that has any effect. But if they were told the truth, they probably wouldn't. But I feel by junior year, you're faced with here are the people that I'm surrounded with. And if they decide to stay, they're surrounded by these people that want to be here, want to do good. I think by junior/senior year, they buy into the system."* (Male)
  - *"I knew a guy that used to be in my squadron that blue-chipped [a high school athlete rated highly for recruitment] his way into the Academy, and he's a terrible cadet. But he changed, and I think we're not ever going to be able to say the admissions policy*

indicates whether or not they're going to be a good cadet or whether or not they're going to do bad things, because people do change." (Female)

- *"I think a lot of that is filtered out by junior year. When I look at some of the teams, I see some of the most respectful people I know. If you look at the leadership of a team, they're well-rounded people, smart, try really hard at school. They maintain a stable relationship. They're really good people all around."* (Male)

- *"I think what's more important than people who come in is people who stay in. If you come in as one person, you should not be the same person when you leave, if you follow the policies and culture."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy and sports teams might foster these behaviors.**

  - *"I think the blue-chipping is not so much about who we let in. I think it just fosters the culture of they have my back and the invincibility culture."* (Female)

  - *"It's not so much the people that we let in are rapists or horrible cadets. It just fosters that opinion."* (Female)

Opportunities for improvement

- **Some cadets indicated that more emphasis should be paid to recruits prior to recognition, the ceremony when freshmen are advanced to upperclassmen.**

  - *"Everyone who is here is going to be commissioned as an officer, if you finish all four years. Getting that emphasis out there when they're first recruited. I wouldn't want to be given the wrong message and then come here and be in that culture where it's, 'whoa, I don't know if I really want to be military first or academics first or whatever. I wanted to just play my sport.' You have a lot of people either leave their sport because there's not enough emphasis or ability for them to be able to focus on the right things here, or you'll have people leave here because they got the wrong message to begin with and they took someone else's slot. So I feel if we just need to put the emphasis in the right place. The majority of teams have the right mindset. I know plenty of ICs who are fantastic leaders in the Cadet Wing and they bridge that gap perfectly, and it's amazing. And considering how much work they put into their sport and then how much work they put into the Cadet Wing, it's incredible. You've got to find the balance. But if we just put the emphasis in the right place during the entire time people are here, it might help with that."* (Female)

  - *"A lot of things need to happen before recognition, not after."* (Female)

  - *"I think it's the mindset. Athletics, it's a great opportunity you have. But you can learn a lot from being there, and it's about the environment that the team has created. So if you still bring that, not military mindset exactly, but that same type of standards, we're going to be excellent, we're going to serve each other and we're going to be honest and do the right thing when we compete. If you take that mindset and put it*

into your athletics, I think it goes hand in hand with everything they're trying to do here. It's not necessarily like athletics is too much. I think just the mindset of your athletics." (Female)

- *"I think it's becoming more common. I think they're trying to work on it. They're recognizing the disparity. You're a cadet, you have an awesome opportunity to be an athlete here and you can learn a lot from that situation."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated the Academy putting a specific policy in place to mitigate these issues will not help.**
  - *"I don't think the Academy creating a policy would be very effective. I think it has to come from more of a person-to-person interaction, and just being willing to say, hey, I'm uncomfortable with you doing that."* (Male)
  - *"Putting a policy in place will not do anything."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that students need to be held accountable for their actions.**
  - *"They need to be held accountable in terms of everything. If you just let them go free on all of these things and they continuously feel invincible, in terms of, 'oh, I can do this because I'm not going to have any backlash,' it's never going to fix the problem because they're just going to keep thinking they're stronger and stronger."* (Female)
  - *"I feel if this were scaled up and they were held more accountable, it needs to be righteously inputted. You can't go on witch hunts."* (Female)
  - *"Don't be afraid to throw people out because they're not meeting the standards. I think nowadays, everyone tries to save everyone, and that facilitates part of the problem of, oh, maybe ICs are meeting the standards, maybe someone else isn't meeting the standard. But by trying to keep everybody, you're really fostering this culture of, 'oh, we're invincible,' because, let's face it, they're not going to throw anyone out for grades."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated coaches and team captains could use their positions to let cadets know they can come to them for help.**
  - *"I think training the coaches, depending on how serious they take it personally, I think that it's shown in how they convey the message to their team. But a lot of times, ICs relate more to their coaches than anyone else on the hill or in DF [Dean of Faculty]. So I think that if you can get the coach to sell the message the way that we try to get our AOCs to, then it would have a much different effect on the ICs, especially those that are recruited to come here and play a sport and have a rude awakening waiting for them."* (Female)
  - *"We talked about the captains addressing the team earlier, and I think that could maybe go a long way here, the smaller talks we were talking about having, maybe*

have the teams also have those. You'd have to ensure that the captains are buying into it, they're not going to check a box with it." (Male)

- *"It's hard for someone to say in front of the whole team, hey, can we all stop this? But if the captain were, 'If any of you have a problem with this, come talk to me personally.' It's much easier to approach a person one-on-one."* (Male)

- *"Coaches are supposed to be in charge of you and facilitating that you grow as a person, and that interpersonal relationship. But oftentimes it becomes a role that it isn't necessarily designed to be, where they incentivize you to do well in your knowledge tests so they get a higher MPA [Military Performance Average] score. But if it comes to sexual assault, that's a very uncomfortable topic that they very likely will not talk about it if it's not mandated."* (Male)

Opinions about athletic staff

- **When asked on the *2014 SAGR* survey whether they believed leadership made honest efforts to stop unwanted behaviors, athletic staff were rated lowest, between 62% and 64%. Some cadets indicated that sports culture overall affects student's perceptions of athletic staff.**

  - *"I know some of the sports teams, because they get so close to each other through the sports, it develops more of a rowdy atmosphere within the team. And sometimes that can spread to parties off base and things like that, and that gets reflected on the athletic staff. And it's not necessarily a result of poor athletic staff as much as just the atmosphere of what sports brings to the Academy."* (Male)

  - *"Because they're in charge of sports and athletics and stuff. So if a sports team doesn't represent the Academy in the highest integrity, then you're, 'oh, where's the problem?' Well, it falls on the people on top."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the athletic staff can seem biased and cadets view them negatively, thus driving their lower ratings.**

  - *"Sometimes the athletic staff, as far as sexual harassment, I know just when you're going through the PFTs, sometimes you can get some very nasty female, sexist comments from the graders that are in the athletic department. So I'm not surprised at all to see the athletic staff at the bottom, when they're sitting there going, 'Girls can't do pushups,' and they give you credit for 18 when you, in reality, did 50. So that doesn't surprise me."* (Female)

  - *"We just have negative feelings towards them."* (Male)

  - *"Seeing lower for athletic staff makes me go back to the locker room aspect."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated they only interact with athletic staff for athletic reasons and do not have the time or inclination to discuss personal matters with them.**
  - *"I think the lack of exposure is probably why it gets to that. Because you're only with them for such a short, limited amount of time, you're not going to go to them, generally, for these issues just because you don't have time."* (Male)
  - *"If you ask people on intercollegiate teams. I think they would say, 'My coach is super supportive.' They would say 100 percent yes. They are making honest efforts. For most of us that aren't athletes, if you have that negative experience with a PFT grader or a bad PE instructor that grades lessons that you never see again, that's going to permanently affect how you think of the athletic department, which is not the most popular department here."* (Female)
  - *"It's not in their scope. I don't really expect my rock-climbing teacher to talk to my class about sexual assault, just personally. Do I think that they would, if they saw something going on, stop it? Oh, yeah. I have a hundred percent confidence that they would. But they don't open the dialogue as much, so that's probably why people have that perception of them."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that it might be useful to have athletic staff and coaches more involved with discussing these topics.**
  - *"I think that would be a big area because they have a lot of influence on a lot of cadets. There's a lot of ICs. That might be an area that they have neglected. The coaches have to coach them to be good people as well as good athletes, and I think they spend so much time on that and miss some of the leadership experiences that we have up here on the hill."* (Male)
  - *"When I was in [sport], I feel the coaches did try to push the message. It's usually a matter of time. You only have a certain amount of time. There is never enough time to do it. From what I saw, I felt like there was maybe a small trend to push it, but with time and everything, it's hard to take time to push it."* (Male)
  - *"Granted, it might make a difference for IC athletes with their coaches. Because they probably have a much more extensive relationship. But for regular Joe Schmoe cadets, you probably aren't going to really get too much about sexual harassment or really get the vibe that they really care about it because they're just so driven towards their mission."* (Female)

Culture

Cadets were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment

and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

General comments about Academy culture and gender relations

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy deals with issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment better than civilian colleges.**
  - *"I think it's better. I know some people think that some cadets don't watch out for their fellow cadets, but definitely, living in the dorms there, I can see it happening a lot more often. So I think it's worse outside of here."* (Female)
  - *"People watch out for each other. Also, people don't think it's as big of a deal at other schools. They might think it's their fault even though they got sexually harassed or something like that. That's bad because people think we're having more cases of sexual harassment than other places, even though that's not true. It's just because we're trying to do something about it. And I think other colleges should have to do stuff like that and encourage people to report and have the education on what exactly is sexual harassment so they know it's not their fault if something happens."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that there is more emphasis placed on sexual assault prevention at the Academy than at civilian colleges.**
  - *"I went to a civilian college for a while and basically I went to my classes, left, went to work, went home. So I never heard anything about the prevention of sexual assault or harassment. I never saw any posters out. There were never any conventions or anything, like as much as there are here. So I don't feel like a lot of people are aware as much about. I only knew maybe like ten people there that I was decently close with. And so out of maybe 4,000 people, you don't really hear much about it as much as you do here, because you're all in close quarters, whereas at a college you can go anywhere."* (Female)
  - *"We have a lot more training on it just because we have an environment where we can be like, okay, we're going to take up your Saturday and we're going to do this, and it's not going to be some sort of optional event."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they would like the Academy to have more open communication about sexual assault cases.**
  - *"Granted, they're like, 'Well, we can't say anything about this because it's an ongoing investigation.' But if there's scores of our peers being attacked, like I think that's something they should tell us about."* (Female)
  - *"It's just like whenever we got told we're on the buddy system and we can't run trails anymore by yourselves; I love to go run trails. That's what I do. That's my peace. That's the only place that I go actually run willingly. And it's like, okay, you're not telling me anything. All I know is that you've never lifted this ban. We know nothing*

about it, and you're not going to tell us anything about it. I think there's a lot of resentment going on towards permanent party and everyone because if there's something happening, we're party of this family, we deserve to know. And also, we're going to this school and we're willingly giving up a lot of stuff to be here and be part of your service, and you're not informing us of basic things that we should know in our living environment." (Female)

- *"A difference between a civilian institution versus here is if something happens at a civilian institution, you get an e-mail about all the crimes that occur on campus, you can know about it. But here, there have been a lot of issues that they haven't told us a single thing, but you hear about it from either the Gazette or upperclassmen who are so disturbed by the fact that they're not allowed to tell people about it, that they tell people about it. And then you hear about it, and now you're like, I'm scared to walk alone by myself."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated they did not want security cameras in the dorms, even though it might make cadets feel safer.**
  - *"People have mentioned putting security cameras in different places. I'm not sure that would be the best solution, but it would be a lot more effective. Because if people know that they can get caught, they're less likely to do it. Even though that isn't the best way to go about it, it is something that is improving."* (Female)
  - *"I wouldn't like that. That would make me self-conscious."* (Female)
  - *"That would put a different vibe on the place."* (Female)
  - *"It makes it seem like this place isn't safe."* (Female)
  - *"It's definitely not the best solution, and I don't like it because I feel like it would be like a prison."* (Female)
  - *"Cameras might not be the best solution. But lights. They're constantly renovating the Tzo [Terrazzo common area]. If they can put in a few lights while they're at it."* (Female)

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual assault has the same emphasis as other areas they receive training on.**
  - *"Definitely."* (Female)
  - *"It gets a lot of attention."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual assault receives more focus than other areas of training.**
  - *"More focus."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that sexual assault gets too much attention.**
  - *"Sometimes."* (Female)
  - *"They overload us."* (Male)
  - *"This entire month is dedicated to sexual assault awareness. They mention it other times during the year, but they jam everything into this one month."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that there may be a concern for desensitization as the topic is talked about constantly.**
  - *"That it's drilled into us, that it's constantly something we're talking about. Honestly, there are a lot of people who are afraid that we're going to get desensitized to it because we talk about it so much. And it's honestly something that we should never be desensitized to. We need to find that balance. The pendulum was this far back, you know; now we're this far forward."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that there is a cultural shift to a sense of responsibility to have positive, instead of negative, rewards for doing the right thing and reporting sexual assault or speaking out against sexual harassment.**
  - *"I think that is changing."* (Male)
  - *"It's slowly changing. But it's definitely a lot different than when we came in here."* (Male)
  - *"Even my freshman year, things are way different now."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that recent changes have allowed for trainings to be more effective.**
  - *"I think it's getting a lot better, especially from last year to this year. I don't know if last year they didn't know what they were doing. But this year, the Take Back the Night thing was significantly better. You could hear a pin drop. It was very good, whereas last year's was like don't rape people, and let's take back the night. And I know the 'Ask First, Respect the Answer' thing, people thought that was funny, and he was able to make it real and stuff. Because I know a lot of the mentality that a lot of the guys 'Why do I have to go to an another briefing telling me not to rape just because I'm a guy?' So I think the style of briefings that we've been having has been more focused around like, 'Hey this does happen to people and they're survivors and we have to be there for them,' so making jokes and saying comments isn't going to be productive. So I think that's been very helpful."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the focus on sexual assault has positive effects on their understanding of the need to take sexual assault seriously.**
  - *"In some ways, it's good. I went to the last three-degrees [sophomore] SARC thing we had. But my partner ended up going with me, and he was saying, 'I can't believe we're having another briefing about this. This is ridiculous.' After that was over, we were walking back, and he was like, 'I just want to apologize. If this ever happened to you or any of my other friends who are girls, I wouldn't be someone that they wanted to talk to. I'm sorry. I realize that now.'"* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the attention to sexual assault is due to the emphasis by senior leadership.**
  - *"I think it's just the approach by it. Because when you have senior leadership coming and saying, this is an emphasis item, if people are going to see it as an emphasis item, whereas honor is more of a cadet-run thing, so it's a more chill environment when you're talking about honor and things, but then there's so much pressure put on it."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault in trainings may be partially due to public opinion/media coverage of high-profile cases.**
  - *"Like public opinion. I've been on a plane, and I'll be talking with an old lady next to me or something, and she'll ask, what's it like there with the sexual assault, because you hear all of the scandal in the news. And it's like you want to give a good presentation about your Academy and the Service. I think that's why they do put in so much training, because they want to be able to say we've put in this many hours of training trying to combat it."* (Female)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors is not the same as the emphasis on sexual assault.**
  - *"No."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that sexist comments occur as part of Academy culture.**
  - *"I think it's accepted. I hear way too much at meals and stuff, just ridiculous comments. Not just sexist, but a lot of people here are very conservative. Whatever you feel, people just speak their mind a lot more. Especially, conservative males feel like they can say whatever they want."* (Male)
  - *"It will progress too. You sit with the same people at lunch every day, so if there's a group of people at the table who are all okay with sexist or racist comments, it will progress throughout the semester and get worse because they know and they realize that they're in that safe environment for those type of people. If there's one person*

that speaks up or is just silent the first time it happens, they more realize that that person is not okay with that and it doesn't get way worse." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated there are differences in attitudes toward sexual harassment among squadrons.**
  - *"One of my friend's squadron, she got upset about a sexual harassment thing. She finally told the guy, to me that is sexual harassment. I know that you didn't mean it that way, but could you not do that. And he took it the completely wrong way and basically spread rumors about the squadron, and upper leadership didn't do anything about that. Now she feels like she's not welcome in her squad because all these people have a negative opinion of her because of this incident where she's not comfortable and then spoke out. In my squadron, I can never see that happening because the way that my upper leadership works, as soon as anyone tried anything, it would be shut down immediately. If someone was trying to spread a rumor about so and so, give a bad impression of someone, they would be like, 'You don't know the situation. You need to stop talking.'"* (Female)
  - *"I also think it depends on the quality of people you have in your squadron as well. If you have a squadron where they're in the higher positions and nobody is willing to step up and be that person who says, 'Okay, if you want to go vilify me, then you at least need to listen to what I have to say.' In my squadron, I know people won't say dumb stuff specifically because I will call them down on it. I know that makes people uncomfortable, and people have told me that. I'm willing to take that risk. You have to have people who are willing to do that within squadrons, within families, to make it a better environment."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that not confronting sexist jokes or comments creates a perception that such behavior is acceptable, potentially leading to other unwanted behaviors.**
  - *"My biggest problem is the sexist jokes or comments that you hear around school. It's not so much it's going to hurt people's feelings, but I feel it really does help to make people who are capable of sexual assault feel comfortable here. This is a completely safe space here, despite the number of reports we have."* (Female)
  - *"We just had a briefing last week. The woman who came and spoke said that there are a lot of men who are sexual predators who figure out very quickly which women to target based on their personality types. A girl is getting harassed, and if she doesn't speak up against it, then it's like some sexual predators would take that as okay, that gives me the green light to continue on."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated the difference in maturity between classes at the Academy, where the upper two classes are more respectful.**
  - *"One thing I noticed is there tends to be a gap between the upper two classes and the lower two classes as far maturity goes, where maybe our classes are a little more*

responsible about being aware of things like this, but the lower two don't have that same level of respect, and the comments are a little more hurtful, at least by my squadron, I've noticed that." (Male)

- *"That's also what I think, and all that exposure to this information over the course of four years."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that some attrition may help the transition in maturity between upper and lower classes.**
  - *"I'm not sure. One thing we joke about is that the rotten apples get weeded out and they're eliminated from the equation."* (Male)
  - *"Some attrition might help. But I just noticed that my group of friends, who are generally upperclassmen, don't make these kind of comments that my friends who are sophomores make."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the women's forum should be opened up to men to help them better understand the issues women face at the Academy.**
  - *"I think a big problem with this is we have a women's forum. If men were just integrated, if they had a panel of women speaking and they got to see the issues as we see them, I think it would be a little bit better. Because they honestly don't understand and don't get a chance to talk about it."* (Female)
  - *"This year in particular when they had the panel discussion with the upperclassmen, they had one female who was one of the top three cadets last semester, and her talking about all the issues that she encountered just because she was a girl. Like they would always call her, 'Oh, well, she's just like the bitch out of the top three, or she only got the job because she's a female.' I can see that happening just because that's the culture that we have here. I think it is something important to address, but I think maybe having it just like a female thing may not be the best because then guys aren't going to take it seriously or they're not even going to know about it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the women's forums are not helpful and make female cadets feel different.**
  - *"Maybe I just have the bad roundtable leaders [in the women's forum], but I just think it's the biggest waste of time. It's making me feel different when I didn't feel different. Maybe that's why I have an issue. When somebody asked the question of how do you lead as a female cadet? The same way as a male cadet. I mean, you're making me feel different when I didn't feel different."* (Female)

Role of peer programs

- **Some cadets indicated they created a cadet working group to discuss appropriate behaviors within relationships.**
  - *"Basically, what we have planned for next semester is a panel of cadets talking to cadets, instead of someone talking at cadets. Basically, the biggest focus is the issue with younger people's relationships, that we focus so much on signaling, that we're afraid to talk to each other. Like if you've never had sex or you've never been in a relationship, then all you have to go off of is TV. And I know people say, 'Oh, I'm not influenced by TV.' That's crap. You totally are. So are you saying, yes, I want to have sex with you, or did she give you the look? That's kind of where the training is going, like making a new cultural norm. Hey, guys, we're all adults, and we don't have to play this game anymore. You can just ask me, can I kiss you? Because that's what we think should be acceptable. But it's really hard to change the culture, but I think if you really try to address it at some point, it could really help. I think IC teams would be a great group of people to start the conversation. And I'm not saying cadets are awkward, but when you're on an IC team, you communicate with your team way better than you would communicate with people in your squadron."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that approaching a PEER (Personal Ethics and Education Representative) depends on the person.**
  - *"Also, one of the PEERs in my squad, she's really cool. I would feel comfortable talking to her. But the other one, he's a nice guy and everything, but just talks a lot, and I feel like nothing that you would say would actually be confidential because he talks a lot. If something is going on, it would probably get around the squad within like a day or so just because of his personality."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the PEER program has benefits.**
  - *"Definitely."* (Female)
  - *"I think they get used a lot."* (Female)
  - *"My friend talks about her PEER a lot."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that Mosaic training[43] provides an area where conversations about changing the culture could take place.**
  - *"So I think that would go hand-in-hand with the new Mosaic training. So now all of the coaches are receiving training on how to be a coach. And the element leaders and flight commanders and even like the squadron commander. So everyone is*

[43] The Mosaic Character and Leadership Coaching Program teaches the Air Force's Core Values and institutional leadership competencies.

getting the idea. But if you ask are there any comments that someone had said, then that could start to change the conversation." (Male)

- *"I think it is transitioning more to something like that."* (Male)
- *"Everyone will. By the end of your junior year, you should have been through this as a freshman, a sophomore, and as a junior."* (Male)
- *"Everyone in the chain of command goes through it."* (Male)

Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed

- **Some cadets indicated that just talking about sexual assault and harassment is beneficial.**
  - *"Just talking about it is good."* (Male)
  - *"I think if you talk about sexual assault, you should also talk about sexual harassment and explain what the difference is. People see it every day and don't realize it's happening, if that makes sense."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that removing perception of males as rapists, and the belief that reporting to a SARC only gets people in trouble, would help change the culture.**
  - *"Stop having the stigma of saying every male is a rapist, because that's how a lot of the guys feel. Reporting to SARC is a good thing for people to do, to get them help, not just to get other people in trouble."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy should promote cultural change.**
  - *"I don't think culture is ever touched upon at the Academy. It's like, 'Don't rape people or don't go to the bar alone.' It's never like, create an environment in which women feel comfortable."* (Female)
  - *"Permanent party wise, coming down from the top, it's never discussed how we can change."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicate that training should focus on making people feel confident to correct sexist behaviors when they see them and to start such training early.**
  - *"We discussed this a little bit earlier, about people feeling confident making a correction. I think that was the direction we were going. To reiterate, embrace more training on making people feel confident in giving feedback. If you can get that in the front, do that type of training during basic and freshman year. Once the freshmen eventually come into leadership positions, they're already fully confident in their skills and abilities to make those suggestions and create that culture we're ultimately reaching for."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy should encourage more open communication about relationships and appropriate behaviors.**
  - *"Getting the communication piece. Honestly, in this group right now, I feel like we're getting more done than we ever do in a briefing setting, for example. The biggest thing that I've run into here is knowing how comfortable someone is talking about that aspect of life. Some people are raised to not talk about it. Like that's a very private matter and I don't talk about it with anyone else. The only problem with that is that if the conversation isn't able to be open, then how are we going to be able to talk about the respect and the healthy relationships and everything if we're not willing to open up based on backgrounds? There's got to be boundaries drawn. You're not going to talk about this is my personal sex life, for example, but you might talk about this is how you have a healthy relationship and this is how you're going to respect the people around you, and to start that proactive training, as far as instead of reactive, just start the conversation."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that more focus should be placed on emphasizing the inappropriateness of unwanted sexual contact, rather than focusing mostly on consent.**
  - *"A lot of our briefings that we have talked about you have to make sure you have consent. Obviously, there have been other briefings and things we were focused on, what's appropriate and what's not. It involves touching people inappropriately. I think there's a lot of focus on consent and sexual intercourse, when a lot of the problems could be dealt with if we created a culture where it was seen as inappropriate to even begin those kinds of unwanted contact."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that more needs to be done to change the culture to where people realize that their attitudes and behaviors are not appropriate.**
  - *"[A recent speaker] talked a lot about how to do this culture. He gave us tools. This is how I would stop someone, just politely walk up. You don't have to start an altercation or anything like that. He just gave us these great tools. Like this is how you should approach that kind of situation. It was super helpful. If placed in that situation where I have to do that, I'd feel comfortable doing that now. But I do think the problem is we need to change the culture so that those people who say, I'm going to go out and get someone drunk and then have sex with them tonight, we need to able to create a culture where that's not acceptable so the people who are doing that and talk about that and make those kinds of comments, they are highlighted and we can talk to them about, 'Do you understand that that's not okay?'"* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that it might be helpful to create a culture where the person stopping such behaviors is seen in a positive light.**
  - *"Stopping bad things from happening, if we maybe glorify that role."* (Male)

- *"You see it as a cool thing. I'm protecting women from sexual assault. That might be a good focus for our sexual assault briefings."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated providing sexual assault and harassment training to designated drivers (DD) as they are in a better position to step in and prevent such behaviors from happening.**

  - *"I know a lot of people DD, especially sophomores, because a lot of the sophomores aren't 21 yet. But we have a lot of training on, bystander training, sexual assault training. But I don't think I've ever heard of any kind of training for a DD. But the people who DDs have easy access to the people who are going to be drinking, the people who are going to be going out. If we had some kind of, perhaps, DD training, designated driver training, I think that could offer a solution where you're helping people who are going to be aware and be present who aren't going to be drinking and should be level-headed throughout the whole night."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that it is important for upperclassmen to lead by example.**

  - *"You brought up the question on how to change the culture, and my perspective on this is that you can change our generation for a slight up trend. Our generation, I feel like we should be focused on the generation before us. You can change [our] opinions and we can make a slight increase, but the people that are below us that are watching us are the ones we need to lead by example."* (Male)

  - *"I think one thing we can do at the Academy, it's characteristic of the Academy, is that every year a new audience comes in, like a whole fourth of the Wing comes in, and they're completely new to all this. So I think continuing that dialogue through time, not just in one year, but have the people who have talked to their element group talk to their subordinates next year, passing that down, will create something that's permanent rather than disappear."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy should pick up information from other colleges and universities.**

  - *"I think another totally different way to help our culture would be to combine it with other colleges and universities. But there's a lot more information out there that we don't necessarily get, for whatever reason, from our leadership. It might be beneficial."* (Male)

  - *"Just the way that people talk about the issues, I think, is huge. Our leadership talks about it with AFI [Air Force Instructions] or this or that, violating rules. But they have to go after the culture at other colleges generally because that's the only thing they can really control."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that focus should be placed on what a positive relationship looks like.**
  - *"The focus is on the negative. We don't hear anything about, this is what a positive relationship would look like. These are subjects you should discuss with your partner to make sure you're on the same page. It's all more in the sense of, if you see this happening, interfere and separate them, and stop this all from happening."* (Female)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Cadets were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated the Ask First, Respect the Answer briefing was good, but not well attended.**
  - *"We had a really low showing for the Ask First, Respect the Answer briefing. But I know that one covered more about this could be somebody that you love so like you would hope that somebody would step in. So that was a lot better bystander training, but I don't think it got out to a lot of people because a lot of people just didn't go."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that Take Back the Night was a powerful training.**
  - *"From discussing it with upperclassmen, this year's Take Back the Night was a lot more effective than perhaps last year's was. I think it will have a bigger impact and we should see the numbers drop, or continue to drop."* (Male)
  - *"They said it was more impactful, in being able to sit down and listen to someone talk about it, as opposed to last year was more of a gathering, from what they've told me, it was more of a gathering and a bonfire. Just bring more awareness to it, as opposed to discussing it."* (Male)
  - *"The story was really powerful. The woman who told it, she told her story around and stuff. So when she told us, not most of us had heard about it, and when we realized this actually happens to people, like the story behind it is."* (Male)
- **Some cadets criticized a bystander video presentation.**
  - *"It was a weird video. It was some Air Force-made video, but it was so cheesy and corny."* (Female)

- *"The training that we received this past summer during commissioning education, was there was this really cheesy video that was made by the Air Force, and it was so cheesy to the point that you couldn't help but laugh at it. You couldn't help but take it as a joke, even though it was something really serious."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that mandatory nature of training makes it difficult to gain enthusiasm.**
  - *"I feel like people are getting jaded about it because every time that we have a conversation about it, it's mandatory. People don't just say, 'Hey, let's talk about this.' We have scheduled time, and you must be there and we are going to talk about this and nothing else."* (Female)
  - *"The mandatory, every type of sexual assault training. A lot of guys, you'll hear them say, 'I'm not raping anybody. I'm not doing anything bad. Why do I need to do this?' And what they did mention at Take Back the Night, what I thought was really awesome, is that it's not your responsibility not to do it, but it's to make sure that there's not a culture that cultivates that kind of behavior. But at the same time, forcing people to go to the events, people who care will be there. It's just hard to get the other people who don't know about it or don't really care or don't think it's really a problem to start caring about it a little more."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that online training that includes information about sexual assault makes it more standard and easier to talk about.**
  - *"Because we had to do all our sexual assault training online last year. Here, if maybe they just incorporated that into our online training, maybe it would become more normalized. People complain about those trainings, but it's just a part of it. If you're in the military, you've got to do it. There's an online training for that. And there are also mandatory events throughout the year."* (Female)
  - *"This is like a workplace. You're here all of the time. When I had a job, we did sexual assault training. It took me two hours. They presented situations, and I think that was definitely something that is a good idea."* (Female)
  - *"Stuff like that [online training] would definitely help because it would just give us more information. It would make it more normalized, and we'd feel more comfortable talking about it with each other. There are some people I just can't talk to because I don't know them or I just don't feel comfortable about it. Whereas, if it were a more normalized thing, people would feel comfortable with talking to each other about it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets cautioned that victim blaming can occur because of training.**
  - *"Something that I didn't even realize until I watched the Invisible War was that the training, even though it's good to have good situational awareness, maybe you*

shouldn't do this, maybe you shouldn't do that, but I think that type of training could be dangerous in promoting a culture of victim blaming." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that their sexual assault curriculum does not prepare them to personally combat sexual assault.**
  - "*No.*" (Multiple Females)
- **Some cadets indicated that their sexual assault training focuses on reactive measures once an incident has occurred rather than more proactive actions to prevent incidents from occurring.**
  - *"I feel like the Academy is a very reactive place, rather than proactive. They'll wait for it to happen and then give you resources to help, as opposed to giving you ways to get out of it. Even just something as simple as more lighting, because when night falls, it's dark. It's very dark here. Just something as simple as that could help a lot. Because if people can see what's going on around them, they might not be as inclined to do something."* (Female)
  - *"I feel like the type of training we've had is reactive. This is about to happen, so go ahead and stop sexual assault. But as we've been talking, this is a big problem in the culture. So I think we need to take a proactive step of trying to figure out what it is we need to address culturally, how are we going to implement a new culture where sexual assault or sexual harassment is just not allowed. So I think that would be better training, is to figure out how to have a proactive culture rather than reactive culture."* (Female)
- **Other cadets indicated that their training focuses on being a bystander and promoting security and safety.**
  - *"Most of our training is very boldfaced wingman type training. Just being socially defensive. Trying to make sure you're in a safe environment. And yeah, you can't always do that, but when you're realizing an environment is conducive to activities like that, then maybe you should not be there."* (Male)
  - *"A lot of the guys get the idea that all of the sexual assault training is aimed at stopping raping, whereas the bystander training no longer treats them as potential predators. So that brings them in as part of the solution. We've been hearing a lot, to the point we've almost become desensitized to that briefing. We hear it so much."* (Female)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some cadets indicated that training should focus on culture change instead of only prevention.**
  - *"We focus a lot on how to stop it when it's happening instead of changing our mindset as to how we approach relationships and what type of behaviors are*

respectful and what is not okay. I think with the change in culture, maybe some of those lines have gotten blurred. I don't know how much, but just how we view sex and relationships definitely has changed." (Female)

- *"To go in with a personal stake in it, like the people who have experienced it, they're very affected by it. But I think some of it is, well, this doesn't apply to me; I'm not going to go do this. Whereas if we shift the focus on to respecting each other, that's something everyone has a personal stake in and that's something everyone can relate to, whereas the other types of training, it might not get through to everyone."* (Female)

- **Some cadets recommended smaller group discussions over large presentations.**
  - *"The PEER briefed the whole squadron at once. [Then] we were in very small groups. We split off into about 10 or 12 per group, and it's much easier to facilitate a conversation that way. So if they maybe split up the classes, with upperclassmen, like PEERs, squadron commanders, and get different leaders or cadet leaders to do it and maybe have the AOC or AMT rotate in between the two, just to make sure they're facilitating the conversation, it would probably be much more effective."* (Male)
  - *"I was going to say, we've had a lot of these small discussion groups, and those always do a lot more for me than the big briefings. As much as the Gazette or national media tries to say we're bad people, often, I know for a fact that cadets are good people. I've met so many. That comes out when we're in a small group and we can express ourselves."* (Male)
  - *"A couple of weeks ago, we had a personal resiliency time on a Silver Saturday. It was following some tragic events. What I heard back from a lot of people is, 'Why don't we do that more often?' Because that was really beneficial to spend some time, especially with your elements. Take your element and spend some time talking about this issue. I think we could use that, and it would became a pretty powerful tool."* (Male)
  - *"It needs to come from a smaller group, at a personal level. And it doesn't need to come in the form of, 'Oh, during fifth period, we're going to get a PowerPoint together and teach you all of this stuff.'"* (Male)

- **Some cadets cautioned that small groups led by peers might not be taken as seriously.**
  - *"That's where the gray area comes into play. We've had mandatory discussion times about sexual assault, but they're led by our PEERs. People don't take it seriously. People are like, I have so much stuff to do. But if it's led by permanent party or not even permanent party, but members who are just not associated with you at all, maybe with AMTs or AOCs, where people can try and figure out how to navigate those gray areas."* (Female)

- *"I think that [groups led by PEERs] plays a part in not helping prevent stuff."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that giving students ample notice about having training would be useful.**
  - *"Cadet life is so jam packed that when you start trying to take away extra time for briefings and things, that gives a really negative attitude toward it. Because during my free period, I already have an idea of stuff I want to do. Today I want to do physics, but instead we have an honor lesson. Once you start taking away people's time, it's going to get cynical. So if they would book that time in beforehand then people would be less cynical about getting the time away."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that training should treat sexual harassment and sexual assault separately.**
  - *"I don't think they're the same thing and you need to distinguish that. Because a lot of people will put sexual assault and sexual harassment in the same category and that's a mistake. And reporting sexual harassment is a good thing because the more we report it and the more there's consequences for it, the more that will go up. But if that statistic looks like a rape statistic, people won't report that."* (Female)
  - *"With the sexual harassment thing, I think we've all noticed comments before. They're very subtle. People don't realize what they're saying, but there's that underlying tone. In our women's group, we brainstorm ways that we can receive those comments and how to combat them, without coming off the wrong way. That goes for men too. Ways to say something to their peer while being, 'Like, dude, that's not cool,' without being the bad guy or the bad girl. Just something as little as that. Try to relate to them or compare it to another situation as you hear a sexist comment or something. But ways to deal with it without coming off the wrong way."* (Female)
  - *"Maybe if the guys had more training of when to step in and say something, rather than us, because we're like bad guys."* (Female)
  - *"I think they stress how the culture is the same for both. The culture that allows sexual harassment and that happened as a culture that's more likely for more sexual assaults are going to occur. I think they should emphasize that a little bit more."* (Male)

- **Some female cadets indicated that discussing actual cases, such as XYZ cases, would be beneficial.**
  - *"It has to be detailed. I've heard some of those stories, and they were way, way more than what was presented. So if you just give me this tiny blurb, it may resonate with one person. But if you give the details, here's what happened, then that will resonate differently."* (Female)

- *"They did that with their most recent Take Back the Night, where they had T-shirts with what actually happened. They said these were old cases that happened at USAFA, and it very briefly described the situation. To know that type of thing helps because then we know it is a problem for us. And to have XYZ reports makes it relate to us more."* (Female)

- *"I would say when it gets to being detailed, that's actually when it has an impact. We all have these bullet points, highlights, stories, yada yada. It's the stuff that's hard to read that actually makes a difference."* (Female)

- *"[A recent case] was a great example. It was so confusing to read. We had a really productive conversation, and it was girls split up, and guys. And we talked about is it more beneficial to be doing it this way? It was split pretty evenly with girls who thought it was better to be with girls and able to talk more. But a lot of people were like, but it's uncomfortable talking in front of the guys. But it's important because they're not going to get it if we don't. I think there needs to be a distinction between that, maybe some girl events, but definitely the integration as well."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that some training has targeted male students causing resentment; discussing the gray areas might be more useful.**

  - *"I think focusing on gray areas is way more important. The guys here aren't the guys who going into parking lots and assaulting girls. Typically it's usually the friends, the date rape situations that need to be focused on."* (Female)

  - *"I think a lot of the stigma here, though, is guys feel like if they go to one of these, you're going to hear, 'Oh, you're a rapist because you're a guy.' A lot of the past years' sexual assault briefings have been kind of like that. I think they're changing it somewhat this year, but at the same time, I feel like it's guys feel maybe more uncomfortable because they're always being the ones blamed."* (Female)

  - *"I think we need to start teaching sexual assault and sexual harassment as the huge gray area that it is and people will start taking it more seriously. Because you need to have open and honest conversations with people; not in focus groups, but in small groups, like adults; not by element leaders, because people don't take it seriously. You can have effective conversation and effective training if people aren't afraid to say things but they can formalize thoughts. It's really hard to define all that gray area of sexual assault."* (Female)

  - *"I just think training for sexual assault can be overdone, and I think guys get really confused. I heard one guy say, it's really simple. You just don't rape anybody. But people don't realize that it's not that simple. When people go out and drink, stuff happens. And that's really confusing for everyone to classify, whether or not that's rape. And the guys are mostly perpetrators when stuff like that happens. It could be genuinely wrong. I'm not saying it should be condoned in any way, but it needs to be discussed because people are very confused about that. And I think it stresses people*

out, and they don't know what to think about it, so they shut down and they're like, 'This is stupid.'" (Female)

- **Some cadets recommended that male speakers discussing topics of sexual assault would be beneficial.**
  - *"We have never had really strong male individuals come up and tell their personal stories. Last week at the big event we had, some of the efforts the leadership made was to have people in that role. But I think having a strong male who stands up and tells their personal story would do wonders. And a lot of men would be like, wow, I'm not alone."* (Male)
  - *"I really think we should have a male speaker for sexual assault briefings."* (Female)
  - *"My recommendation is to have a male speaker. That's one of the things some of my friends talk about. It would be a male perspective. I wouldn't be opposed to it. I know there are criminals out there who have reformed. I don't want to say once an offender, always an offender. That is usually the stigma. But people can change over time. And I think sometimes hearing their perspective or hearing the perspective of someone that was accused but later acquitted, they don't have a bad outlook."* (Male)
- **Some cadets recommended adding variety to training, going in more depth.**
  - *"I think variety. In every single briefing, you don't have to cover every single thing. Cover one thing in one of the briefings. Cover types of unwanted sexual contact. Cover that in one briefing. That's all your briefing is about and have a full discussion on that. Then another day, talk about this leadership component of it. I think that we try to cover everything in every briefing, and so then we just hit the surface. People feel like it's the same briefing over and over again."* (Female)
  - *"I think a lot of the problems with the briefings we have is they focus so much on consent, and that's a huge thing. And the problem with that is people don't see themselves in that role. And then also, that happens behind closed doors, and then it's a he said/she said. Where if we talked more about the hookup culture or sexual comments and just the culture we have, that involves everyone. I think we need to talk about the how and what we can do with our culture right now."* (Female)
  - *"I think the type of training needs to keep being developed. Using humor is the best way to get through to us. Being real with us is the best way to get through. But if you're going to lecture us, if you're going to tell stories, if they're not going to make it relevant to us, we're not going to pay attention. So one thing I've always thought is why don't they have class briefs or whatever where they just have stories of actual people that are here that are willing to write down their stories?"* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that making training more relevant to their lives would be useful.**
  - *"If we could personalize it and tailor it towards our experiences, because we're more receptive to hearing what's going on around us. But just share the story and leave it to us. What can we do to prevent this? How can we deal with this? Let us own it and develop it together as a group. I think that would help with training and prevention and awareness."* (Female)
  - "*Probably the best thing we could do with this kind of training is make it not feel like training. Because cadets make a clear delineation between training and our real lives."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that teaching communications, consent, and social skills would be useful and would help prevent victim blaming.**
  - *"Social skills."* (Male)
  - *"There's an overall societal issue that underlines this, is that the burden of proof is on the woman to prove that it was unwanted. that's where I take issue with the word 'unwanted sexual contact' being used, because I don't think it should be unwanted, insofar as the other individual should have to know and be convinced and be continuously aware that it is wanted, rather than the victim have to at any point demonstrate that it wasn't. It should be assumed to be unwanted until it is illustrated to be wanted."* (Male)
  - *"You talk about risk mitigation beforehand; you talk about support afterwards. So if somebody comes to you and said this is what happened to me, you don't go to risk mitigation. You go to support. You focus on risk mitigation first. You say here are the basic things to protect your safety, just from top to bottom, your personal safety, your financial safety, all that stuff. You talk about that before. But if we have a lot of assaults, risk mitigation. Because that comes across as we've been having a lot of assaults, so we should talk about that. We should start with that and focus on support afterwards."* (Female)
  - *"We should also have training on communication. A lot of times why these situations go south is because a guy misreads a girl's signals, a girl misreads a guy's signals, and it just starts going south from there. A guy thinks a girl is interested, but they're not. So this fosters more problems than it helps it. And I think by understanding those communication barriers, it is going to help a lot."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that additional bystander training would be beneficial.**
  - *"I think we should get more bystander training because with all of this happening, most of us will probably not be a perpetrator or probably not be somebody who is sexually assaulted or something. I mean just statistically. So I think we need to focus on bystander training because that's stuff that we're going to take with us throughout*

the rest of our lives. Figure out, how should we intervene, how should we not make big situations out of it? And so I think that's something that we need to focus more on that we don't." (Female)

- *"We don't get a lot of bystander training. We always talk about be the bystander that helps prevent this stuff. And some of it may happen behind closed doors. So it doesn't surprise me that all this goes on, because so many people just don't know how to engage in these situations."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that continuing to focus on the topic is important.**
  - *"I think more of a continued focus on the topic gets us to have conversations. And I promise you none of us that came back from Take Back the Night wasn't talking about Take Back the Night in some way. And probably because we're inquisitive, we were talking about what they were saying and not just how bad it was that we had to be there and waste a night. So as long as that kind of conversation can happen throughout the Cadet Wing, as long as it becomes pervasively obvious that everybody is against it, I think, at least within this group, you'll see those numbers decline."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated the importance of talking about precautionary measures as a means of prevention.**
  - *"I think as a community, we just look at when somebody is raped, what do we do about it? It's not necessarily what is leading up to the rape in the first place. I know that's a very sensitive area, about the way people carry themselves, underage drinking, drinking with strangers and stuff. But it's like we always talk about response to it and how we're going to support the person it happened to. It's hard to figure out how to eliminate it in the first place. But if we could do that, we wouldn't be having this conversation."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that conversations at a lower-level, squadron or peer level are beneficial.**
  - *"I think that needs to be done at the squadron level. That's where I think most of the difference is made, whenever you see people you're closest with talking about it and realizing that there is a problem. Like when you see the athletes versus non-athletes. We had a problem, so at the squadron level we discussed it with each other, and the athletes didn't know they were doing something that made the non-athletes mad, and vice versa. Everyone talking and figuring out why they think that way or why they feel like that or why certain actions are said. It was just like putting it out on the table and realizing everyone has their own side of the story."* (Male)
  - *"I think at a smaller level that would be most effective. Like a small group, if you have small groups in your squadron and there are a couple of girls in each of those groups, and they're like 'Hey, you guys say stuff like this and this bothers us for this reason,' I think that helps it click better."* (Male)

- *"I don't think it needs to be handled on a large situation because people don't feel like they're getting heard and their time is being wasted. But I'm involved in a small team, where in the past there's definitely been a tendency of sexist behavior. There were a couple of girls who were like, 'Hey, this irritates us, this upsets us,' and the whole team basically came to realize that's not right and changed their views."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated the importance of having both genders' perspective on sexual assault and harassment represented in trainings and discussions.**
  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Females)
  - *"I like to have conversations with my guy friends and give them the perspective of girls. As far as the phrase 'No' or 'Stop,' they need to stop. That was something that apparently is an issue for at least some guys here, of understanding that."* (Female)
  - *"Part of the communication thing that we're setting up most likely next semester is we ask a group of guys, how many times do you think you've gone too far in this situation? And a very high percentage. And I think that's really interesting. Because if we sat a man and a women down together at a table and they talked about these incidents, then a woman gives their perspective and the man talking about how he interpreted it, I think that's priceless. Just saying, when you touch me there, to me that was like you were trying to signal me. To him, that was I'm just being friendly. Just saying that is an open environment for communication."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated the need to discuss sexual matters openly as a way to dialogue and educate.**
  - *"Some people are raised to not talk about it. That's a very private matter and I don't talk about it with anyone else. That's perfectly understandable and perfectly okay. The only problem with that is that if the conversation isn't able to be open, then how are we going to be able to talk about the respect and the healthy relationships and everything if we're not willing to open up based on backgrounds? And so I feel like that's one thing that has to be addressed, that everyone comes from a different background and we have to respect that. There's got to be boundaries drawn, in a way. You're not going to talk about this is my personal sex life, for example, but you might talk about how you have a healthy relationship and this is how you're going to respect the people around you, and to start that proactive training, as far as instead of reactive, just start the conversation."* (Female)

Chapter 7:
U.S. Air Force Academy Faculty and Staff

Three focus group sessions were conducted at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) from April 20-22, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. The three sessions were: faculty members, coaches and athletic staff, and military staff (AMTs and AOCs). Each session had between 11 and 16 participants. A total of 40 staff members participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the faculty and staff participants the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix H, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USAFA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rates remained unchanged for both men and women from 2012, and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Participants were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Participants further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some staff members indicated they were familiar with the results of the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"I think we've covered it at a director's call, if I remember correctly, not too far back."* (Athletic)
  - *"Staff meeting, Superintendent's weekly staff meeting."* (Faculty)
  - *"In the faculty council."* (Faculty)
  - *"We also got an e-mail with a link to the SARC. Some SARC slides that they put together for sexual assault awareness month and these stats were in there."* (Faculty)
  - *"They showed us this before."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the rates for USC might be influenced due to reluctance to report experiences.**
  - *"I would say it's underreported. I think a lot of the girls are really afraid to go ahead and say it [even on an anonymous survey]."* (Military)

Discussion of USC rates[44]

- **Some staff members indicated they thought it was possible that rates of USC would decrease in future years.**
  - *"One would hope so."* (Athletic)
  - *"I don't know. I guess it's possible. It would be something to see. It would be interesting to see if it goes up or down."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated the emphasis on sexual assault prevention has increased in past years.**
  - *"I think it's definitely gone up. We had baseline training a month ago that was mandatory for everybody in the department. And it was three or four hours long, and the major theme of the whole thing was what we're talking about right now. And let me add for that I gave a student I know who attends a civilian university some of the numbers that we had learned here and how many freshmen and sophomores are sexually abused and different things. And she hadn't heard any of this stuff. So the effort that we're making, if I could compare it to where she's at, they're not getting this at all, which really concerned me. But on the other hand, makes me feel good that we are emphasizing that here."* (Athletic)
  - *"We're paying a lot of attention to it. Faculty and instructors in the classroom are speaking a lot about it."* (Faculty)
  - *"Been more of a focus the last couple of years."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that training seems to be having an impact.**
  - *"I think overall, it takes them really having a breakthrough moment for it to seem worth it. I know they had Take Back the Night. So I think it's a cool approach, but you're looking at a school that's predominantly male and so trying to overcome the stigma of every guy here is a horrible person. And that's not the message that people are trying to get across. So I think they need to have their own breakthrough moments, whether it's a friend that they talk to or however it works. So I think it's helping."* (Athletic)

[44] The handout for cadet focus group participants no statistical difference in USC rates from 2012 to 2014 for both men and women.

- *"I think the SAPR people are trying to get out there more, and they have actually had team meetings with different teams, and I think that's gone over well. When they met with our team, they really enjoyed meeting with them and being able to talk openly with those people. So I think that allows them to discuss what their thoughts are more in a small group. Like, this is a small group where they can actually talk in a small group setting rather than being in a large auditorium with the SAPR people just speaking at them."* (Athletic)

- **Other staff members indicated there is still more work to be done in changing attitudes that sexual assault is exclusively a problem for women.**
  - *"I think there's a lot of barriers to overcome when you have a school that's predominantly male, when you're telling them statistics, when it caters to females a lot more. Even the survey kind of does."* (Athletic)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[45]

- **Some staff members indicated that behaviors that occur among men might not be wanted, but some cadets are uncomfortable objecting.**
  - *"They used to talk about what they would do, like joke about what they would do in the shower and things like that. It was in a joking way, but who's to say that the one person on the receiving end wasn't going along with it because it was their buddy or whatever. They legitimately make a game out of it. How far could you push the limit before the other person was so uncomfortable that they had to stop it, which blows my mind, but I don't think girls really do that, but I don't know."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that male behaviors such as locker room behavior are part of the masculine culture.**
  - *"I think part of this is tied in with masculinity, the norms around behavior to a certain way, and manhood and male identity. You expect that there's going to be horseplay, and that's just the norm of what happens in the locker room. Or the genitalia stuff. It's part of the 'bro male' behavior. It doesn't make it any less unwanted, but it's just more the norm around these gender roles that we have for men, that's what you're supposed to do."* (Faculty)
  - *"This age group in particular, this is a particularly formative time for their identity. And so I don't want to be outside of normal. If I'm the one that says knock it off and no one else does, it's my problem."* (Faculty)
  - *"There's also the expectation that the male cadets at the Academy have a strong value of just putting up with stuff. It is not a topic that men at the Academy feel comfortable complaining about. There's just this 'I'm going to put up with it.' This*

[45]See Appendix H, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USAFA Men" for the details shared with participants

place is just a series of put up with it. It's this shared 'We're enduring stuff, so I'm just going to endure.'" (Faculty)

- *"Two of these things are about being part of a team, the horseplay, the locker room, initiation. It's about being part of a team, being accepted, not put yourself aside to say, 'Don't do that to me.' About belonging to the group."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy has taken steps to reduce unwanted behaviors among men.**
  - *"In basic training this year there was a large emphasis on no horseplay in the locker rooms. Because in past years, you would have training sessions in the locker rooms, when everyone is naked, and you would make some of the cadets do some things. There was an emphasis this year on that not happening."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members think most of the male behaviors occur in the locker room and not in other places, such as the dormitory.**
  - *"I haven't heard anything. The first thing that comes to mind is you immediately think athletic teams. You don't think of a regular gym class."* (Military)
  - *"I haven't seen that [improper behaviors in the dormitory]."* (Military)
  - *"Maybe they do it when we're gone."* (Military)
  - *"I think they get snap-towels and stuff. I'm sure there's more than that that happens."* (Military)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[46]

- **Some staff members indicated that alcohol might be involved in more incidents than the survey reveals because people are fearful of punishment for alcohol-related offenses.**[47]
  - *"I would think these numbers are maybe a little low because of alcohol and the rules that are in place here as opposed to a different college. Sometimes people don't come forward for fear of getting in trouble for underage drinking. That's huge here, maybe more so than at other places, because it's sometimes talked about and sometimes people will say, 'Don't worry,' as they come forward. 'You won't get in trouble or you won't get in as much trouble.' But I do think that's in the forefront of people's minds. If they are underage drinking and something does happen, they are more unlikely to go forward and confront or bring it up than they would be at maybe a different school or if they were of age."* (Athletic)

[46] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.
[47] Per the *2014 SAGR* survey, 53% of women and 37% of men who responded that they experienced USC indicated alcohol was involved in the incident with the greatest effect on them.

- *"There's basically a no tolerance policy for alcohol. Alcohol reduces inhibitions. Probably has a lot of role in what happens here. But I think you're not going to see that reporting as much because they're worried about getting in trouble for that, even though they may have been the ones who had something happen to them that they didn't want to happen to them."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated someone might look for a potential sexual target who has been drinking.**
  - *"It's probably an acceptance thing. Everyone else is doing it; I probably should have a drink or two. And if they haven't had exposure to alcohol, they get drunk quicker, and then something can happen to them. And I think someone who maybe is a perpetrator who has done this repeated times, they're going to look for the drunk person because they're an easier catch."* (Athletic)
  - *"Predator is a whole different animal than some of this gray area stuff that goes on. There's a distinct difference between a predator, whether they know they are one or not, that goes out of their way to isolate someone, get them drunk, take advantage of someone."* (Athletic)
  - *"We don't have the fraternities that you would see at a normal university, where using alcohol as a predatory tool seems to be much more commonplace and organized. I think it certainly happens here, but it's very individualistic and onesie, twosie cases."* (Military)
  - *"I think it could happen either way [preplanned or taking advantage of a situation], but I think the people who want to make it happen, who hunts and understands predator versus prey mentality, I think that's one of the things that we missed the boat on, is try to catch people who do what they do intentionally. You can't catch a hunter by appealing to their higher brain functions, as far as the right thing to do."* (Military)

Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates[48]

- **Some staff members indicated that the rates for perceived sexual harassment may have increased slightly in 2014 due to increased education.**
  - *"I think the education piece."* (Military)
  - *"I think education. People are starting to consider things sexual harassment that they would not have considered sexual harassment before."* (Military)

[48] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 48% of women experienced perceived sexual harassment (4 percentage points higher than 2012) and 9% of men experienced perceived sexual harassment (unchanged from 2012).

- **Some staff members indicated that the perceived sexual harassment rate was lower than they would have expected.**
  - *"That's lower than I expected."* (Faculty)
  - *"That's much lower than I would have expected. It seems like male cadets view female cadets as not able to contribute as much and just inherently value female cadets' contributions to the wing less. I would stop that if I directly saw that in the classroom. But it just seems just watching the classroom dynamics, the male cadets in my classroom, it's hard to measure, but it feels like they get a little more respect from the classroom at large."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that unwanted behaviors might occur due to the close relationships that develop in coed dormitories.**
  - *"[Discussing the coed dormitories] in this room it's two young ladies, in this room it's two young guys, and you get to be very, very comfortable around each other. If sometimes that comfort just doesn't go a little bit too far."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that unwanted behaviors might occur because some cadets do not know appropriate limits or are unwilling to say something when they experience unwanted behaviors.**
  - *"There are people who come here from tiny, tiny schools, and home school, things like that, and they don't even know how to properly flirt with another individual. So if that's what they've seeing in a locker room, 'Oh, I'm just going to try this with this girl.' I think it's that general, it's teasing, it's fun, it's light. Or it's from TV or whatever else it is and then they're directly applying that. Some people have certain tolerance levels, and some people aren't comfortable with speaking up about it. Others may be more comfortable, and those are the people that need to step up and say something and hopefully change the culture."* (Athletic)
  - *"And from everything that we learn, going back to the predator thing. They test the waters first. You say something to a person, they ignore it, well, okay, let's try something else, and then they ignore it. So you have to be able to recognize some of those behaviors and, maybe if you're not willing to speak on your behalf, have somebody, your buddy, your wingman, whoever, speak on your behalf and stop it."* (Athletic)

Discussion of sexist behavior rates[49]

- **Some staff members indicated they have observed sexist comments among cadets, so are not surprised by the results of the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"I wouldn't be surprised, just watching cadet interactions. In the males category, it's basically saying they're like women for not being a certain way. That tends to be the most common way I see that."* (Faculty)
  - *"I see sexism in the way other women want other women to be. Women will come down harder on other women than they do on men."* (Faculty)
  - *"It has to do with reputation. If the one weak link happens to be female, then the other females will jump on that and say, not only are you making our squadron look bad, you're making me as a woman look bad, and I'm going to make sure that all the men in this room know that I don't approve of your behavior."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that there is less emphasis on sexist behavior than sexual assault at the Academy.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Faculty)
  - *"I think they're dancing around it with this idea of respect, but I don't think that we're focusing on that enough."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets behave differently during the duty day and at other times.**
  - *"I don't see it cadet to cadet, but I hear the aftereffect. Because a lot of times they'll be in class or something, they'll hear a joke or something they found offensive, or on the way back to class while walking on the Terrazzo. But once they get in the squadron, it seems like a whole different game is being played."* (Military)
  - *"The opportunity to intervene is very few, because they know how to play the game. We don't see it so much. So you don't have a name to put it to, to attribute to, to intervene."* (Military)
  - *"They know pretty much if somebody is in the Cadet Wing, we're going to do something about it, so they're not going to say it in front of us. The ones who do come and talk are upset about it. And oftentimes it happens in class or in relation to a team."* (Military)

[49] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 84% of women perceived experiencing sexist behavior (unchanged from 2012) and 38% of men perceived experiencing sexist behavior (unchanged from 2012).

Reporting

Faculty and staff participants were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix H, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Participants discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Participants were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more cadets to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with faculty and staff participants providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some staff members indicated that the number of official reports is higher than expected.**
  - *"When you say less than five here, I would venture to say that number is higher than what you actually see."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated the number of reports of USC have gone up in recent years.**
  - *"I find it unusual [that the number of reports have gone up but the USC rates have not], because I think our reporting seems to be up. The first thing that comes to mind, but I have no proof of it, is that the cadets are protecting the image of the Academy. With the cadets, with my experience, they'll talk bad about the Academy like crazy to each other. But if somebody outside the Academy talks bad about the Academy, then the fight's on. So the Academy is consistently, in their minds, under assault from outside, news organizations, our Gazette down here."* (Military)
  - *"Education-wise or reporting-wise, I also think it's the education piece that is making the reporting go up. A freshman this year would report something that perhaps a freshman two or three years ago would not have reported because the education is better and they understand that what happened to them actually falls into the context of unwanted sexual contact or even sexual assault."* (Military)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some staff members indicated that leadership at all levels encourages reporting.**
  - *"I think it's multilayered. Those sitting at this table probably have the most tactical engagement with our cadets. It seems that everybody is talking to them about sexual assault. I don't think there's a level of leadership that it doesn't come from."* (Military)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some staff members suggested that low-severity incidents may be reported less frequently than high-severity incidents.**
  - *"I think there's a difference, though. For someone, good game, butt slap, I don't want that, I don't want you to do that. If someone keeps doing it, are you really going to report it? No. All of this sexual unwanted stuff is happening and only 16 percent are reporting."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that survivors may be less likely to report a given incident if it occurs as part of an escalating series of incidents.**
  - *"Well, that's what makes me wonder, does it escalate? A lot of the things that I read in a lot of the reports, it's two individuals that knew each other and then it basically grew out of control. So it makes me wonder. Like, the predator thing, does it escalate? If it's a guy and a gal and the guy does something and she's uncomfortable with it, but it wasn't too far, maybe just a neck rub or something, and then the next time it happens and it escalates up a little bit. And then it reaches a point, though, that she has to report it. Is that usually how this stuff happens, it escalates to where it reaches a point where it's out of control, or not?"* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that survivors may not report out of fear of victim blaming.**
  - *"I think victims are scared of repercussions."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think a lot of victims are scared of what if no one believes me. How am I going to be treated by that person that I'm accusing or by their friends or by their group of individuals? You see it all the time in the media when someone comes forward and people are like, 'Oh, well, that female, she's promiscuous or she's a slut,' those kind of things. And so they become a victim not only of the sexual assault but a victim of, now, their perception in the public and by the people around them. And it's not just women. I think a guy who would be coming forward with this would be labeled as a wimp. You're a guy. Why don't you tell them to stop, that kind of thing. I think on both sides victims are scared to report a lot of times because of how they're going to be perceived."* (Athletic)
  - *"After this case was reported in the Gazette, USAFA monitored the Yik Yak that was going on after the Gazette story came out. There was a lot of prevalence of comments saying, 'Well, if you drank to the point that you can't remember anything...' There was still that victim blaming. That would be a barrier to reporting if you knew that everybody was going to talk about you on Yik Yak."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that a perceived lack of fairness or effectiveness of the military adjudication process and related consequences deters reporting.**
  - *"The track record of the perpetrator staying in and then the victim is the one who leaves the Air Force. Would be writing on the wall. That's based in facts. It's some of the more notorious cases."* (Faculty)
  - *"The perception that the cadets have, that they'll get better justice in the civilian world. In my opinion, they are less likely to see their case go to trial in the civilian world than they are in the military because the military takes these cases to trial now, within the last couple of years. But the cadets have that perception, and they're always surprised to hear that that's not the case."* (Faculty)
  - *"Every year, it seems, some four-degree gets a sexual assault issue and gets kicked out on fraternization or something. There's always a story or two every year floating around, and it sticks in their mind. I don't blame them."* (Faculty)
  - *"I have a cadet who I know reported and then was put on probation for consensual sexual contact in the dorms that had happened earlier, that had come up during that investigation. It's a Catch-22 because you can't give immunity for those things because then you run into, well, did you report X to try to get out of Y?"* (Faculty)
  - *"The investigation is long. It's ongoing. It's going to turn up a lot of stuff. Then, from a judge advocate's perspective, they will make recommendations to commanders, saying even though this has gone on for X amount of time, here's the only information that we have, so we will not be able to prosecute this. But cadets don't see that part of it. They just say, 'Well, I went through it. I'm hurt worse now, and nothing is going to happen.' And that gets out, and that's the communication."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that fear of ostracism deters reporting.**
  - *"I was just told that the reason a particular cadet did not report was because her first year here, she's already seen the ostracization of a fellow cadet that reported and the squadron turned on that person. And she wanted none of that."* (Faculty)
  - *"It's even harder for male victims because they fear that even more. Because then a lot of the language starts questioning their masculinity if they bring forward a report. You had sex and you didn't want it? That's impossible."* (Faculty)
  - *"The stigma is a big piece of it. Cadets, they're reluctant to report, because then for a girl, if she reports, she becomes the 'SARC girl,' as the other cadets will refer to her. Not only does she have to deal with all of that emotional turmoil, but now she's somewhat ousted by other cadets."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the length and demanding nature of the reporting process itself deters reporting.**
  - *"My experience in my squadron is the cadets see how the victim was treated during the process, and therefore they don't want to take any action because they see the turmoil that that person has to go through. We do really well training all of the pre-stuff, what to do to prevent it, but we don't really train on what to do after the event has happened. The feedback I get also is that, possible victims will come forth, but don't want to do anything about it because of the having to go to OSI possibly and the interviews that go along with that. Plus getting things more out in the open, bringing up their past, which hurts even more."* (Military)
  - *"I think the process just takes an extraordinary amount of time. So I think that if you do report and are constantly grilled and have to retell your story multiple times, the length and the drawn-out retelling of your story so many times just has to get cumbersome, to the point where other people seeing this don't want to go down this path. I just want it to go away."* (Faculty)
  - *"It doesn't help that OSI pulls them out of class without warning. If I were a cadet, that would be very stressful to me, especially if you only have 40 lessons to learn the material, all these classes that number three cadet would not be able to handle without going to every single class and then getting pulled out of class. I wouldn't want anything to do with that. When I say 'pulled out,' I don't mean literally OSI drops in and takes them out and then and walks away with them. I'll get an e-mail that morning that says, I have to go to an interview with OSI. I would think that that would be a detriment."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members suggested that cadets do not believe some unwanted behaviors warrant reporting.**
  - *"I'll tell my buddy, whatever. Even if it's something that should be reported, it's not worth the hassle while I'm here. I'll put my head down and keep going. If someone touched me on the butt, I'm not going to report it, versus someone assaulted me and tried to rape me, that has a little bit different connotation."* (Military)
  - *"Especially when you look at locker room behavior and things like that. If they're filling out a survey on unwanted sexual contact, if something happened that maybe meets the definition, but at the time someone didn't actually feel that way or didn't realize that it was an event that should have been reported, they might answer those questions differently."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets would not report USC if they themselves had committed an infraction.**
  - *"Another thing that hasn't been brought up yet is that they were doing something that is also wrong. And so they don't want to get in trouble for that. And that's one thing that I haven't seen real clear guidance on how we handle that. They don't want to*

traumatize the victim even more, but at the same time they don't want the morale of the wing to be drop because they hold them accountable." (Military)

- *"I've heard most commonly they're afraid the circumstances under which the harassment or unwanted sexual contact took place could jeopardize their status as a cadet. For example, if they were drinking in the dorms and there was unwanted sexual contact, if they report the unwanted sexual contact, that may or may not go forward, and they themselves will be get kicked out for alcohol use in the dorms."* (Faculty)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some staff members indicated that reporting is the key to identifying repeat offenders.**
  - *"I think the concept of reporting is about breaking the chain and not continuing the behavior, allowing the behavior to be in the environment. It's more victims."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think it's a good information point, but I think in the mass briefings that we've had, those details have been made known, where it's not uncommon to hear a rapist will go through X number of people before they get caught. It takes this many types of whatever with alcohol before someone will make a mistake or something like that. Definitely, if no one has heard it, it should be known. But I think those of us on permanent party who have been trained to brief all of this stuff, the statistics are already out there."* (Military)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some staff members indicated that reporting rates rise with confidence in leadership.**
  - *"Yeah, that's more confidence in leadership."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that better education has enabled cadets to identify incidents of USC more accurately.**
  - *"I think the education is getting better, so perhaps your number went down because females are more educated on what you actually meant on unwanted sexual contact. So even though I'm sure the wording of the question hasn't changed, I think there's a better understanding than there was a few years ago of what that unwanted sexual contact is, and that it's not an arm around the shoulders, but it's something more than that."* (Military)
  - *"[Agreed]."* (Military)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some staff members agreed that emphasizing the frequency of repeat offenders to cadets might encourage reporting.**
  - *"I agree."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think it's good to have with the cadets, but I think it's also important still to caveat with them. If you're a victim, you need to do what makes you feel safest. So that's ultimately your highest priority. It would be nice if you could contribute to stopping the perpetrator; however, your first priority is you. Take care of you. Get better."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members suggested that minimizing the academic consequences of the USC investigation process would encourage reporting.**
  - *"In addition to the time and emotional impact, if they report, they're going to have to tell their teachers at some point what's going on with them. And I think the problem with that is, potentially, if they don't want to, if they'd rather keep it as private as possible, they might be thinking that we're then going to compartmentalize in our mind as them being victims. We get very little information, but we do know why they're missing our class, and maybe observe them a little more closely and see if they're emotionally impacted and stuff like that. One easy fix would be don't conduct these during class. They get snatched out at a moment's notice."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think more relaxed attendance policies would help a lot of these scenarios. Okay, I have the flexibility to let you miss X percentage of the lessons. That would be fantastic. And I don't have to ask questions."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that improving victim advocacy would encourage reporting.**
  - *"I'm going to guess that that is victim advocate or an advocate in some way. I know that the SARC office is trying to get more VAs [Victims' Advocates] within DF [Dean of Faculty]. That would be fantastic."* (Faculty)
  - *"I know we're bolstering our VAs on part of that. One option we could do, since tours here are so short, is just be part of the welcome aboard. We're looking for help in these areas. Here's how you can contribute. Because I think more faculty members that are helping these cadets, the better."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members did not feel empowered to help those who experienced USC.**
  - *"I have one example where a cadet came to me because he was having sexual issues with his girlfriend. We were encouraging them to talk us about it. But anyways, as it turns out [listed some of the issues she faced]. So now this has a whole other dimension to it, where she needs help. So that's a double-sided message. Come here, I'll help you get to the resources, but then you might get hung for it too. Or the*

person that is being sought after for help might get hung in the process. That's something that needs to be fixed." (Faculty)

- *"I think that goes to the theme of giving instructors more autonomy and control to help their folks."* (Faculty)
- *"That [instructors are required to report] is not true at all. We are not mandatory reporters. But we can be required to testify. So it's a weird thing. We were mandatory reporters like five or six years ago, and then they changed it. So we are not mandatory reporters, but we could be called upon to testify if we knew something."* (Faculty)
- *"I think we know our boundaries. We know that we're not mandatory reporters. We know that cadets can't make restricted reports to us. In the instances where I think that that will come up, and it has several times, I explain to the cadets, look, I'm not going to go tell someone about this unless you tell me that I can or you want my help. But also know that I'm not like the SARC. I'm not like a special victim's counsel. We don't have that confidentiality."* (Faculty)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
>
> 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a cadet would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some staff members indicated social retaliation for reporting sexual assault would be more likely at the Academy.**
  - *"That's what happens here."* (Military)
  - *"It's really social."* (Military)
  - *"There's a social reprisal there. The cadets have a term, I heard it today, 'SARC'd.'"* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated it is often other cadets who retaliate.**
  - *"Another cadet."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that professional retaliation could subtlety impact decisions.**
  - *"Retaliation is directed at that person because they reported it versus defending your buddy and saying, 'We don't know if she's legit or what.' It's probably not a good idea to get involved with that. That's different than specifically retaliating. I think both happen. And then with the formal definition of retaliation, I could see how maybe that happens if the victim would be applying for a specific position, that they say you didn't meet the qualifications, because the qualifications are very subjective."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated professional retaliation could occur within the cadet chain of command.**
  - *"Within the cadets, it could happen, within the cadet chain of command. It has happened, whether it's for ratings or whatever. I definitely would say that there's potential for that happening within the cadets."* (Faculty)
  - *"I could see where, if somebody was going to accuse a teammate of something, to where I could see where the other teammates of that individual could maybe put pressure, or at least they could ignore that person. They could make snide remarks about that person. They could put pressure on the accuser."* (Athletic)
  - *"That person [one's wingman] might be allowing the perpetrator or the accused to get away with something that they should experience the consequences of. And if they don't, then they're actually doing harm to that cadet."* (Athletic)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated situations where actions were viewed as retaliation when in fact someone was trying to be helpful.**
  - *"Moving someone out of a squadron, and then you remove them from a leadership position after that. Leave it up to the victims. You give them options, but without making life miserable for the accused until they are proven guilty. You have to be fair to both sides. But going to the victim and asking what would they be more comfortable with. Give them options, and they can turn it down. If the leadership position is more important, then they can stick it out."* (Athletic)
  - *"They are good policies, but they're also guidelines, but they're not all-inclusive."* (Athletic)
  - *"It turns into a patronizing situation. Like, we know what's best for you in your recovery, and it's not the best thing. 'I've been assaulted, I've been hurt and I told you, and you're punishing me again.' The people that are doing it are doing it because they care. We want to make sure that you get through this place."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated actions associated with an incident, such as collateral misconduct, might be perceived as retaliation.**
  - *"If it doesn't get substantiated that it's sexual assault but bad things still happen, discipline comes down through the cadet discipline system. Potentially, a victim may say, 'Hey, I'm the victim here. You guys in the permanent party chain retaliated against me because after I reported, well, now you hit me with demerits and now you hit me with whatever. Wait a minute. No. You broke the rules.' This isn't retaliation. According to the CDS, you were intimate behind closed doors or something to that nature. It has this type of punishment. This is why you're getting it."* (Faculty)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated they would advise a cadet to discuss retaliatory behaviors with a victims' advocate, the AOC/AMT, or the inspector general.**
  - *"There is a victim's advocate program, so, I would recommend that they go see the victim's advocate because they usually help them out that way. For us, we would probably contact our AOC or AMT, those kind of people, so they know that they're experiencing."* (Athletic)
  - *"The IG [Inspector General]."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that sometimes a cadet will confide in someone regarding retaliation, but does not necessarily want them to take any steps to report it.**
  - *"It's real delicate because almost always the individual will tell you, I don't want you to do anything. They've dealt with everything already. They've seen it coming forward. They've been run through the ringer. So they'll beg you, 'Please don't do anything.'"* (Athletic)
  - *"They want somebody [to know]. Yes. They will just beg you not to."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated they should report retaliation, should a cadet come and speak to them regarding it, but the situation can be complex.**
  - *"Yes, sir."* (Military)
  - *"You're always going to take the victim's best interest."* (Military)
  - *"The retaliation that I've heard the most about or experienced this year has been reported by other cadets, not by the victims. So I think that's actually, at least for me, has been much more common. Do I go to the victim and say, 'Hey, I hear this is happening, would you like me to try and do something about it?' in which case they're going to say, 'No, or I would have told you.' Or do you just deal with it without even telling them that they're going to deal with that? I don't know. That's a weird line to walk. Because if the victim themselves is not coming forward and reporting it, but you're hearing about it from other sources, more often more than once, so you know it's happening."* (Military)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some staff members suggested additional types of expedited transfers as a method of reducing retaliation.**
  - *"They are considering transfers between the Service Academies."* (Faculty)
  - *"You can transfer them to ROTC. I think that's better than showing up at West Point. That seems really unusual."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think another thing that has been talked about. If it's an active duty base and there's a victim and potential perpetrator, the perpetrator is generally moved relatively quickly to another base. Here, they stay here. They get to put on a defense, if you will, amongst their peers. Cadets at large start thinking that cadet, nothing has happened to them, they must not be guilty because they're going on with their regular daily lives. So people look at the victims a little stronger. Some ability to remove the potential perpetrator for a period of time while the investigation is going on."* (Faculty)

- *"Let them [accused] leave for a while, while the investigation continues. And if it comes out that nothing happened, they came back. And it sucks for that person if that person is innocent."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated education can help better handle or diminish retaliation.**
  - *"You can educate on the fact that social retaliation is retaliation and really hit that hard. If you put a post on your Yik Yak, that's retaliation."* (Faculty)
  - *"I don't think they're educated as much on if I'm withholding something from somebody, that's retaliation."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think just more education on victim blaming in general, which we've been doing better, at least from what I hear from firsties in the last year to two years, there's been talk about the concept of victim blaming. But my firsties seem to say it wasn't really being talked about before then. So that's good that it's being brought up. But the more you bring that up and start to educate people on the aftermath of a report and how to help the victim and how to treat the victim, that kind of stuff, the more we educate people on that, the better."* (Faculty)
  - *"You said how the Academy could do something better. Almost all of the mandatory briefings that come down are handled by cadets. They need to get mandatory briefings with their faculty. And athletics, statistically speaking, is a large part of all this. The coaches need to have a day where they say, 'This is unacceptable.'"* (Faculty)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, faculty and staff participants were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among cadets and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Participants were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some staff members indicated that social media plays a role in retaliation.**
  - *"It's out there a lot. We had one major case where there was a lot of publicity, and it was taking sides on campus."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the tone of posts changes with current events.**
  - *"I think it's cyclical, based on the current events. Right now they're doing well with each other because we've had some really serious events that have happened. So any time something goes on there and says 'I'm having problems,' they do a great job of reaching out to each other and helping each other out. But first time we have a major*

negative story, I guarantee you, it's very centric on what the big story of the moment is. Right now it happens to be the suicide and that kind of stuff. So they're very supportive and take care of each other. But as soon as it's another major 'he said/she said case,' I think it will get back into the weeds very quickly. They try to avoid names and yell at each other for saying names." (Military)

Use of Yik Yak[50]

- **Some staff members indicated that the anonymity of Yik Yak lends itself to negative posts.**
  - *"It's anonymous. They can say whatever they want."* (Military)
  - *"It's no different than society, like when you read the paper. Some of those things are just heinous. From that aspect of it, it's realistic along with society and how the anonymity part allows you to say things that you would never, ever say otherwise."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that a potential problem is that the site allows for the spread of inaccurate information that cadets believe is true.**
  - *"A lot of what we had seen was damage control from these things. The vocal minority is speaking so loudly that the majority of cadets think that it's true. The consequences of that spread very quickly because people assume that a lot of people are saying it, and it's not true."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that Yik Yak could be a barrier to reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"That would be a barrier to reporting if you knew that everybody was going to talk about you on Yik Yak."* (Faculty)
  - *"Like Facebook and things that actually have your name attached to them are positive. But Yik Yak, is anonymous. Sometimes I talk to my students about what I see on there. Because some of the things that people say, especially when it relates to the Boulder case or something else, they wouldn't say that if their face was associated with it or their name was associated with it. If I were a cadet and I had been a victim of unwanted sexual contact and I read some of this stuff on there, I wouldn't want [to report it]. Look at what they say about the Wing Commander. And that's the Wing Commander. That's not even someone who has said sexual assault or something like that. I wouldn't want to bring up anything."* (Faculty)

[50] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

- **Some staff members indicated that Yik Yak can be used positively to view what cadets are thinking.**
  - *"What I do like about Yik Yak is that it gives us a glimpse into what they're doing. Just because they're not saying it to our faces, those conversations are happening behind closed doors, inside squadrons, during MCQ [Military Call to Quarters]. Those things are happening. At least now we can see it and go, 'This is stupid. What do you think?' 'Oh, I think it's stupid too.' They have power to down vote something."* (Faculty)
  - *"It gives you a very honest pulse of the Wing as well. You can ask your cadets, 'How are things going,' and you get, 'Things are great.' And then you go on Yik Yak, and you go, 'Oh.'"* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets self-police the site to remove negative posts on another cadet.**
  - *"And they can respond to it and say this comment is stupid. It gives them more power."* (Faculty)
  - *"You can down vote Yik Yak, and it makes it disappear. So Yaks that are nasty and bring out names that refer to other cadets tend to disappear, actually, very quickly. And squadrons will actually e-mail each other. 'Hey, there's a yak about one of our people out there,' and they'll all get on and down vote it so that it disappears. If they're talking bad about permanent party, it tends to just stick around. But when they're talking about each other, they're actually doing a very good job of policing it, and you're seeing a lot more positive yaks now than you did."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that there are positives to social media.**
  - *"A lot of good comes out of it, too. We had the near-miss suicides that were posted. You're feeling a certain way and before you know it, they have a lot of replies, 'Meet me here. Let's talk.' So there is that very positive aspect."* (Military)
  - *"It gives you something to talk to the cadets about as well. I bring that up just to kind of clear the air. 'Hey, I read this on Yik Yak. What's going on with this?'"* (Military)
  - *"I think it's more useful to have it as a censor. The conversation is going to happen. We need to know what they're saying, and this gives us a beautiful censor. Even if it's of a very small subset, it's vocal. Perhaps they're brave by their anonymity. At least it gives us something to talk about."* (Faculty)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some staff members indicated that the posts on the sites have improved since cadets know Academy staff follows social media.**
  - *"Well, they know we're watching… It's gotten a lot better, and the cadets now have taken it upon themselves again. They know that we're watching. They also know that the Gazette is watching."* (Military)
  - *"I think it's cyclical on what they use to talk about each other too. And when they know that we are not watching them, it's a very crude thing that they say. If they think someone is watching, they tend to edit themselves."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that it is difficult to monitor some sites.**
  - *"It's hard to officially monitor an anonymous site."* (Military)
  - *"They have user names associated with the account, and you see that same person is posting certain things, but you still don't know who that is."* (Military)
  - *"Then it goes back to the First Amendment."* (Military)
  - *"I think they have tried to track Yik Yak and have not been able to."* (Military)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Faculty and staff participants were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix H, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some staff members indicated surprise at the gender gap in perceptions of leadership.**
  - *"I'm intrigued that the women are slightly more wary of these people, in some cases greatly. For the cadet leaders, they seem to be more wary of them."* (Faculty)
- **Some faculty members indicated that the environment in which the leadership interacts with cadets might drive the results.**
  - *"What struck me is the athletic staff. When I think about just that, the classroom environment is very formal, and I don't really see an opportunity in my classroom for that to really happen. They essentially know if you say something, that this is your job, to be a professional. If they say something that's not professional, they're going*

to be called out, whereas maybe they're down there, they're in more relaxed clothes, more relaxed environment." (Faculty)

- *"A classroom is a place where you can actually have conversations. I can start my class by asking them what's happening in the Wing. If it leads to a discussion about sexual assault, I can talk about sexual assault, what the resources are for them. We can have a conversation. It's harder to envision how they're going to have a conversation if they're in their swim trunks ready to jump in to do water survival."* (Faculty)

- **Some faculty members indicated that athletic staff could potentially have more opportunity to discuss USC issues with cadets.**
  - *"On the flip side, they probably have the most opportunity to talk about it. If you're sitting around the weight room and someone makes a joke and a coach walks by that doesn't say anything. So I'm wondering if that is part of it as well. It's more opportunities for staff to do something, and they don't do it, whereas we have very little opportunity, so when we do see it, we do something about it. So I'm wondering if that would be part of it."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members were not surprised by lower ratings given to athletic staff.**
  - *"The majority of our issues, I think, in my experience, has been through the ICs, the athletics. They have the culture, on some of the teams, an organizational culture. With the swimming team last year, had the PowerPoint about Academy women, and then they hazed other teams, multiple drinking, going downtown, partying, getting drunk."* (Military)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Faculty and staff members were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and staff members were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some staff members indicated they had biases about particular teams creating toxic cultures against women.**
  - *"Last summer when we were doing our new instructor training, there was a cadet panel. There was one particular cadet who stood out, his attitude. When I found out what team he was on, instant reaction: Of course. It's one of those guys. That's my perception of how that particular team behaves here."* (Faculty)

- *"There's one team that any time a male cadet is talking to his girlfriend, whether female cadet or nonmilitary member, a group of his teammates will walk by and chant, 'Let her know, let her know,' insinuating let her know who is boss."* (Faculty)

- *"I went to a particular sporting event that has both male and female teams, and those teams do not often compete at the same time. And it was the strangest thing I had ever seen. I'm sitting in the stands, and all of a sudden the women walk out, and they stand at a further behind position. They're at parade rest or whatever. Music starts playing, some competitive music. And the men strut out to the area with the American flag because they're about to do the national anthem. The men strut out to their music. Those particular teams have a history of discriminating against the female aspects of that particular team. For someone as a spectator, that was so clear of a bias against the women."* (Faculty)

- *"I think it's gender. And also, at the coach level, when they're calling the women girls, you know it's wrong. That needs to stop, they can't do that, that it's wrong."* (Faculty)

- *"We've seen situations where a male assistant was hired as the head coach of a major women's sport, and I don't think the reverse would ever happen. Even in terms of a gender makeup of senior leadership, it's rare to see even female head coaches of female sports. There are not a lot of good, strong female role models in sports."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that sometimes the behavior of student athletes is inappropriate, but can be used for teachable moments.**

  - *"I've got two, actually, that I'm taking through probation right now, and they have transformed. They've transformed because they come and see the permanent party or cadet leadership. And before that happened, where they were just doing whatever the heck they wanted to. Both of these guys both told me, when we came onto the team, we're superstars. The coach isn't going to tell us to do anything, except to make us happy so that we perform. My problem with that, aside from trying to figure out how do I restructure that thought process, is okay, so how far down the rabbit hole does that go?"* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that there is a difference between Division I sports teams and club teams.**

  - *"Very clear."* (Faculty)

  - *"More revenue sports and non-revenue sports."* (Faculty)

  - *"I think there's a reality when the cadets do attend one particular sports team event. They're mandated. Even if they're an athlete on another team that is traveling, they're still paying for tickets, I believe. So how can there not be disparity? I don't think it's a perception; I think it's a reality."* (Faculty)

- *"The reports I get from my cadets is the organization, the culture of those high-profile teams."* (Military)
- *"There are differences. Some athletes can get in with lower scores than somebody who does not have somebody sponsoring them. There's definitely a difference. Between football and the rest of the teams too."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that athletes often acted like they are entitled.**
  - *"There's almost an attitude of imperviousness to rules or standards."* (Faculty)
  - *"Entitlement."* (Faculty)
  - *"I would say that sense of privilege seems to start from the very first day."* (Faculty)
  - *"They all believe that they have power above us to do what they do. And when we catch them, they all believe that we have no power to put them back in their place, unless we get people chipping in on our side supporting us, saying, no, you will take that to the mat and you will make sure that they are on probation. And if they don't succeed, they're gone. It's been an additional experience that if there is a high-profile player, that there is a very big stick the Athletic Department, apparently, carries, that they can wield, even if this player has done something where they take it upon themselves, say, we'll screen them out, and that's it."* (Military)
  - *"I've heard from athletes that coaches will let them do what they need to do as long as the end justifies the means on how to get there. They don't care what the cadets or athletes do, as long as they perform in their sport. I don't know if it's physically separated or they just don't enforce standards, or both."* (Military)
  - *"That gap [between athletes and non-athletes] exists in other places also. It's not just here. We tend to think it's the gap exists here, but it exists at all places, where they think the athletes getting the privilege of picking the first classes and the athletes getting, where he can park where he wants to park, just different things that you hear, and the special tutors."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that it is easier to associate behaviors of individuals with their teams as a group.**
  - *"I think the athletes are in the spotlight more because they have more attention drawn to them because they're on a team. If it were to happen up in the Cadet Wing, I'm not saying that it would be diminished, but because it wasn't an athlete, would you see that comment? No, you wouldn't."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think that that might be the factor; person one did it here, but four other people did it in the wing, but we're going to look at the one because he's an athlete."* (Athletic)

Opinions about athletic staff and recruitment

- **Some staff members indicated that some coaches have different priorities and styles that may lead to perceptions of special treatment.**
  - *"I have my own opinions. I think when that happens, if a team has so many in a row, that coach has got to go. That's just me."* (Military)
  - *"The athletic staff, to be fair, the coaches, they're not going to get recognition or anything else if we graduate a very good military officer. But they could potentially be fired if their teams underperform consistently. To me they are competing. They don't have to be, but they're not necessarily aligned."* (Military)
  - *"I have the impression that the cadets felt that the non-ICs would protect our athletes. I won't. If somebody gets in trouble with this, they're in trouble with me too, and I will do everything I can to make sure they're disciplined on that. I will not protect an athlete because I need them on my team. If they do something stupid, then they're going to pay the consequences for that."* (Athletic)
- **When asked on the *2014 SAGR* survey whether they believed leadership made honest efforts to stop unwanted behaviors, athletic staff were rated lowest, between 62%-64%. Staff members indicated athletic staff might be rated lower because they do not interact with as many cadets and their role does not easily permit discussion of these topics.**
  - *"I'm not going to be upset by this number because, of course, 75 percent of the people that have never dealt with me or any of the other coaches, we're going to have the lowest ranking with them because we have nothing to do with their day-to-day involvement. If we knew how many athletes felt this way, I would be more curious about that."* (Athletic)
  - *"We're one of very few schools in the country, Division I, that have athletics and physical education and intramurals and club sports together. Most schools, the athletic department is separate from physical education and the other programs. And I would think it would be tough, it's easy for a coach to bring his players together and talk to them about keeping their blouses on and keeping their pants on, doing the right thing, and let's create a leadership group and let's do this and let's do that and do this. I don't think it's quite as easy for that, when you're teaching a swimming class, to give a lecture, about the stuff that we're talking about. You're asking a cadet how much does the athletic department do to help you with this, and your only association with this is maybe an intramural team and a PE class. Well, you probably haven't had that association. I would think that with every team they have."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think some of it comes from what was said before. They're not mandated to do things that we are. That's why NCOs and officers have a much higher percentage of making efforts to stop it. It's not like people in AD condone that or encourage it, per*

se, but they just don't actively show them that they're trying to stop it. It doesn't take much to say, hey, by the way, if I see any goofing off or horse playing that could be sexual in nature, I'm going to hammer you, regardless of what median you're in. That doesn't take much to say that." (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that there is a perception that recruiting standards are different for athletes.**
  - *"There's a perception of difference. I don't know if there really is."* (Faculty)
  - *"It does seem like a lot of the prep school slots go to athletes that they want, which I don't know exactly what the stats are, but that seems to be accurate, but my memory could be faulty."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated they believe recruiting practices are unbalanced; not all recruits are bad apples, but some standards are unfair.**
  - *"Some of those athletes are outstanding cadets. Some of them are really smart and good young men and women."* (Military)
  - *"I'd hate to broad brush them out. Whereas some of the high performers, they're just as bad as we're talking about. You can't just higher the standards; we would lose some good officers that way."* (Military)
  - *"Having the experience of having sat on the admissions panel and read blue chip packages and regular, not athletic packages, there's a difference."* (Military)

Culture

Faculty and staff members were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault is an important issue at the Academy.**
  - *"I wouldn't say that people weren't taking it seriously [before], but I would say that it's just highlighted more."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault is emphasized more than other areas of training, to the point of saturation.**
  - *"We beat it up. Almost to the point that when you go in and you start to talk about it, their eyes just glaze over because they've heard it so many times before."* (Faculty)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual harassment is not addressed as much as sexual assault.**
  - *"I think we address sexual assault a lot. But harassment, not so much. More gets bought up just during the briefings real quick. 'Here's the continuum, here's harassment, here's assault. All right, let's talk about assault now.' And that's the focus of brief. Because that's where the focus is put, rather than just across the entire continuum."* (Faculty)
  - *"That's one we're weak on. As per our instructions, Air Force Instructions, there's zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Yet when somebody is sexually harassed, does that mean they're gone [the offender]? No."* (Faculty)

Recommendations to emphasize the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy should find ways for cadets, especially those in lower class years, to address negative situations professionally.**
  - *"Maybe they're at an impressionable age. Maybe the freshmen are looking for acceptance, so it might show up on the survey, but they're not going to address the person that did it to them, because then are you isolating yourself from the team? That's not an answer, but how do you then breach that would probably be a question to ask. How do you go to the individual and give the individual the power, I don't know that 'power' is the right word to use, but the insight to then address it in a professional manner that doesn't isolate them from the team?"* (Athletic)
  - *"And I think some of the culture, especially as freshmen, it's basically come in here, and it seems to me that they're pretty much told, You make no decisions ever in your life for the next year. You will do what you are told. And so that creates a problem when you get in a situation where you're asked to make a decision, to say yes or no, and all you've been told, just beaten into you for weeks and weeks and months and months, that you yes, sir, yes, ma'am."* (Athletic)
  - *"I have an example of what you can call a predator is a male, an upperclassman who's in the chain of command and preying on a freshman who probably wouldn't say anything. She didn't know what to do. She went and met him in a room even, and it got to the point where it was almost crossing the line. And luckily, she had enough thought to say, 'Okay, this is bad. I don't care if I get in trouble. I'm going to leave the room.' It's important to especially remind the freshmen, all of the freshmen, that*

they don't just do something because an upperclassman tells them to do it. If they threaten you with anything like that, it's not a legitimate threat, and they should have someone that they can go talk to." (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that not only the coach and leadership must be involved with educating cadets on proper behaviors, but that seniors must lead by example.**
  - *"It's a respect issue and an education issue. And when you ask, how do we make it better, on something like that, it almost begins with the coach, when he initially sits down with his team and they're talking about team rules and regulations and they talk respect and respect each other. And then, the success of a team is usually dependent upon your seniors and the leadership, those seniors' example. You've got to be big brother. Your seniors have got to be in there. If they're witnessing something going on, they almost have to be the ones that step up."* (Athletic)
  - *"To me then it would start with your captains, who would be seniors, and then hopefully that would spread to the other seniors. But if you're a coach, you're picking your captains because they are maybe a little more mature, a little more responsible, than some of the others, and they're the ones that have to set that example. If they're not, then you picked the wrong captains."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that the culture of intolerance must be continually addressed through education.**
  - *"We're putting 4,000 kids in a giant petri dish. And a thousand of them are just out of high school. They're, for the most part, immature. They may be more mature than their peers from high school. They're still, for the most part, very immature. This is an overwhelming place. So we need a much stronger culture of intolerance of this sort of thing. We need a much stronger base of education and not a mandatory, I have to go to this stupid class thing. We have to change the culture."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think the keyword is education. That's really the only tool we have, is education, from the Superintendent to the AOCs, our coaches. All we can really do to influence culture and climate is to keep educating, to never let it fall under the table, keep it on top of the table so we keep talking about it and talk bluntly about it. Our superintendent has a way of describing acts, that we don't try to hide it, we don't try to sugarcoat it."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets must take ownership to correct such types of attitudes and behaviors.**
  - *"That's the only thing that matters."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets must be held accountable for their actions.**
  - *"They need to take accountability for themselves. Somehow we need to hold them accountable for that. These kids come from different backgrounds. They are coming here, they mess up, and I get the impression at times that at least the public thinks that we've turned these men into rapists or something. And you can't blame the Academy for every rape. We should do what we can to stop it, of course, and educate them and all that kind of stuff, but you just can't bring these kids in as 18-year-olds and suddenly, bam, they're going to pick this up. It takes a while."* (Athletic)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Faculty and staff members were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some athletic staff members indicated that it is not realistic to train cadets on topics of sexual assault in large groups.**
  - *"We cannot have a thousand people in an auditorium and talk to them about sex… It would be useless. It would have been a useless meeting. The only way we can educate our cadets is to figure out a way to get them into groups of a dozen or 15."* (Athletic)
  - *"And we had a meeting in our team. The women in that group said that was the best it's ever been because they were able to talk candidly. It was only women in that meeting. They were able to talk about those things. They're talking to athletes, but they're 25 percent of the population. So how are they going to take care of the other 75 percent of the population? They're going to put them in an auditorium and talk to them."* (Athletic)
  - *"And I think it would be nice to have more opportunities for people who don't have teams to interact with. I have zero impact, in my opinion, on the cadets, especially if you see them for eight lessons. I tell them, 'Hey, shoot me an e-mail if you ever have questions, if you ever need anything.' And you try to form that bond, but when you're teaching them how to break through the bonds or whatever, that's not the environment that you want to give that offer in. And I've never had anyone follow up on that. So where are the opportunities, then, to go out and mentor? I mean, I know that there are some, and I could do more on my part, but it would be nice if there was more of an outreach on both side."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated there is reluctance to talking about preventative measures to avoid appearance of victim blaming.**
  - *"I get the sense that we're told we're talking about prevention, but we're not actually talking about prevention, so that would be victim blaming. We talk a lot about the process for reporting, but we don't talk about how to protect yourself up front, and we don't talk about what to do when somebody has reported it. And it's out there. If we were saying people are stealing from others, we'd say, lock your doors. Don't leave your valuables out, things like that. Never talk about that with sexual assault prevention."* (Military)
  - *"We don't because it's considered victim blaming. I tell my cadets all the time, and some people might think it's unpopular or whatever, but no one ever deserves to be assaulted or have anything imposed on them like that, but there are certain scenarios and certain situations and things that you can do to mitigate that risk. Or maybe the potential is greater if you go somewhere. But we don't want to talk about that."* (Military)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets would appreciate training on relationships and opportunities to discuss these topics among themselves.**
  - *"The impression that they're getting too many don'ts and not enough dos. So they want: How do I have responsible relationships? How do I act in a way that's respectful? How do I navigate all of these things? Versus don't do this, don't do this, don't act in these ways."* (Faculty)
  - *"Small group, scenario based always seems to be more effective than large groups and someone standing up on a stage talking about XYZ. One of the really good suggestions I had heard was that element leaders, during LIFT training [Leaders In Flight Today, a team building seminar], that they get a particular amount of training during LIFT that empowers them to have these conversations. Because I think they want to; they just don't know how to structure them."* (Faculty)
  - *"What cadets have said is they want to have these discussions among themselves."* (Faculty)
- **Some faculty members recommended more options for people to talk to about these topics.**
  - *"It would be nice to distribute the responsibility for sexual assault prevention training outside of the SAPR office. Cadets are required to go to this training with someone they do not have a relationship with. So someone, as far as I know, is not interested in my life at all, where if you distributed that to small groups, but then also to people with whom they have a relationship. I assume the AOCs are pretty high on the list. They must be doing something right. I talk about this in class and it's well*

received, but I also have a rapport that I've never had with a SARC rep present." (Faculty)

- *"We are trying to figure that out. Those of us that are on the sexual assault awareness planning committee for the Dean of Faculty are trying to figure that out, but we want feedback on how it's going. Because we didn't do it terribly well last year, but we did it better this year, but we can do better yet empowering them."* (Faculty)

- *"A lot of the social sciences and humanities classes are able to talk about these conversations in class, but it's much harder to bring it up in a hard-science class."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that it would be helpful for men to be involved in groups such as the Women's Forum to promote greater awareness.**

  - *"On the women's side, what the Academy is already doing is helpful, especially with the increasing awareness piece. The Academy has these women's forums that are required for all women. But one thing I know that they're working on that would be more particularly helpful is for men to be included in that as well. Because a lot of it is an awareness issue. A lot of people don't realize that they do this, but when they talk about cadets, they talk about cadets meaning men, and they talk about female cadets. Just so people are aware that what they say could be sexist or could be considered sexist depending on the recipient. I think the Academy is making strides in that direction, but that is one thing that already they're working on that will help."* (Faculty)

- **Some faculty members indicated they would like advice on how to discuss issues in class when it is likely there are survivors among the students in the class.**

  - *"Our department invited and had a mandatory meeting for the faculty with staffer people and victim advocates. I know I have some victims in my class. How do I let them know that they don't have to be there, and how do I make them feel comfortable about not being there? So maybe if it were a more mandatory thing, that that happened on an interdepartmental level where we had the resources to come to us, we might address it and be more likely and less resistant to address it in classrooms."* (Faculty)

  - *"I got the message that I was supposed to discuss it in class, but I don't feel comfortable. I don't, a hundred percent, know who my audience is. I have this instinct that there's at least one cadet that has a victim advocate on their side. I feel like it's unfair to me to tell me to go talk to my class about this when this information is not also flowing as to who is in my class and where they are on these issues."* (Faculty)

  - *"I think this is another area where I'm all for making the class instructors feel more empowered. Because I told all my sections this week, look, I'm going to spend the*

first five minutes of every single lesson doing this (indicating). If you need to, just come in five minutes later. Don't report in, don't have to do the official reporting in late." (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that training should address how to help students who have been assaulted.**
  - *"As much as we put the emphasis on prevention, we need to talk about the other half and train as much on the other half, on how to take care of the victim and the possible perpetrator. Because that's kind of voodoo right now, and we don't talk about that. And I think if that was more in the open and more educated, for us to give to the cadets, that would bring the whole picture and make full circle for a lot of these guys."* (Military)
  - *"I think that would increase the minds of the cadets too, because they go to these briefings all the time and roll their eyes and say, well, I'm not going to assault anyone. I'm not going to rape anyone. Why am I wasting my time here on a Friday night? This is boring. This is not applicable to me. I'm not going to do this. But if they can learn things, they can apply to helps others."* (Military)
- **Some staff members recommended different approaches to engage cadets.**
  - *"When we do talk about that, it just goes in one ear and out the other. Whereas I did a training with my cadets that we talked very scientific about tonic immobility and the responses that some victims have during a sexual assault. And it was very scientific what we were talking about, and that it was hugely received. I've gotten so many positive comments from it. Because they said, I never really thought about it in that way, and now I can see things from a victim's point of view a little differently. So trying just on a very small basis, talking about the victim and the things from the victim's angle was actually very well received in my small sample."* (Military)
  - *"You're hearing AMTs and AOCs modifying the talking points, trying to get through to the cadets. Because otherwise, they just have a very specific range of topics."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy was doing better; some indicated Take Back The Night was effective.**
  - *"I think just in general, at least Air Force wide, we've been doing a better job at making people understand that sexual assault includes more than just your CSI rape, that there's more to it than that. So perhaps today's freshmen are just better educated coming into the school. But just in general, the emphasis that we've put on sexual assault in the last couple years, as an institution, from what I understand, has been geared more towards understanding the nit-noids and the definitions of things. And also just encouraging victim support and that kind of stuff that we've been educating people on has made people more comfortable with understanding the issue."* (Military)

- *"Giving us the good pulse, a lot of it leading up was, why are we doing this [referring to the Take Back The Night event]? This is so stupid. Oh, my God, you're wasting my time. Afterwards, it was, Oh, my God, I'm so glad I went. That was worth going to."* (Military)

Chapter 8:
U.S. Coast Guard Academy Cadets

Seven cadet focus group sessions were conducted at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) from March 23-25, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. There was one session each for men and women held for freshmen and sophomores, where juniors and seniors were combined. A single mixed-gender session of juniors and seniors was also held. Each session had between 3 and 11 participants. A total of 51 cadets participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the cadets the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix I, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USCGA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rate for women decreased from 2012 (noting that the incidence rate for women at USCGA was statistically lower from 2012 to 2014 and the rate for men remained unchanged), and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Cadets were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Cadets further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some cadets indicated they had <u>not</u> heard the results of the *2014 SAGR* survey.**
  - *"[Multiple No]"* (Males and Females)
  - *"No, because I don't think any of them, or at least except with one exception, were prosecuted. I would assume that there would be some UCMJ action taken if any of these were legitimate, and we only heard of one."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they would have expected the USC rate to be lower for women because they had not heard about any reports of USC.**
  - *"I'd expect the numbers to be lower, because if it was unrestricted I'd expect to hear about it, and we've only heard about one or two."* (Female)
  - *"I would just add, I think it's interesting about the fact that there's eight and that we only heard of one. That's surprising to me, because it's supposed to be an open*

dialogue, we have so many trainings about sexual assault, all these things, and to find out that eight happened in the span of a year, that we only as a Corps knew about one, and they're unrestricted, that's why that's very surprising I think." (Female)

Reasons for decrease in USC rates

- **Some cadets indicated that the CASA [Cadets Against Sexual Assault] program has helped reduce the rate of USC.**
  - *"Well, I know we definitely have a lot of trainings on it, and CASA, which is Cadets Against Sexual Assault, they definitely do a lot of trainings of people and get people involved. So our class, a lot of people are in CASA, so that probably has helped bring it down."* (Male)
  - *"Well, they have a big CASA presence, there are posters in the bathrooms and everything. And I don't know if that was there before, but they make all the numbers really available now."* (Female)
  - *"I'm in CASA and it's gotten a lot stronger in the past couple of years."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that general emphasis has contributed to reduced USC rates.**
  - *"Maybe with the changes in swab summer,[51] dramatic changes of being less strict and maybe being a little more lenient with swabs, maybe that could have affected…"* (Female)
  - *"I think there's been a general increase in putting pressure on and awareness of it. And so that's brought the numbers down."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated the USC rates have come down because the proportion of women is increasing and because men are reluctant to admit experiencing USC.[52]**
  - *"Over the recent years we just recently started getting more females. So the other Academies have already had a lot more females there. And in terms of male rates, I believe most men in general probably wouldn't admit to anything like that happening because of pride and whatnot."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that a major case might have called attention to issues of USC.**
  - *"Last year that there was a sexual assault case at the Academy, except that it turned out to be sexual contact [sexual touching]. So my point was that it doesn't give the breakdown, like the six percent, like it has various components of it. So I mean, there*

[51] Swab summer is a seven-week indoctrination course at the beginning of the freshman year.
[52] Cadets were correct in stating that in 2014 there were proportionately more women at USCGA (33.9%) than in 2012 (30.6%). However, the actual number of women decreased in 2014 (297) from that in 2012 (307), representing an overall decrease in the student population between those two years.

are differences in each of them. That might have influenced how people are more careful now with what they do and they're more cautious of maybe doing something that could lead to further trouble. So that makes them less likely to even attempt maybe." (Female)

- *"It's unfortunate that something happened, but it made people talk about it and it made company officers sit down with you and say this happened, where can we go from here, what can we do differently. And before that I've never sat down with a company officer and said what can we do to like prevent this again. So it was really just a bad thing, but they had a really productive and like good outlook on it, and I think that really like made people more aware of what was happening and what we can do to prevent it."* (Female)

Experiences of unwanted gender-related behaviors for men[53]

- **Some cadets indicated that the slight rise in USC rates for men might have resulted from the increased emphasis the Academy has placed on sexual assault.**
  - *"I think part of the rise could have been with just more men being willing to talk about it, because that's been a big emphasis lately, getting men to come forward, and men generally being more reserved."* (Male)
  - *"I think it also has to do with all the training that we are receiving. It was a pride issue, where men wouldn't come up and say that this has happened to them. But now that we have gone through that sort of training, where you know this happens to people and they feel more comfortable reporting it, so it's not a matter of we have seen an increase in it, but a matter of how many people feel comfortable reporting the issue."* (Male)
  - *"That's not really something we talk about in our trainings. Our trainings are much more focused on a woman's perspective. I know they do touch on a men's perspective, but it's usually a side point. And I think, at least my perspective is that our general community, the majority of them don't see that as unwanted sexual contact. It's seen as like 'Oh, we're buddies, we're hanging out, it's the sports team, like this is what goes on.' So I think it's the fact that we don't talk about it that much in our trainings why that might have gone up."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the percentages of USC behaviors involving locker room and horseplay behaviors among men seem plausible.**
  - *"I could definitely see it probably higher by like locker room, just like horseplay, that kind of stuff, sports, gyms."* (Male)
  - *"Because that seems like one of those situations that could be an accidental thing, someone giving someone the good game slap on the butt and it being construed*

[53]See Appendix I, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USCGA Men" for the details shared with participants

differently than the person that was doing the touching. They could have been just horsing around, but the other person was uncomfortable with it." (Male)

- *"It's actually like in the locker room I think. The guys will play around and think they're being funny. But there are just so many different levels of boundaries, that one guy's boundaries are probably completely different than the other. And I've heard stories and stuff, and I see how that might encroach on someone's comfort levels."* (Female)

- *"When I was reading these numbers I was thinking just physical sexual, like almost how females usually have it done to them, or rape or touching inappropriately. But now that I read this [the percentages involving hazing, horseplay, etc.], I wasn't even going there. But now that I read this, I'm not surprised at all. Like guys on teams, it's just like the nature of being a guy, joking around. I know it's not okay. But this doesn't surprise me at all, these things right here for guys."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that it would be difficult to put policies in place to reduce the horseplay type of behaviors among men.**

  - *"I don't think that's possible. How would you enforce that in the locker room? There's no one in there to watch what they're doing, and that's why it happens now. Yes, you can encourage men not to do it, but they're guys, so I feel like that might not do much."* (Female)

  - *"I'm just going to throw out the idea that these numbers are so small that I almost don't want to focus on it so much for fear that it would lose some of the camaraderie. I like the ability that you can go up to a guy and slap them on the back and say 'Hey, man, you did a great job out there.' And I'd rather not that suddenly have this potential to be unwanted sexual contact. That would potentially lose out on the brotherhood aspect that guys can get in the locker room and on a team. So I think we've got to be careful that the training doesn't overstep that bound."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that for the sports teams having the coaches or team captains address inappropriate behaviors might help diminish the activity.**

  - *"I think it would help a little bit because they look up to their coaches for the most part. So if the coaches were to get involved and just maybe put the idea out there, that maybe that's not appropriate to do, even if it's your teammates. Just be respectful I guess."* (Female)

  - *"Maybe telling the captain, because I think the captain knows the team players better, and he knows the better way how to suggest things to them."* (Female)

  - *"And the team captains too, that's I think a big role."* (Female)

  - *"It's hard for someone who's like lower, who's underclassmen to really step up and say something without risking being looked at funny. Just the same way it is here for a third class to approach a firstie and say to tuck your shirt in, they're not going to do*

that. But if you go to the coach and they're the ones telling those who are under them, then…" (Female)

- *"Maybe something from the athletic director would be a better format. I couldn't see myself taking seriously that kind of talk in a class-wide training event with 200 people of mixed genders."* (Male)

- *"I think that maybe if you tried to do a little bit of both [training and having coaches talk about inappropriate behaviors], because some people might not respond to it in a training or might not pay attention. But if they have a captain or coach telling them, maybe it's coming from two places so maybe I should try not to do it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that additional emphasis on inappropriate behaviors among men could be effective in reducing incidents.**

  - *"I think there just needs to be an attitude shift. I don't know if there should be more rules in place, but I think just the way captains are dealing with their teams, there's this attitude that boys will be boys and that's where this is resulting, I think. And I think if we just need to stress that boys will be boys, that's not our attitude, our attitude is to a higher standard. I think that would be the most beneficial than maybe all these rules, because people usually tend to want to break rules when they are put on you. So I think an attitude shift would help."* (Female)

  - *"Also awareness, if people know some people are actually getting offended when this stuff goes on, instead of just assuming it's a guy and girl and just between that and the sexual level."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that some of the inappropriate behaviors among men are seen as initiation rites.**

  - *"If you're looking at sports teams, I'd say that's a whole entire different story, because in terms of sports teams there's always going to be some form of hazing. The best example I can think of right now is in high school what our football team used to do is pretty much all of their freshmen and wrap them up and pour ice on them and pretty much put them all naked next to each other for a certain amount of time. It was like more of an initiation. And some people found pride in that. 'I got initiated and when ours come, we're going to make sure they're all good.' And by doing that it's a certain communication level. For some people it's more of a bonding thing, rather than a hazing."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that hazing does not occur at the Academy.**

  - *"To me it makes sense that hazing is less, because people don't really know what hazing is here. You don't haze people, that's very, very clear. So this other stuff, I really think people see that as horseplay. It might not be interpreted the same by everyone else, but they know it's not a sexual assault and they know it's not hazing because they know not to do either one. So it's that area in between."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that whether behaviors among men are viewed as inappropriate depends on each individual's perception of the intent motivating the behaviors.**
  - *"I think a lot of it has to do with the motivation behind some of it, or the way people associate it. If you associate some of those activities and you have a positive reaction or positive association with it, you don't think of it as hazing or assault or even unwanted. It's only that when it's clear that the intent was negative and you associate that intent with negative do you think of it that way."* (Male)
  - *"That implies that there's other people who were doing the same action, they just didn't consider it unwanted."* (Female)
  - *"The other thing is when they say unwanted, it still can be seen as a joke, but maybe not everyone takes it offensively. It's just a way to joke around. So maybe these reporters [on the survey] felt uncomfortable, and then that's where the reports [percentages] are coming in from."* (Male)
  - *"I think also if these happened to be on a sports team, it could depend on the sport, because different sports are more comfortable with touching. If you're a tennis player or something, you might not be used to being touched, obviously not inappropriately touched, but just touching a person as much as someone who wrestles or something like that."* (Male)

Changes noted over the years by upperclass cadets

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault prevention has remained consistent over the years they have attended the Academy.**
  - *"I would say it's been about the same."* (Male)
  - *"I would say it's been pretty consistent."* (Male)
- **Some upperclass cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault prevention has increased over the years they have attended the Academy.**
  - *"I think it's increased. It's definitely increased. I don't think we ever had a morning training, it was only the online ones that we would do and everyone did them. Now it's like people are actually talking about it. We're having like meetings around it."* (Female)
  - *"I think in the last two years we have been talking about sexual assault a lot more, so I think people are more cognizant about it. If we are talking about sexual assault, the positive thing that could happen potentially is that there is less sexual assault because people are more aware of what constitutes sexual assault so they won't go as far. The rate at which or the amount of times we talk about sexual assault or the type of trainings we have has certainly increased."* (Male)

- *"Bystander principles have definitely been talked up more. And I don't think it's only in relation to sexual contact and assault, but all offenses. They talk more about preventing and helping your shipmates from entering a point they could commit any type of offense. So like protection on both sides. Protecting someone from committing a crime or whatnot, and preventing possible victims."* (Female)

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated an incident during the past year raised awareness.**
  - *"I think day-to-day interactions, in my mind, it's not really a question anymore, it seems so automatic. There was another incident that happened where student here made a comment in passing. It was a joke to some people, but then it was taken very seriously. It was another eye opening thing. I think day-to-day it's more and more clear what the standard is and that it is being."* (Female)

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated the emphasis has also increased on use of alcohol.**
  - *"They've also been doing this huge push with being really aware of how much alcohol you're drinking, being careful with that. And I'm sure that's probably a contributing factor just because people are being so much more careful. The incident that happened occurred when the aggressor, I guess would be the right terminology, was drunk, and I think that focus on limiting your alcohol use is also part of it."* (Female)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[54]

- **Some cadets indicated that alcohol is associated with incidents of USC.**
  - *"The number one drug used to commit sexual assault is alcohol."* (Male)
  - *"I know there was a case last year where alcohol was involved. And so I think that a majority of the cases would have some kind of alcohol or other impairing agent."* (Female)
  - *"I would say yes. A lot of the facts are that a lot of sexual assaults occur when people are under the influence of alcohol. So in regards to the situation in sexual assaults and incidents that occur here at the Academy, I imagine that a lot of them have a factor of alcohol involved."* (Male)
  - *"I think that's why it doesn't happen here as much as other schools [USC], only because we can only drink two days out of the week. At other schools they're drinking four, three, I don't know. So that's why we don't have as many actually. But I think that when we do drink it's excessively, and that's when you see bad things happen."* (Female)

[54] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.

- **Some cadets indicated that use of alcohol starts downtown (off Academy grounds).**
  - *"Normally, the way I've heard, it starts out in town and then comes back to campus."* (Male)
  - *"If you're a cadet and you're 21 or older, you can't drink or have alcohol on campus, except at specific events, at which they never should allow it. So I think that as much as that rule is hated, I feel it has the potential to stop a lot of things from happening [because it's happening within the campus rather than downtown]."* (Male)
  - *"It stays off campus. Well, the drinking stops here."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they watch out for each other when they are out drinking.**
  - *"I do think that the cadets are very protective over each other. And when people go out and drink and stuff, they definitely watch out for their shipmates. And so I think it takes people away from even the option of doing anything bad. So I think that's really unique about the Academy is how protective we are over each other."* (Female)
  - *"I think really over the past year I've noticed there's been this huge response to how people drink in response to watching out for people. I think just like the talks that we have had at the Academy have influenced how it's viewed off campus, and I really noticed people are more responsive off campus at addressing how people are drinking and being more careful with them now. I think getting people to do it off campus is based on how they treat it on campus."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated consent cannot be given for sexual activities if one has consumed any alcohol.**
  - *"Once consuming alcohol, consent is invalid. Because you can't give consent if you drink. The scenario is, let's say a person consumed alcohol. If they consent after consuming alcohol, technically it's not really consent because they're under the substance, they're under the influence, so they're not thinking. The whole thing that they are telling us is that they're not thinking their rational way of thinking in their daily life, so you can't really trust it. It's a safety line."* (Male)
  - *"You can't even if you have a drop of alcohol. I really feel like when you hear about sexual assaults and stuff outside of the Academy and the normal college world, you hear a girl who is drunk and she's at a frat party and stuff like that happens. And so by them telling us that you can't accept consent from somebody who has had alcohol, then that keeps us free from any of those situations."* (Male)

- *"And it protects a victim too. In some cases if they wanted to file a report and the other person says 'Oh, well, you said yes,' but they can say they were under the influence of alcohol, then it immediately becomes there's no consent and it immediately becomes sexual assault."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy has a designated driver program, but are unsure of its effectiveness.**
  - *"They have something. I'm not too sure. We have drivers."* (Male)
  - *"All the firsties signed up to be designated drivers on certain days."* (Male)
  - *"[Is the designated driver program taken seriously?] We don't know."* (Multiple Males)

- **Some cadets indicated that many cadets do not know how to drink responsibly.**
  - *"I think that the Academy should in some way have a way to teach cadets how to drink. Most cadets probably hadn't drank before coming here, and then they come here and we're still in college, and some of them might want that real college experience which is to go get wasted and come back drunk."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like we need to stop taking this idea of trainings and putting people in a room and talking about stuff. Do more things like Take Back the Night, like an event. Or I know at Navy or maybe West Point they do this thing where it's on your 21st birthday you have this big event, it's like a birthday party that your company will throw for you. You have one drink, then you have two, and you learn how and see what it feels like. And a bunch of people are doing this with you and it's a big event dinner that they do for every cadet on their 21st birthday. It's a fun thing and they learn about alcohol. I feel it needs to be a more relaxed environment."* (Female)
  - *"A lot of the problems happen when people start turning 21. They're not allowed to drink here, so it's one of those if they haven't really done it before, they don't know their limits. So they go out and see what it is, and end up coming back and realize they went too far."* (Male)
  - *"One thing they do have is officers' socials. Sometimes for upperclassmen when they have a class meeting or something, they'll have a cocktail hour, an open bar, a cash bar, and that way you can have a responsible environment where alcohol just happens to be there, instead of going down to the bar where the purpose is to go get drunk."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicate the new night watch program has been helpful in stopping bad behaviors.**
  - *"Something that was initiated this year, in order to hopefully avoid the unwanted sexual contact or anything like that, is they initiated a night watch duty for some of us to stand. So during late nights when people come back from liberty, maybe they're*

wasted or they've drunk too much, like the night watch company is there to make sure they get back to their room and not make a ruckus around the company. I think it is a good idea. Some people disagree. I think it is a deterrent for some people. It might not be a deterrent for all people. And then the quality of the night watch varies with the people who are standing it, but I think it is a good effort." (Male)

- *"This year we started a night watch. So there's someone in each company area when people come back to help them to their rooms and just make sure that people aren't going to the wrong rooms and stuff. So I think that might help."* (Female)

Discussion of perceived sexual harassment rates[55]

- **Some upperclass cadets indicated that as they move up in class years they become more respectful of each other.**
  - *"I've definitely noticed, even just from freshman year to junior year, like the cadets here get more and more respectful towards one another. Like we are expecting or getting prepared to become officers, so people have a more formal way of interacting and they are more careful with what they say."* (Female)
  - *"I think starting over swab summer, the guys here start to look after you, and I don't know if you guys feel that, almost like we're sisters. I feel like if I went out with my guy friends here, I would feel like they're protecting me from guys out there. So I just think that it's that more of a family atmosphere here that I feel like they're nicer, they're like my brothers."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that training through CASA might have contributed to the decrease in sexual harassment rates for women.**
  - *"Yes, I mean, it could."* (Female)

Discussion of sexist behavior rates[56]

- **Some cadets indicated that additional training could address gender relations and the relationship between sexual assault and other types of behaviors.**
  - *"I think a big part of sexual assault problems is gender relations, especially at a military academy where there's a much smaller population of women. So I think maybe just tying that in to maybe our trainings, like this focus group. Just that discussion of how both genders are viewed at the Academy and how they're treated differently and that kind of relationship."* (Female)

[55] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 30% of women perceived sexual harassment (10 percentage points lower than 2012) and 11% of men perceived sexual harassment (unchanged from 2012).
[56] In the *2014 SAGR* survey, 78% of women perceived experiencing sexist behavior (unchanged from 2012) and 38% of men perceived experiencing sexist behavior (unchanged from 2012).

- *"I know the word micro-aggressions has been thrown around a lot, so it's like very small, minor things that happen on a daily basis that nobody thinks of and you're not going to report because they're not really reportable. But they actually do lead to a wider culture of disrespect, and that leads to sexual harassment, because nobody really thinks of them as a problem."* (Female)

- *"I don't know how everyone else feels, but personally with trainings, they always direct it as towards the female as the victim. That actually really bothers me, because I don't think that's fair to distinguish, if it is a widespread problem, as we've seen by the graphs, both men and female experience sexual aggression. I think the language should be generalized. I know the intent is there. Even if you look at the policies, like the civil rights policy, as it stands currently it says women may be victims. Why may we and may not men?"* (Female)

Reporting

Cadets were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix I, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Cadets discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Cadets were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more cadets to come forward to report if they believed their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with cadets providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some cadets indicated they were aware that eight reports of sexual assault had been filed in the past year.**

  - *"So I think that was something that shocked me when I first saw these numbers. The fact that it was eight. I saw that earlier this year. The fact that it was that eight reports happened. And while reports don't always mean something happened, it means that someone feels victimized. And the fact that there's eight, maybe thirteen reports where someone is feeling victimized."* (Female)

  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Female and Male)

  - *"Only the restricted one."* (Female)

  - *"There's the restricted."* (Male)

- **Other cadets were not surprised they had not heard about the eight reports of USC.**

  - *"No."* (Multiple Males and Females)

- *"I think there are hundreds of cases that go through Chase Hall. Not specifically sexual assault, but just with lots of different types of stuff. And there are lots of those cases that we don't hear about. So to me, us not knowing about those eight cases is sort of a sign the system is working. You aren't supposed to know that my roommate had a PIO the other day, right? He didn't, but that's just an example, right. You know, that's not how the system works. There is some sense of privacy in this. So it makes sense to me that we wouldn't know about these eight."* (Male)

- *"Yeah. One really big one last year. But other than that, I haven't heard anything else really."* (Female)

- *"No, because I don't think any of them, or at least except with one exception, were like prosecuted."* (Male)

- *"It shocked me when I first saw these numbers, the fact that it was eight. And while reports don't always mean something happened, it means that someone feels victimized. And the fact is the Corps never addressed that, kind of makes me like whoa."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated the numbers of reports of USC are low because cadets do not want to call attention to themselves and cause any negative repercussions on their careers.**

  - *"I'd say that doesn't really surprise me. I feel a lot of people don't want to report anything because it looks bad for them and their cadet career could be in jeopardy and all that stuff."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the number of official reports was higher than expected.**

  - *"I think it depends what kind of context you put it in. I would expect it to be lower if I didn't see the unwanted sexual contact rates, just from my opinion and perception of the Academy. However, after seeing the unwanted sexual contact rates, you would hope that it would be higher than the six percent of women are experiencing unwanted sexual contact. There are not enough reports to sustain that number."* (Male)

  - *"The thing I tend to think about with this is these are formal reports, whereas perhaps someone can experience unwanted sexual contact in the moment, and they might just turn around and tell that person that did it to screw off or whatever and but not make a formal report. So they still experienced that, but they didn't go down to the office and actually file a report."* (Male)

  - *"That's thirteen, and there are a thousand of us. That's almost a full percent."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the number of reports of sexual harassment was lower than expected.**
  - *"I feel like the sexual harassment complaints are really low."* (Female)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy has made clear the distinction between restricted and unrestricted reports.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Multiple Males and Females)
  - *"They've thoroughly gone over that."* (Male)
  - *"We've probably had three or four trainings clarifying the difference between those two."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they support two different types of reporting.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)
- **Some cadets correctly identified as erroneous the belief that restricted reports could be made to company commanders.**
  - *"[Multiple affirmative responses]"* (Male)
  - *"The company officer can't take a report."* (Male)
  - *"The company officer is a mandated reporter."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they trust company commanders so would assume restricted reports could be made to company commanders.**
  - *"Because it's like a parental figure."* (Male)
  - *"It's who's available."* (Male)
  - *"And like the company officer is someone that you already know. It's someone that's in a high position, but they might understand. But unlike the SARC, most of us have only seen or talked to the SARC in training, so we don't really know them. And we all know our company officers a little bit better."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that some company chiefs are victims' advocates and authorized to take a restricted report.**
  - *"Yeah."* (Male)
  - *"I think they can take an unrestricted report."* (Male)

- *"It's like certain chiefs or something like that."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated it would be beneficial to clarify which Academy personnel can take a restricted report.**
  - *"I'd say it depends on the company, because I know some company officers and some company chiefs, they actually have the training."* (Male)
  - *"All the chiefs do."* (Male)
  - *"A vast majority of the chiefs, I should say that. Some company officers, I don't know that for a fact that they do, but some company officers do."* (Male)
  - *"No, company officers do."* (Male)
  - *"I think that's the problem. You can't put a generalized label saying all chiefs."* (Male)
  - *"I think that would change it if you could always say, no matter who's here, you could always say all chiefs could take restricted reports or you could say all officers or all civilian teachers also have this training, they are open. Because you can't just have this kind of piecemeal. And I understand it's extra work, but I feel like most people want to be able to have that one click in their head. They don't want to have that list of people. They want to say all my company chiefs can do it, any company chiefs."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that other personnel should be authorized to take restricted reports.**
  - *"I think that the duty section should be able to take restricted reports. Because as of right now they have to take an unrestricted report."* (Female)
  - *"I think a lot of people feel comfortable going to their chiefs."* (Male)
  - *"I think if all the coaches had victim advocate training that would be another good one. Because considering most of us are all athletes in some way and have a coach or a sponsor like that here at the Academy. So every single one of the athletic department and coaches, whether they work here or not, if they have that kind of training, I think that would probably be a big step."* (Male)
  - *"Another Academy recently had a policy change where all cadets are not mandated [reporters]. So all of your peers, you can tell them, and they don't have to report it. And they've had a lot of discussions in their units. And they've all said that it's been more beneficial because it gives people the chance to go to who they want to go to. If it's sexual harassment it can be solved at lower levels and they're not risking going up and just getting on this path of an unrestricted report that they can't stop."* (Female)

- *"I think coaches would be helpful because a lot of people, they feel really close to their coaches. And I think that that would be nice if you could go to them and feel comfortable talking to them about it. And then they also have that good balance between them, they're at the Academy, but they're not a professional [military] person. So it's more like a personal thing, you could feel comfortable talking with them."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated it would be beneficial to clarify the requirement for fellow cadets to report something they hear.**
  - *"They are [required to report]."* (Male)
  - *"If they are not a CASA? If they are not a CASA member, they are by law required to report it?"* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that failure to report incidents encourages further offenses.**
  - *"I think that seems in line with a lot of what you hear about it just being the same person that creates the problem in the first place."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like sometimes that if there's someone who is just a touchy person and there's no statement made that [sexual] contact isn't wanted, then there can be repeated incidents without the person ever knowing that the victim felt that they were being inappropriately touched."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated the need for privacy in unrestricted reporting.**
  - *"Yes, definitely."* (Female)
  - *"They just want to talk to someone and they don't want it to be reported. They don't want to do an unrestricted report. They wouldn't mind maybe reporting it as restricted and not letting the information out, because consequently they want that other person to be punished. They're not worried about reporting it to someone who can give an unrestricted report, they're worried about reporting it to a friend."* (Female)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some cadets indicated that people would be more willing to report perceived severe offenses than offenses perceived as less severe.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Males)
  - *"The reason for that is because, as the question was, it's an unwanted sexual contact or like touching or something like that. Whereas the connotation with sexual assault is it's more of like, even though that is the definition, people's idea of it is more a worse offense. So the amount of people that actually go and report it have to have more than just the less intense end of the spectrum."* (Male)

- *"The people who would report something like that, it goes beyond that locker room level of just somebody being like 'All right, cut it out,' or 'All right, we've got to deal with this somehow.' It's seen as not acceptable by the general populace. It's 'All right, that was way beyond the limits so go and report that.' They would definitely have the support of everybody. And knowing that they had the support, they wouldn't feel any kind of remorse or regret to report."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that a fear of repeated victimization would motivate someone to report.**
  - *"They're afraid it's going to happen again and they don't want it to happen again."* (Female)
  - *"If it's ongoing [that is, repeating the unwanted acts]."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might report in order to have access to healthcare and support services.**
  - *"They might have developed some mental problems after it, and to get help."* (Female)
  - *"Sometimes talking about something with someone that knows."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that someone might report to protect fellow cadets in the future.**
  - *"To make the Corps safer."* (Male)
  - *"If they're afraid it's going to happen to other people."* (Male)
  - *"Maybe if it happened to them once it may happen to someone else too."* (Female)
  - *"They want that person out of the Coast Guard. You don't want that person harming other people. Like if they're going to do that to you, what's to stop them from doing it to someone else?"* (Male)
  - *"And along with that, I think the more serious offenses, when they do want to report, the reason to do that is so that it doesn't happen again. So if it's not accepted in the Corps, then they want to stop it there, they don't want to let it happen to another person."* (Male)
  - *"The reason why you do an unrestricted report at the Academy is because you want the other person to be separated from the other, you want action taken against the other person. And honestly, that's probably like a better option for a lot of people."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that incidents are reported to prevent long-term career fallout should an offender rise to a position of power.**
  - *"It's important, especially when you get out in the fleet, if that person is going to be an officer that's going to create a really bad environment. So that could be a really good motive for coming forward."* (Female)

How the Academy can encourage reporting

- **Some cadets indicated training more personnel to take a report of sexual assault would increase the comfort level in coming forward.**
  - *"I think personal preference also goes into if you were going to make a report, who you'd report to. We all feel closer to different people here on base, civilian and officer alike. And I think that one thing that kind of inhibits maybe some of that is that people don't feel close to people who have the training that can take a restricted report or something like that. If you mention it to someone who doesn't have the training, they have to report it, that's part of their job. But, say there's only CASA, victim advocates, and the chiefs, et cetera in there, and maybe you're not close with any of them so you don't want to open up about it. So maybe if every, if like every employee gets that same training or has that victim advocacy. I know it's far out there, but it's an idea."* (Male)
  - *"There's not enough, maybe there are not enough options for the person who would want to report. And the person they would feel comfortable with doesn't have the training."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that a change in the culture is needed to help people take sexual assault and sexual harassment more seriously.**
  - *"They're always complaining about sexual assault trainings or harassment trainings, they're making jokes about it or 'Be careful, that's sexual assault, you punched me in the arm.' If more people heard about some things, they'd say 'Hey, don't joke about that and don't make fun of that situation,' and made people feel more comfortable, then when it came out, they wouldn't get such a negative response from other kids."* (Female)
- **Some cadets recommended having all company chiefs certified as victims' advocates.**
  - *"I think it would be helpful if all of the company chiefs were victim advocates, because right now most of them are, but I know some of them still aren't. And I'd be more comfortable going to a chief than my company officer."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that clarification of punishments could be better.**
  - *"I think another problem is that the consequences of harassment are like the same as assault. So I think that's why people are afraid. Because it would be cool if the*

consequence would be like a warning, 'Cut it out, you're on the radar now.' But the consequence would be like a mast [judicial punishment] class one. So I think that's a reason why people don't necessarily want to come forward is because they know it's bad behavior, but they don't necessarily want to get them that in trouble. So that's why no one really wants to say anything." (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that more discussion on USC by company leadership would encourage reporting.**
  - *"Well, I feel like the SARC does a pretty good job and the trainings are pretty good, and CASA has a good involvement. But I feel like if our company commanders and chiefs could talk about it a little more, I feel like that could help. Just talk about it in general."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated confidence in the CASA program leading to comfort in reporting.**
  - *"I think that's why CASA is so good, because they're your [peers]. Yes, they're your friends and peers, and you know that they have confidentiality on it, so you can tell them what happened and stuff and details, and they can do the restricted report if you wanted to, or you can go unrestricted."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that they do not believe that further efforts would increase reporting.**
  - *"I don't think so. They tell us restricted versus unrestricted. I think that's as far as they can really go."* (Female)
  - *"I personally don't think there's much that the Academy can do because when it comes down to it, it's all personal preference and what you think. To the extent what may be sexual assault to one person is not going to be the same to somebody else, somebody else might have a higher tolerance or just be super nice and not want to get the other person in trouble. So I personally don't think that there's too much that the Academy can do, other than just let people know and have opportunities to have a discussion."* (Male)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:

1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].

2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a cadet would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated both professional and social retaliation against someone who reported sexual assault could occur at the Academy, but it would be primarily ostracism.**
  - *"[Multiple affirmative responses]"* (Multiple Males and Females)
  - *"I would say more socially."* (Female)
  - *"I think our bigger problem here is the second one, the social one, the ostracization. And I think as a legal definition that's very hard to hold someone to. We're college age, we're 18 to 21 years old here. And you're going to say 'Oh, you didn't talk to her, you cut her out of your social life.' That's not going to go anywhere in a criminal investigation. So it's like it's, one, very hard to enforce. And two, you can't force someone to have a conversation with someone. So I think that that's the problem that we have in that that's not really an easy thing to combat."* (Male)
  - *"I think in theory those are really great definitions, but it's forgotten too that this is a really unique place in the fact that we're college age, we're college students, yeah, we're part of the military. This is a big issue across the nation right now. I think that puts people worried with the fact that no matter what's going to happen, there's going to be talk of it. And I don't know how to combat that. But the fact is, that no matter what, talk is going to happen. And I think by that ostracization I think people worry that talk is going to be ostracizing."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that social retaliation can be subtle.**
  - *"I think socially things might change, people might just pity you more, and you might not want that pity. So even people trying to be overly sympathetic, that could have just as bad of an impact. It just changes the way people see you if they knows this news about you, even if they're not intending to be mean, they just might look at you differently."* (Female)
  - *"I think that it will happen in smaller groups. Like you'll talk about the report in a negative connotation in a small group that doesn't include the reporter, and then when you see the reporter you'll put on a smile and you'll act nice enough. But that's how I would imagine it manifesting."* (Female)
  - *"I think people would just keep distance. So it wouldn't be like a negative response, but it would be like a neutral one where then they felt excluded, even though the purpose wasn't to retaliate against them."* (Male)
  - *"The stuff that can't really be prevented, can you prevent one of your friends from not talking to you, or maybe someone that you're not close with that you will occasionally say hi to not saying hi to you. Like the stuff that you can't affect, that small day-to-day stuff I can see changing and that being considered retaliation, but that's not really things you can take action for."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that when sexual assault is reported, people often take sides of the most-liked party.**
  - *"Yes [people take sides]."* (Multiple Males)
  - *"It wasn't a sexual assault case, but it was an assault case that occurred, and people were actually taking the side of the person who committed the offense because he was well liked. They were actually hating against the girl who was assaulted because of the punishment that was given. So I could see that happening with sexual assault."* (Female)
  - *"I think in the press that the school goes through when things like this happen, obviously because people are going to get kicked out if a sexual assault is committed, which makes complete sense. But because of that, then we have people who are friends who resent the fact that maybe their friends are getting kicked out."* (Female)
  - *"Just because if it's like within a friend group and something happens, then it's kind of like I don't know if this person would be okay with me hanging out with this person, so they're kind of like who should I go with."* (Male)
  - *"Everyone has their friend groups here. A lot of times, especially in the case of a sexual assault, the person isn't the person you'd expect, it's a quote, unquote good person. So when people hear that so and so committed a sexual assault, they're going to try to back that person up, 'Oh, that person would never do that.' That's how I see it happening."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that lack of information causes rumors to spread about someone who reported sexual assault.**
  - *"Before masts [judicial punishment] and during the investigations everything has to be kept completely secret and you're not allowed to talk about it. I think that just fosters rumors and lies and misinterpretations of what's actually happening. And then once that's out you can't really pull it back. And people will learn the truth eventually, but how much of the truth will they learn and how much will they accept."* (Female)
  - *"Sometimes I feel like reporting almost turns into a social event because of the masts. Usually everyone will attend them just to find out what happened, but sometimes people just want to hear gossip almost."* (Female)
  - *"I think it largely depends on how people view the severity of the case too. Like if the majority of the Corps of cadets or whoever the group is sees it as something relatively insignificant, then they're more likely to be disrespectful or show some sort of dislike towards the reporter, as opposed to if it's something that is viewed by the public or by the people that know that it's gone on. Or something that's really serious and really severe, then I think the people are more likely to back off from the person that reported it because they see what a big case it is."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that professional retaliation is unlikely to happen, but gave hypothetical examples of the form it might take.**
  - *"No." [They do not see that happening]* (Multiple Males)
  - *"Well, here it might be like if it were an upperclass taking that kind of action against us, they might dock points in our CER [Cadet Evaluation Report] or something like that, or make us do more things. They could just give us tons of division work or something that is not necessary."* (Male)
  - *"Because we already do a lot of things and there's a lot of [Academy] rules on us, they could just really get on you, and while they're not holding other people to the same standard, they're just making you do more than you should just because they don't like you for whatever you did."* (Male)
  - *"They could get a bad watch. Like if there's a formal or something and you happen to get put on as an OD [Officer of the Day], you're the officer of the day for the company, it's a bad watch, and they could take it as they were given that because of the prior situation, even if it is just a simple this is the way the schedule worked out."* (Male)
  - *"Like if you're such a rule follower, then why aren't you following the rules now. They could let the locker room stuff slide as well as you can let a room standard slide. But if they're going to uphold that standard in the locker room, then, well, uphold them in the barracks. So then that could be like a retaliation point."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated possible biases of leadership could be a form of retaliation.**
  - *"I think it usually goes the other way, like the victim is going to have more support I think from command than the accused, and I think ninety percent of the time that's a great thing. But then the other ten percent of the time that could be wrong, as someone was saying, you could be falsely accused. And oftentimes they're kind of written off and really not supported by command."* (Female)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated situations where actions might be viewed as retaliatory when in fact someone was trying to be helpful.**
  - *"At least the company chiefs, they're not going to do something in spite of a person, they're going to do what they think is best. Even though they might think it's best, the person may take it the wrong way. But in general I don't think anybody is really like out to get somebody for that, it may just be perceived the wrong way."* (Male)
  - *"Then too, moving a person also involves whoever they've moved in with. So some random person in another company could feel like they're somehow being punished, I guess, because they have to move out of their old room with their roommate to move in with this new person. And it involves more than just the victims at that point."* (Male)
  - *"I know if you report something you get moved out of the company, and it's the victim that gets moved out of the company, so that can be perceived as you're being separated from your friends, you're being separated from like your small company community. So, although it's intended to protect the victim, it can also be perceived as separation."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that including the people affected by the decision could preclude potential negative reactions.**
  - *"I would think before you go and make the final decision, people would be like 'Hey, is this something that you're comfortable going and having happen?' Like they should be talking to them and the people that they're moving in with and setting up, making sure everyone is all right with it before it happens."* (Male)
  - *"I think it also depends on the severity of the case. Like really bad ones you'd have to go to more large scale solutions."* (Male)

Ostracism as retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated of the two kinds of retaliation, professional and ostracism, ostracism is more likely.**
  - *"Ostracizing."* (Multiple Males)

  - *"Just not talking to them, just holding higher standards for them and not other people. More cautious around them."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated ostracism is related to social standing at the Academy.**
  - *"I think the others would be social politics. You know who your friends are, and if they stand by you, they're your friends, and if they don't, they're not. And that's, for lack of a better term, that's high school politics. Or office politics, whatever you want to call it. I think it would depend on where they stand socially, how antisocial they are, how many friends they think they have, whether they belong to a team, whether they don't, whether they're in a club, whether they're not."* (Male)
  - *"Social death, like social death, where you're that social outcast. And I think a lot of that has to do with the impression that the Corps has of the parties involved too. I think that might also change the way people want to report, or if they feel like they're not going to be believed because they're not popular or the other person is more popular than them."* (Male)
  - *"I would agree with that. And I also think it has to do with rumors that occur, people who speculate what happened, not having the full facts and not wanting to go look for the full facts. Like okay, this is what happened and they summarize the facts or they summarize the basic idea of it and it's not true, and then they develop this opinion of somebody and then they start to ostracize them or even a form of retaliation."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated social retaliation can have effects on cadet performance.**
  - *"I'd say mostly social, but if you socially ostracize someone, then they're probably not going to do well in their other fields."* (Male)

Awareness of prohibitions against retaliation

- **Cadets indicated mixed awareness of specific regulations prohibiting retaliation against someone who reported sexual assault.**
  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Males)
  - *"No."* (Multiple Females)
  - *"I don't know. Common sense."* (Female)
  - *"Well, I definitely didn't know that like it was illegal to not retaliate. I mean obviously I know it's not a good thing to do, but I didn't know there was actually the legal side of it. So I think if that was included in the sexual assault trainings, I think that would be beneficial, because that definitely opened my eyes.'"* (Female)
  - *"I didn't know it was specifically prohibited, like just outlined completely. Of course you're not going to ostracize somebody because they experienced something traumatic. But I think that this campus does a better job than most civilian colleges*

would do when it comes to social behavior like that, just because everyone here is pretty close knit. But there's always that possibility of it happening. I just didn't know it was specifically outlined." (Female)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated a variety of personnel someone might approach if they were to experience retaliation for reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"I think you would just talk to your company officer or chief. They'd go talk to the other person about it."* (Male)
  - *"You could probably go straight to your company chief or company officer and talk to them, 'I feel I'm being retaliated against' and take it straight to them. I think that would be most people's first choice anyway. Even if it wasn't their direct chain of command that was doing it, they'd probably go straight to their chief or company officer first."* (Male)
  - *"I think they'd just go to peer counselors, but not really anyone else."* (Female)
  - *"Probably most likely the SARC. Coaches too."* (Female)
  - *"Counselors."* (Female)
  - *"Coaches."* (Female)
  - *"Chaplains."* (Female)
  - *"I like the whole division, so each person has a varsity third class and fourth class. So I'd definitely go to my firstie, because I know them putting themselves out there to help me, I could always go to them."* (Female)
  - *"On the flip side, I probably wouldn't go to my division. So I think it just depends on how well established you are with the people around you. If you're in a division of all boys, for example, you're just a little bit on the outside of that whole. So I guess it just depends on who you're around most of the time and how much you trust them."* (Female)

Leadership awareness of retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated their chiefs, company officers, and/or cadet leaders are aware of social relationships among cadets and could identify behaviors that would be retaliation for reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"I think that they're more aware than we think they are of the social relationships between people, just based on conversations that I've had with some of them and things I've seen them do. So I think they might not be part of it, but they would easily notice it."* (Female)

- *"I remember in the assault case that someone mentioned earlier they mentioned 'Hey, yes, there's an assault case in this company, we don't know what's happened yet so please don't talk about it, just don't spread rumors, just please respect the people involved and just don't talk about it.'"* (Male)

- *"It's very hard to take a meaningful action against ostracization. So I think as the company officer or company chief you can have the conversation with someone and say 'I've noticed that behavior,' but as far as actual action, I don't really see that as being a possibility."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that leadership would step in if they witnessed retaliation.**

  - *"I feel like they would definitely pull us all together. We have different company officer time or company chief time in the morning, like in military training period we'll sit down and talk about relevant things or upcoming things. I feel they would definitely sit us down and be like 'Listen, this is what's going down, this is what's happening, you need to knock it off.' They would definitely address it."* (Male)

  - *"Recently there were two individuals who had an issue with each other and they had to be separated. There were a lot of rumors going around the Corps about what actually happened. And one of them was moved to my company, and our company chief had one of those morning trainings with my class and said it doesn't matter what the rumors are, it happened, you need to give this person a fresh start and not bring that bias in."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated how leadership would become aware that retaliation was occurring.**

  - *"I think they'd probably have to be told by someone else."* (Male)

  - *"I think they would definitely be aware. People, like talk, hearsay and, you know. So yeah, I think upperclass will hear and then they'll pass it to chiefs or officers, and we'll conduct maybe a little stand-down meeting and they'll be just like we'll address this issue and try to fix it."* (Male)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some cadets indicated there is not much the Academy could do better in terms of preventing people from engaging in social retaliation.**

  - *"You can't control people's social inclinations that way. We have friendships here. You know who you like and who you don't like. I just think that is always going to happen."* (Male)

  - *"I would also say, the type of environment we're in, we're in the military, they try to make everyone the same, so if you get a chance to have your own personality, you're going to take it. So I don't think that's possible, in all honesty."* (Male)

- *"I'm going to go ahead and say no [not much more the Academy can do]."* (Male)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, staff members were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among cadets and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Cadets were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some cadets indicated that social media sites in general would not likely play a role in retaliation for reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"Not specific to sexual assault I don't think."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think it would be a problem here because I don't think anyone is dumb enough to do that."* (Female)
  - *"I feel cadets are careful about what they post. So I feel the retaliation would be more just gossiping."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that only anonymous social media sites would be used for retaliation for reporting sexual assault.**
  - *"We all know what retaliation is. You can get in trouble for that and putting it all on social media easily attaches your name to it. So I think that's generally avoided."* (Male)
  - *"But at the same time, for something like Facebook, so many people use it, even parents and co-workers, so I don't think Facebook would be the source if I was going to post something about someone. I wouldn't go on Facebook. It would probably be a Yik Yak or Twitter or something."* (Female)
  - *"Everything at the Academy, that's easily documented if you post something, so I don't think someone would do that just because they'd know they can just take a screenshot of it."* (Female)
  - *"A lot of that has to do with the fact that maybe Facebook or Twitter, stuff like that isn't necessarily anonymous. So if you post something like that, that's either blatantly attacking someone or just blatantly like I don't like this person in general, that could automatically get traced back to you. And all of a sudden you have a group of people may be coming and asking you questions or talking about it, or someone higher up who saw it or something along those lines. So I don't think necessarily those avenues at least at the Academy are really sources for any form of retaliation, just because of how visible everything is on it."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that if something were posted on social media against a victim, the Corps would be supportive of the survivor.**
  - *"I think if someone was to post something on social media that was against the victim for reporting, I think that the Corps would be immediately behind the victim and then in turn the aggressor would be ostracized. I like to think that as a Corps of cadets we get behind people."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the following sites are used to communicate with each other.**
  - *"Twitter."* (Female)
  - *"Facebook."* (Female)
  - *"Snapchat."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the following sites can contain negative comments about the Academy or cadets.**
  - *"PFR. Parade Field Rejects."* (Female)
  - *"[Parade Field Rejects] it's like the Coast Guard Academy Chive [a photo-entertainment website] where they put up photos or comments saying something negative about what happened or complaining about something or someone. And anybody can see it, obviously. There are officers from all over the Coast Guard that know about PFR and ask questions if they come visit. 'Oh, I saw this about so and so on PFR.' And I don't go on it, it's completely stupid."* (Female)

Use of Yik Yak[57]

- **Some cadets indicated that Yik Yak specifically has played a role in retaliation.**
  - *"We definitely had a big problem earlier in the year with Yik Yak, an anonymous chat thing. People could just like put something out there, and everyone else that used the app in the surrounding area could see what it was. And there was a lot of anonymous hate done on that app. And it became a big problem and the senior leadership got involved with it."* (Male)
  - *"I think that's one of the things that's more likely to happen, just because it's so much easier for people to type something in their own room and not say anything to someone's face. It's just a lot easier to disconnect and just say whatever."* (Female)

[57] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

- *"I would say yes [used in retaliation]. There's a social media thing called Yik Yak, and it was anonymous. The Academy has ways of finding out who posted stuff. But the general idea of Yik Yak is that you post things up for people to see and it's anonymous. And then some of those things I think were actually used in a hurtful manner, and that was addressed earlier this year. So I do think that is an issue."* (Male)

- *"Well, it's anonymous, and it's the general area that you're in. You can just post things anonymously. And it's just fast and it's usually negative things. The thing about that is it's not just retaliation, it's just an open invitation for people to bash anybody and anything. And that's what got out of hand. So it got really badly out of hand, and that's when someone must have brought it up to a senior officer. And then we had a whole stand-down because they printed out all the things written and it got presented to the command. And they were not having it, which is the right thing. And all the companies had to have a stand-down."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that there are negative posts on Yik Yak about a variety of topics, not just sexual assault.**

  - *"My one association with Yik Yak was when we were on it during say a Corps-wide or where someone is speaking and everyone is like 'Wow, this speaker really sucks,' and you realize like it's a cadet maybe speaking. And they get on Yik Yak later and they realize everyone is posting how bad they were and things like that."* (Male)

  - *"And most of that stuff on there [Yik Yak] wasn't sexual either. There was an app on like iPhones [Yik Yak], it was pretty much like anonymous Twitter. It was limited to how much you could say and it was like to your general [geographical] area. So we were grouped in with Conn College for our general area. So we could see posts that they had posted and they could also see posts that we had posted. And you'd comment on them. And there were a couple times we had Corps-wides, and people would be commenting on different people that were talking in Corps-wides. But none of it was ever sexual things."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that Yik Yak posts can be tracked by the Academy.**

  - *"We had this whole Yik Yak scandal where people were posting bad things, and then IT would just use the IP address or whatever to find out. So we've all been exposed to people who have gotten in trouble because of social media."* (Female)

  - *"With Yik Yak earlier in the year, when it came out people were like 'Oh, social media, it's not anonymous.' Immediately people were leery of it. So I just was saying we pretty much know the dangers."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that some posts on Yik Yak may been perceived as a form of harassment.**
  - *"People can post, especially after Corps-wides, people will post something funny about it, which can be misconstrued as harassment I guess you could say."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy has addressed responsible use of sites such as Yik Yak.**
  - *"It's just stuff like be responsible. Nothing is truly anonymous, you could follow the address and figure out who this is. And if you say anything with respect to your shipmates, like have a discussion, 'What do you guys think is good or bad about this?'"* (Female)
  - *"Kind of reminding us why we're here, that we are professionals and we are going to be Coast Guard officers and we shouldn't be doing such ignorant things."* (Female)
  - *"And I really like the way Air Force did it, because there's 4,000 students there, so having it Corps-wide is not really feasible to get a message across. So they split them up into companies, and upperclass talked to each class individually within that company, so there was about like 40 people in the room. And they just really explained, specific to Yik Yak, anyone can see it."* (Female)
  - *"I know at the start of the year we had the whole problem with Yik Yak this year, and there were a lot of people that were getting called out for stuff and all that. And the Academy shut it down pretty quickly, because within a week it was like you're being stupid if you think this is truly anonymous, stop it."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that there is self-policing.**
  - *"Sometimes if you would post something about someone specifically, someone would respond to it and say 'Hey, that's not cool, or don't use names,' or something along those lines."* (Male)

Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated that freshmen are not allowed to use social media.**
  - *"Not at all. We're not allowed [to carry devices or have accounts such as Facebook]."* (Male)
  - *"And freshman at the Academy don't even have social media, it's not allowed for freshmen."* (Male)
  - *"Freshmen don't have access to Facebook for most of this year, so they can't use it."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that freshmen can use social media while on leave.**
  - *"We can use it on leave."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that social media use is regulated even after graduation due to security concerns.**
  - *"And we understand that even once we graduate what we put on social media is regulated. We can't post 'Oh, we're in so and so, but in three days we'll be in so and so,' because then they'll find out, then they'll know where our cutters are. It's operational. So we, for lack of a better term, growing up through the Academy, know that our social media isn't fully ours to operate the way we want to."* (Male)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some cadets indicated they think sites are monitored.**
  - *"They got Yik Yak'd too, and they could see it."* (Male)
  - *"I feel like some cadets went and said something to somebody, then it worked its way up, and then they went and checked it out and saw what was going on."* (Male)
  - *"In terms of whether or not the Academy is vocal about it, I don't think they really say very much about it. They just stay back and monitor it. And then if it becomes a widespread problem, that's when they start to talk about it. That's when you hear from the upper levels."* (Female)
  - *"All the Corps had it. The command staff had it also, the cadet command. And they saw it and they were the ones that were like this isn't acceptable, especially when Conn College can see it. This is not what we want the general public to see as an Academy, so we have to hold ourselves to a higher standard."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy has taken action when posts were too specific.**
  - *"Some posts became too specific, people's names were being used, and that's when they got involved."* (Male)
  - *"I've seen a situation where something that was completely meant one way and then got posted on Facebook and then word got back around to a company officer or someone in a higher position, who interpreted it in another way. There were consequences to some of the actions that were posted on Facebook, on these social media sites. So I think it's definitely not the higher-ups are patrolling the social sphere, it's more of word gets around and then they hear about it, and then once they do the investigations or they do a little more digging into it, then they find things of this nature."* (Male)

- *"I think it's pretty common knowledge that if you were to do something inappropriate on social media, it's public, and so I would not put it past command to get you in trouble for that or whatever or punish someone."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that in certain cases sites should be monitored, but overall privacy should be respected.**
  - *"Only if it has a toll on a certain person, only if it targets a specific group or people or person or company. But other than that, I think the Academy should respect everyone's privacy. They should only direct it if it's negative towards a certain person or something like that."* (Male)
  - *"Yes, if it's targeted someone should, they should definitely take a toll on that because whoever posts on social media is for everyone to see, so that just gives everything a negative reputation and a negative view on everything."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that when the Academy became stricter regarding social media, posts also became more negative.**
  - *"I think what happened, what my feeling toward it was that when we were freshmen it was more just like humor. And then the year that followed there was a big crackdown, it seemed, on a lot of stuff in general. The rules became a lot stricter. And morale just went down and people took that out anonymously on Yik Yak and it became a lot more profane."* (Female)

Suggestions for using social media to provide resources

- **Some cadets suggested applications that the Academy could use to make resources available.**
  - *"The only thing I could think of is a chat room."* (Male)
  - *"Maybe there's a page or then maybe they might submit frequent articles on Facebook. All cadets aren't members of the CASA, but they might find the organization on Facebook and then they just do articles every now and then or something like that. Because a lot of people use Facebook, and just getting that frequent time with it, maybe like 'Oh, this happened to me the other day,' and then if they read this article maybe they'll be more inclined to report it."* (Male)
  - *"I know that our chief made all of us get this app, Circle of Six, where it's more to prevent situations like this happening. So if you are put in a situation, the app helps you quickly contact someone to help you get out of that situation. And you could take any six people to contact, and you press a button and it will send an automated text to them asking for help."* (Female)
  - *"Since we talked about how like people are like more open to like saying like anything just because it's anonymous, like I think if the Academy made an anonymous forum or something where they could ask like those SARC numbers and things and*

make it more accessible or easier for them to just jump on a computer and ask it, instead of thinking they want to set up a meeting with the person, because that seems like a much more formal way." (Female)

- **Conversely, some cadets indicated that additional apps are not needed.**
  - *"They do a pretty good job of putting that number everywhere."* (Male)
  - *"If you need help for whatever, there's a list of ten phone numbers for the different scenarios. So it's definitely made public and accessible for any situation."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think we would need an application. We have the phone numbers for our company chiefs and officers. And I think that's a much more mature and appropriate way to handle it, rather than trying to reach out. If it goes right to them, then that's fine. But again, I don't think we need to have that many outside sources trying to help, because half the time would have to be explaining the Academy to someone else and the Academy life."* (Male)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Cadets were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix I, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some cadets indicated that leadership shows they are serious about sexual assault issues by discussing the issues and indicating that they are available for cadets if there are problems.**
  - *"Whenever we meet with them [the company chiefs], they always bring something up about just if you want to talk, they're there."* (Male)
  - *"There's something to me that kind of proved that they're taking it seriously and they're doing it properly. There was a case last year that it was actually deemed to have not occurred. And they made it very clear that there was a thorough investigation. That to me at least proves that they're going through the right process and they're being objective about it. I feel like the process and the command has made an effort to be as transparent and fair as possible, which is a good point I think."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy increasingly takes sexual assault issues seriously because of the influence of senior leadership.**
  - *"I think Admiral Zukunft and Admiral Papt both Commandants, the last two Commandants of the Coast Guard, have been very adamant about this subject. And I think that's definitely had an influence. They've both been very passionate about getting rid of sexual assault in the Coast Guard as a whole. So I think that's definitely influenced the Academy in regard to leadership and what they stand for."* (Male)
  - *"Admiral Zukunft [Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard] does. He talks about it. He said it, in one of these Corps-wide addresses he said that."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the ratings of leadership seemed correct to them, including the slightly higher ratings given by men than women.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Male)
  - *"To me, yes, because I was just talking to one of my female friends about the subject very briefly, and we ended up discussing that pretty much. Men are a little bit more open I guess when it comes to stuff like that [referring to trust in the Academy leadership to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment], if they need to do it they will do it, whereas I think she said that she feels like at least most of her female friends and herself would be a little skeptical about it."* (Male)
- **Conversely, some cadets indicated surprise at the gender gap in ratings of leadership.**
  - *"I think they seem on par. The only thing that really surprised me was the difference between men and women. That's a little shocking to me. Just like every single category there is a significant difference between women and men."* (Female)
- **Some female cadets indicated that female cadets may rate leadership less favorably because they are more likely to be survivors of USC.**
  - *"I think it goes back to the fact that you have a higher percentage of women experiencing sexual assault or [unwanted] sexual contact. And if you look at the number of people who are reporting it anyway, that number is very low. So I think all those numbers correlate."* (Female)
  - *"Maybe could it be in any way to do with the genders of those who they're reporting to? I think here we have more male officers, and like the class of 2016 was one of the largest female cadet populations initially. So just that means there's a lot more males above that. And I think that can account for the male, female difference."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the lower ratings of academic staff could be driven by how little interaction cadets have with them, relative to other leadership.**
  - *"And then I just saw that the civilian academic faculty was a lot lower than the other numbers. I think that's just because they're less likely to talk to us about it, because all the trainings we receive are generally from military leadership or cadet leadership, and the academic staff isn't really going around saying this is an unrestricted report, this is a restricted report, this is what you do in case of sexual assault. So I think that just is a reason for that lower number."* (Female)
  - *"I think part of the reason why we don't really get it from the faculty is because it's only so much they see. They don't see the everyday Chase life. When we're sitting in class we're just quiet, taking down notes. The focus of class isn't really for talking about that. They might feel awkward bringing stuff like that up. But I have no doubt that if they saw something or heard something that they would say something. I just think that they probably don't really feel a need to bring it up if it's not a pressing issue."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that cadets may feel less unity with civilian faculty because they are not members of the military.**
  - *"I'd say it doesn't surprise me that the civilian faculty is a little bit lower than the rest, just because they didn't go through the same things that we have been through, that we don't have quite the same unity with them. So I guess we just inherently don't trust them as much."* (Male)
  - *"I think it makes sense when you compare the civilian because it's easier to build more of a relationship with commissioned officers. And also they know more of the military procedures when it comes to this stuff. With the trainings and just almost like the fact that they are officers, so you build more trust with them."* (Female)
  - *"I think that the numbers make sense. The civilian academic faculty, I think it would be weird if just like at the beginning of class the teacher made an announcement about [sexual assault issues]. I feel like their job is more to teach. I think it makes sense that they would be the lowest."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that whether faculty members discuss issues of sexual assault depends on the individual faculty member.**
  - *"I think it depends maybe what major you're in, or what teachers you have, but one of my teachers is actually really good about talking about sexual assault and stuff. And if there's laws that are passed or changed, like a law passed in Connecticut or it was up for discussion, and my teacher took up a good portion of the class to discuss it."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that athletic staff and civilian faculty care about them, but they do not talk much about sexual assault issues.**
  - *"They're not putting off the facade that they don't care, but they're just not actively talking about it. But they still, just by how they act, they care about you. At least what I see, coaches and teachers, they do care. And that's a big thing to see that they would be willing to talk to you."* (Female)
  - *"Especially if they're your mentors. There are mentors around."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the perception of how sexual assault cases have been handled in the past could result in higher or lower ratings for leadership.**
  - *"A past case. Because of the rumor mill around, if someone gets an idea that this happened this way, or they know what really happened and it wasn't taken care of to their satisfaction, or someone they were like 'No, that shouldn't have been a problem,' and then someone got booted for it, they automatically become cynical of the whole system."* (Male)
  - *"I think a lot of it has to do with the response they've had to past cases. So I think, whether it's a good or bad thing, a lot of times they really lay down the law when it comes to these cases. So sometimes that's perceived as a bad thing, like maybe overreacting. But any time there's a case that has to do with sexual assault, sexual harassment, the person got the maximum punishment or really big, they are really laid down that it's not acceptable. So I think that influences all these numbers are extremely high for confidence in leadership."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that leadership may be judgmental when dealing with USC cases.**
  - *"I feel like there's also another thing. If you feel like someone is going to judge what you're saying, your opinion, even if it's true or false, whatever you're saying, if you feel like there's going to be some sort of judgment, most people don't like to get judged. Some people don't really care, but I think a very large amount of people, that feeling of judgment just turns them away."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the results could be driven by personal relationships rather than by perception of competence on sexual assault matters.**
  - *"I think the other thing that has to do with it too is we keep referring back to people's basic opinions of each other. A couple of people, commissioned officers that I wouldn't talk to or I wouldn't expect to go out of their way to do it. It's just that general opinion of people."* (Male)
  - *"But say your company chief is someone you revere and you have total respect and he has training or whatever. You're going to answer more positive."* (Male)

- *"I think it's just the personality. It's just the personality and how they interact with cadets. Like this unnamed company officer who just sits in their office all day and doesn't really walk around the company and interact with cadets in a social environment, rather than just sitting there at the table at their office administratively, whereas the chief will walk around and talk with them, get to know people on a personal, social level, so, you're more comfortable with them. I mean, that's the difference."* (Male)

- *"I know if I was ever going to have to report something, I probably wouldn't report it to someone that you see in passing. I think that you report to someone you trust. Those are the people that you have the dialogue with continually. So your military uniformed faculty you see a lot more, they're here, around, and they teach continual classes, so you see them multiple years in a row, and you build that dialogue. And I think the same thing with athletic staff, you have them for a while, so there's a trust built up there, even if they're not in the supposed chain of command of what you're restricted, unrestricted, they're someone's confidence you trust in."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that leaders who are victims' advocates are particularly approachable.**

  - *"Well, there are some chiefs and officers that are advocates, CASA type. Victims' advocates, and they have a picture outside their door so that everyone will know that they're approachable for that specific reason. And then we have meetings with them and they address those issues and just become more approachable. So it seems like it would be part of their job. Unlike professors, who their job is to teach us about whatever topic."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that leadership should try to relate to cadets on a personal level when it comes to sexual assault issues.**

  - *"I think it's easy to relate to personal stories, and when everyone is put up on the high post. And so one commissioned officer was like 'Oh, don't see me as a captain, see me as just a normal person. And I've seen someone go through this, and how they went through it and what happened.' That more true than just putting facts up on a board and you just sit, like next."* (Female)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Cadets were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and cadets were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders. Note that unlike the three DoD Academies that are Division I, USCGA participates in Division III athletics.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some cadets indicated that treatment in regards to unwanted behavior issues is the same for all cadets.**
  - *"When you're in sports, certain sports get more team lunches or team breakfasts, where you might have a little day-to-day favoritism that way when you're in season. But I don't think that there's any favoritism based on sports when you're before the green table for an incident. I think if you're being charged for an incident of any kind, I don't think there's any favoritism that way. I don't think an athlete is going to get retained when a non-athlete would have gotten the boot for the same offense."* (Male)
  - *"In no way would [being an athlete] help someone who committed a sexual assault."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that because athletic teams are Division III and well integrated into the general Academy population, standards for all students are the same.**
  - *"Well, the Academy is not big, we don't have really big sports teams as much, so I feel it's harder for that dynamic to form. I feel just because we're so much smaller than that, everyone knows each other, that it's harder to isolate yourself."* (Male)
  - *"I think [part of the reason we don't have that problem here] is we're Division III, as opposed to some of the Academies that are Division I sports, where there's already a double standard for Academics and other things and military and stuff like that."* (Male)
  - *"[The standards are the same] because I think we're basically all athletes in one way or another, because either we play a sport or we're on a club or we play in our company sports. We're all athletes."* (Female)
  - *"I think it's just so hard here because we don't have a gap. Air Force has, they call it a Tzo gap. So a Tzo is a gap between varsity athletes and intramural athletes. And a lot of times varsity athletes will get out of trainings and get out of things, military things, for their sport. Here we don't have that, so there's not a negative or such an obvious distinction between who's a varsity athlete and who isn't. Here you can play a sport one year and then not the other year, and people think you're still a varsity athlete. Just no one really knows, there's not a gap. So officers aren't inclined to hold varsity athletes or regular people to a different standard."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the culture and closeness of athletic teams might facilitate some unwanted behaviors that are not severe in nature.**
  - *"When I first started playing sports here, my captain, my teammates, our practice room, the locker room, that's considered totally separate from the rest of the Academy. It's a place where just we can do our sport, we can just hang out and be*

ourselves, compared to up in the barracks where we have to hold military standards. I wouldn't necessarily say [it promotes] bad behavior, I mean, it's good to let loose I guess. But I wouldn't say that we're just down there going crazy. We still have a job to get done." (Male)

- *"There's always that hazing, you're new to the team, you have to make it, just fit in. And a lot of people don't report because you want everything to make that next position and you'll do anything to make sure you start and do whatever. So you risk that to move yourself forward on a playing field."* (Female)

- *"So I was thinking about this for a while now, and the thing that came to my head was when I was doing something recently for athletic things, pretty much our coach was, show some sportsmanship, give them a little butt tap, you do that on teams. And I think there's I guess mixed feelings about it is the best way to put it."* (Male)

- *"What has been accepted is no longer accepted or opinions, all it takes is one person to cause a victim and feel uncomfortable. Sports teams are constantly changing, so I think that happens. And I also think the constant time together you drop borders. And those borders are what's accepted when you're not in the locker room, can be carried over to other places."* (Female)

- *"Personally I wouldn't say that certain sports teams have sexual assault. I mean, there's always a degree of joking around, especially in male sports in the locker room, whipping each other with towels and stuff. But just personally I wouldn't consider that any harassment or assault within the team."* (Male)

Culture

Cadets were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

General comments about Academy culture and gender relations

- **Some cadets indicated they feel safer at the Academy than they would at a civilian college.**

  - *"A hundred percent."* (Female)

  - *"I remember a time where I was talking to my mom on the phone and walking back from the library at whatever time of night by myself, and she was like are you safe, like call me when you get back to your room. And I was like it doesn't even occur to me."* (Female)

- *"Like I trust my classmates, I trust my fellow people here. I know that things do happen and that you still have to be careful. But there are serious repercussions here for people breaking those rules and everyone knows that. And it's being enforced more and more."* (Female)

- *"I think there's a lot of physical evidence to point to the fact that people think they're safe here. There are no blue light phone boxes for emergency numbers. I think you would be hard pressed to find somebody who felt uncomfortable walking around campus by themselves at night."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that other colleges do not emphasize sexual assault as much as the Academy does.**

  - *"No."* (Male)

  - *"Not in the slightest."* (Male)

  - *"Because it's military, because it's including military now, they always try to hold us to a higher standard, so that's primarily it too. And also we're smaller than most regular colleges."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that, in comparison to other colleges, the Academy is able to require cadets to attend trainings.**

  - *"There is an ability to get the trainings in that you wouldn't really have at a normal college. Because there you're just going to end up going to your classes, and if there's something that you can just blow it off real easily. You might necessarily not get it emphasized as much to you. Whereas we're told you're going to be here for training."* (Male)

  - *"Since we all are required to go to these trainings, if there's another college and you said 'Oh, there's a lecture about this,' I doubt the entire student body is going to come to it. So I think all of us are on the same page. But whether they take it seriously or not, we all know that it's pretty black and white because of those trainings."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual assault is more of a problem at other colleges than at the Academy.**

  - *"Oh, I know for sure at normal colleges it's worse."* (Male)

  - *"There is a lot more alcohol consumption and a lot more people, a lot more cases."* (Male)

  - *"On other campuses you go out on Thursday night and drink and maybe go to a frat party where normally this stuff happens. Here that's not really an option, so that's not really an issue for us, except for on the weekends. There's so much supervision*

here, you're constantly being watched. There's not as much opportunity here for those instances to occur." (Female)

- *"Like people at other colleges might not even feel safe walking across campus at night."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they believe the Academy emphasizes reporting more than do civilian colleges.**
  - *"In other colleges they have the same things we do about reporting, but it seems for them it's more of a comfort thing, report it if you don't feel okay. But with us it's drilled into our brains that you have to report, as opposed to them it's an option."* (Female)
  - *"Something that struck me, just having friends with schools that have this problem, their staff advises them not to go to their school board, they have a board for sexual assault, and they're advised to go immediately to the police and totally bypass the school. And I think here everyone feels pretty safe and comfortable going to whoever. But the fact is people do use that as an avenue and there are outcomes says a lot for our system. Other schools are looking towards ours, I believe. I know other schools are starting to adopt a CASA program."* (Female)
  - *"Honestly, considering the programs and how they're approaching things, at least from what I've heard in comparison to other academies and colleges in general, we're probably the tip of the spear in attacking this issue, just for sure."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the penalty is steeper for cadets who engage in sexual assault than for students at civilian colleges.**
  - *"I think it probably should be at other colleges and universities because if you get convicted for sexual harassment or something, then you might get kicked out of that college. But then you can just go apply to another college and get in and start with a clean slate. Where here pretty much if you get kicked out you're starting completely over at college again."* (Male)

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual assault is the top priority in terms of trainings and emphasis at the Academy.**
  - *"I think it's easily number one."* (Male)
  - *"Trainings based on it, it's definitely number one."* (Male)
  - *"It's at the top."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that the culture at the Academy is very supportive of prevention of sexual assault.**
  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Males)
- **Some cadets indicated they understand sexual assault is an issue and it is heavily emphasized at the Academy.**
  - *"A lot of us would like to think it's not a big deal at the Academy, but a lot of us also understand that it's an issue. We've had trainings where they give us these percentages and we are surprised. And then as time goes on we keep getting these percentages and we're like 'Okay, we understand that this is happening.' And sometimes people turn a blind eye to it or they like to think that it's not as bad here at the Academy. But I would say that a lot of people have the understanding that it is an issue. And it's heavily emphasized."* (Male)
  - *"People feel like 'Oh, I have to go to another training.' But I feel like it's discussed a pretty good amount and everyone is pretty aware of it."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that although they receive a lot of trainings (and may become desensitized to the topic), they still see it as a serious issue and would act accordingly if a situation presented itself.**
  - *"You feel like sometimes it almost becomes overkill to where it almost loses that effect, it almost loses that effect and seriousness when it becomes such overkill. But it still if something was to happen, everyone would act upon it."* (Male)
  - *"It almost gets to the point like 'Oh, we have another sexual assault training, we've gone over the same information every time.' And I think it's good to be exposed to all the people that you can make a restricted and unrestricted report for that kind of thing."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that cadets take sexual assault seriously.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)
  - *"I think it definitely is, and you can see that. Even coming from a swab summer everybody is a little bit on edge and trying to follow the rules as closely as possible because you don't really know the culture. I do think that it's taken seriously."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated they receive more training on sexual assault and sexual harassment than other trainings.**
  - *"I feel we have more training on sexual assault and sexual harassment and like who can take certain reports than basic ship handling trainings."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that sexual assault has received more emphasis at the Academy over the years.**
  - *"It's definitively increased."* (Female)
  - *"Absolutely."* (Female)
- **Other cadets indicated that the emphasis on sexual assault has remained constant.**
  - *"I feel like that's always been, from day one."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the past Commandant of the Coast Guard's goal was to eradicate sexual assault as an issue in the Coast Guard.**
  - *"Especially with Admiral Papt, that was what he wanted to get rid of in the Coast Guard. So everything somewhere, even any lecture, it was this isn't going to happen in my Coast Guard, we're getting rid of it, like this is on the chopping block, number one."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated they view preventing sexual assault as an important issue because of their closeness to one another.**
  - *"Well, we have been together for a whole year. We've all been through the basic summer training programs. We all have a very strong bond with each other in our respective companies and not in our respective companies. And if an incident like this ever happened, it would affect all of us pretty dearly because we are all so close to one another. So it's like we just want to prevent that from happening just because it's just unacceptable and it just causes the whole Corps a lot of troubles and a lot of like pain through it."* (Male)

Emphasis on sexual harassment and sexist behaviors

- **Some male cadets indicated that there are perceived issues with gender equality.**
  - *"Especially at the Academy women say that they're equal and that they are just as good as men. I'm not trying to deny the fact that they're not just as good as us and they're equal. But then you go to the PFE [Physical Fitness Test] and they have like 45 percent easier standards than we do."* (Male)
  - *"Physically there are differences between females and males just because of genetics, but the standards were set where it's almost a joke for them to get a blue star, because if they are athletic and participate in varsity sports, they're almost guaranteed a blue star."* (Male)
  - *"We pretty much have our three uniforms each season we can wear. And females have like six maybe different uniforms they can wear."* (Male)

- *"Sometimes you see it playing a role with offenses. Somebody will be masted [courts martialed] or something and they'll be retained and somebody else will have the same offense and they'll get kicked out. And you'll look at it and go how is that even possible. And you see one person was a female, one person is a male."* (Male)

- *"It goes along with sports as well, not just with diversity. Because it's like they might need wrestlers, they might need runners, rifle, all that, but at the same time they're trying to meet more of a nationwide requirement of we're trying to become more diverse so we have to meet these numbers."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they receive training that discusses both sexual harassment and sexual assault.**

  - *"I feel like the typical training is 'This is sexual harassment, this is sexual assault, and these are your ways to report it if you see it happening, and these are the people you can go to' and stuff like that. So I feel like that's pretty much the basic training that we get."* (Female)

  - *"We also have groups, at the beginning of the year, where we go around with our companies, and we have to talk about. Well, we have to go through situations and how we handle the situation. It's like sexual assault and sexual harassment. It's how do you stop it from becoming sexual assault too."* (Female)

Ways that culture can be changed to improve the way sexual assault and sexual harassment are addressed at the Academy

- **Some cadets indicated they are careful to be aware of their audience and intentions.**

  - *"We kind of have gone over some cases where people have been kicked out just for saying the wrong things and being interpreted a certain way. Everyone is just very careful with their words, and if you say something you're like don't interpret it this way, this is not what I meant at all. So yeah."* (Female)

  - *"It's definitely happened where if they say things, you're just like that's not all right to say around me, that's not all right to say in general. So I think it's definitely ambiguous and it depends on who you're around. And so people just have to, I don't know, read your audience a little bit better."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that it may be useful to promote the idea of family within the Academy to make it easier to empathize.**

  - *"I think it's naive to say you're going to have zero [sexual assault or sexual harassment]. You're never going to have a year that has a zero in either category. I think it's a great goal, but I think it's not possible. So I think, you know, you might be able to throw as much as you want at the issue, you know, throw money at it to make it go away with this campaign or that campaign, but in the end you're never going to be able to eliminate it. The best thing I think you can do is create as much of an atmosphere that promotes that kind of the family aspect. For me that was always one*

of the things whenever we talked about it is the idea that, I don't know, me personally growing up I have a sister. I saw a campaign once, it was how would you feel if that was your sister. And that always stuck with me. So that idea that it's family, and I think that's something that's promoted really well here, you know, is the idea of family because we're so small, or maybe it's just something that's ingrained in us growing up or growing up through the Academy here." (Male)

- *"Maybe it's just the culture of the Coast Guard versus the others, I don't know. Maybe we stress that family more so."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they thought leadership is doing a good job in addressing sexual assault.**
  - *"I think so."* (Male)
  - *"There's always room for improvement, but for right now it's a pretty high standard and it's awareness and it's very highly supportive."* (Male)
  - *"I don't think they should increase it, just from my experience, I don't think that. I mean, with everyone that I've met here so far, sexual assault hasn't been a problem for them. So I don't think increasing it would do anything more, because I think it's already right now, I don't want to go too far, but I don't think it's affecting many people because of the atmosphere of the Corps."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that the current emphasis on sexual assault may be the perfect balance.**
  - *"I think the level is right now like if they were to put more emphasis on it, it would start entering that range of just beating the dead horse. The value of it would decrease if they put more emphasis on it."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that pulling the person aside and having a conversation one on one with them instead of in front of the group when they make a sexist comment is a good approach.**
  - *"I think it's more of a couple individuals. Like there are I think some individual people who have problems with it that, you know, they may passively aggressively voice and not so much realize it. But I think having a conversation with them one on one when you realize it, not necessarily in front of a whole bunch of people where you're just trying to get in a fight with them, I think those are better ways to help solve a problem slowly but surely, rather than having big things, because I think that really turns people off. And then those people who maybe have the problem are going to talk about it and shed a negative light on it again. And I don't know, that's just kind of been my personal experience with it."* (Female)

Role of peer programs

- **Some cadets indicated that the CASA program is beneficial and they are comfortable talking to fellow cadets.**
  - *"And the fact that they can take a restricted report and it's one of your peers, I think that's a very good thing."* (Male)
  - *"I'd say it's effective just because we've got a lot more people qualified now, and the more people that are qualified, the more likely that someone who is qualified is going to be one of your friends. So if you're not sure on whether to go restricted or unrestricted, you don't want to talk to some official person, you can just go and talk to a friend, it doesn't have to go anywhere from there, and just tell them what's happened and that's as far as it goes. I think it's also really good because CASA members are trained with like a bunch of different things, and that way they're so informed, so if someone is not sure about policies or whatnot, you can go to them and they'll know a bit more."* (Female)
  - *"If someone doesn't feel comfortable going to an officer or someone in their chain of command, there's people in each class, and since our class is so small we know everyone, so we have someone that we can go talk to that we would feel comfortable like reporting to."* (Male)
  - *"I think it's the smaller school, tighter knit feeling. Here you ask anybody in our class if you know this person and they'll be like of course I know him."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that it helps that they may be talking to the CASA member for reasons other than a sexual assault incident, so that avoids the problem of being identified by others and rumors starting simply from seeking out a CASA member.**
  - *"If you can find a friend that's in that group or at least be close enough friends where you can just go in there asking for homework. It's not like you're stepping into the SARC's office."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the availability of CASA is also beneficial.**
  - *"I think the other thing is just the availability of CASA, because you can only have one SARC and maybe a few victim advocates. CASA is so widespread, if something were to happen, it would be very easy to find someone that you could talk to. Even if it happened in the middle of the night, the SARC's not here, it's going to be pretty easy to find CASA."* (Male)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Cadets were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to

provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some cadets indicated that CASA leaders are effective trainers.**
  - *"Yes."* (Multiple Males)
  - *"I'd say they're more effective than the online trainings that we have."* (Male)
  - *"One thing that, now that I think about it, during swab summer there was a point where they had CASA members come in, they completely relaxed the swab summer attitude where they, like they took off their shoulder boards and said we are not your cadre now, we're CASA members, we're here to be there for you. And like that was one of our first introductions to that, and I think that was a good thing."* (Male)
- **Some upperclass cadets indicated that training has improved over the years.**
  - *"Granted, people say it's being shoved down our throats, but some things that have been good is that the trainings have varied. So sometimes it would be like a PowerPoint or sometimes the SARC would come talk to us or sometimes it would be a movie or some guy giving a speech about stuff. So the trainings have stated the same thing, but in different ways in order to capture the attention of all the cadets."* (Male)
  - *"I believe a decent amount of cadets take it seriously, because we do have to do a lot of trainings. And I would say most of us just click and go and hope for the best. But this was one of the trainings that even I like paid more attention to than pretty much most of my trainings."* (Male)
  - *"It tends to deal with the issue itself and also the command emphasizing it as well."* (Male)
- **Some cadets discussed the training they received in the past year.**
  - *"A couple times over the summer with CASA training. And I think we had two or three trainings from SARC. And then maybe we had one once this semester. Or three?"* (Female)
  - *"We had one the first semester and then the second semester. Then we also have the online training that I think DoD does."* (Female)
  - *"It's become such a big issue the last couple of years. I remember back to our fourth class year there was like one or two trainings about the SARC and CASA. And now, for lack of a better term, it's shoved down our throats sometimes. And I think that's almost turned some cadets off, like 'Right, I know this, I've got this, I know this, I've heard about it a thousand times, let me go do my homework.'"* (Male)

- *"People know we are getting this shoved down our throats, and people say 'Yeah, I know this, I know this,' and then [when asked if] they know who they can go to to place an unrestricted and restricted report, they say something like company officers, who can't accept a restricted report."* (Male)

- **Some cadets described what they considered the best training.**

  - *"At the beginning of the year with SARC, with all the PowerPoints and with these charts showing the most current surveys and explaining to us this is that and that is that. And the most surprising slide that she talked about was the perception of sexual assault and sexual harassment was very high. Which didn't, in my opinion, really surprise me that the perception was really high. So that was the most effective was in the beginning of the semester with her big training."* (Female)

  - *"I would say the one we had last swab summer, that was really helpful. These upperclassmen came in, they were wearing like civvies, and one of them like was our regimental chief of staff and we all got yelled at by her. Then she was all smiles and in a dress and she was like, 'You know, if you need anything, like anything at all, here's my number, I want you to have it.' So it was like okay, now there's someone I know I can go to if anything like this happened. They gave us training and talked about some things. And then we did that for the cadets or for the swabs this past summer. And it was really good for them."* (Female)

  - *"I also think that those are two really good ones [referring to the two examples in the comments above] that I also remember, but my overall opinion of training on sexual harassment and sexual assault is 'Oh, gosh, we have another training on sexual harassment and sexual assault, in one ear, out the other. Like it's probably in Leamy, I'm probably going to sleep, I probably have to be in uniform.' The reason that was so good is because it was a small group, it allowed for discussion. It wasn't just facts, here's some facts thrown at people and go on your merry way now, we did our training, check the box. The online trainings, those are just very ineffective. You need to make it a comfortable atmosphere maybe like this, offer refreshments or something, just to get the mood up and the conversation up, and those are good trainings."* (Female)

  - *"I hate to start out with a negative one, but we had one with a SARC which I thought had some positive aspects and some unpleasantness. It was the first one we really had a training with her on a smaller scale, she did it by class. And she showed us the statistics generated from the last survey that we had taken, which was fantastic, I think all of us really appreciated being able to see that. But then she proceeded to like browbeat us, this is from my perspective, she browbeat us about the results of the statistics, like what we're not doing right and what we can do to fix this. We're all like none of us have even seen these before. And I ended up walking out of there with a very negative impression of the fact. Whereas if she just like presented the statistics and said now let's talk about what we can do to change, instead of berating us for being bad, I felt it would have been much more positive."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated they have learned in trainings that the trainings might not change those who would engage in such behavior, but are for others to be able to recognize such behaviors and how to handle such situations.**
  - *"Well, they've said in the trainings that there's a very small percentage of people that would actually do this and that training, it's not for them. Whatever it is that inclines them to do that sort of thing, just seeing a PowerPoint about it isn't going to make them not do it. It's more just to help us recognize that it does happen and what it looks like and what to do from there."* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy asks students for their input.**
  - *"Yes, [through] surveys."* (Female)
  - *"Maybe if they talked about how things have changed and what's worked in the past."* (Female)
- **Some female cadets indicated that training might make men uncomfortable.**
  - *"I've noticed that it seems like there's almost a negative attitude towards males specifically. And granted, females statistically have a higher rate of everything. But just talking to my male friends, that kind of makes them angry to go to these trainings, and I feel it shuts them off to listen to anything they say at the trainings. So it works against them almost."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that training has a positive effect on reporting.**
  - *"Yes."* (Male)
  - *"I think people now know about it and they know it's safe to come forward."* (Female)
  - *"I still think there's been a positive effect, even though they're boring."* (Male)
- **Some female cadets indicated that training like Sex Signals would not be useful for men.**
  - *"I think they wouldn't take it seriously."* (Female)
  - *"I don't think so."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated their criminal justice class helps them understand the nature of offenses and punishments.**
  - *"We all take a criminal justice class. We take the legislation, we look at previous cases, which I really appreciated, to see what the responses are. It's across the branches with cases in different Services. And it shows us what a sexual assault is, what sexual touching is. It lists the offenses and what constitutes that offense. And*

knowing exactly what that offense is and how it's punishable and what the different avenues of punishment are, like whether it's an non-judicial punishment or a courts-martial, to me that explained a lot of my discontent with the way that offense was handled last year, just knowing why it fell the way it did. And the teacher that's teaching it has been very forthcoming and just open and honest about it." (Female)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some cadets indicated that discussions versus online training and quality over quantity would be better in terms of training.**
  - *"I think maybe also going for quality, not quantity. Because if that training that we had is the only training we have this semester, I think it will have been a better training still than having people click through the same training that we've done for the past three years in a row. So I think even if you take all the time and effort it would take for three trainings and put it into one and make it really powerful, I think it would be better than just having another one."* (Female)
  - *"Whenever we have scenario discussions, I think that's helpful. But if like it's seven in the morning and I've just gotten an hour of sleep because I was up really late, and people are talking to me about sexual harassment, I feel like I just try purposely not to listen, and just because it's so early. I feel like discussions are better than being like forced down with knowledge."* (Female)
  - *"We had a training given by the SARC and I felt she did a really good job. But when we have online trainings, a lot of people just click through them. And also it's really early, so."* (Female)
- **Some cadets recommended supplementing training with a website or page on the current portal dedicated to these issues.**
  - *"Sometimes we forget things that happen in the trainings. I don't think a separate website would help, but maybe a page on one of our portal websites saying this is who is restricted, this is who isn't restricted, because nine out of ten times people are always asking others and people don't really know a definite answer. Also, there's another situation that happened this semester where someone wanted to go search one of those people out, like a chaplain or Dr. Murray [Director, Center for Counseling and Development], for example, but they didn't know what he could tell people and what he had to report or not. So I remember that person didn't want to go seek help because of it. So maybe if there's like a Web page saying like the SARC can report or won't report, or Dr. Murray can do this and won't do this would be beneficial because it would make people more inclined to go see those people."* (Female)
  - *"A whole Web site."* (Female)

- *"Just like a page or something up that someone can reference if they need it real quick if they're feeling this way. Like, I don't know if Dr. Murray can report me medically. I wouldn't want that to be reported, so I would want to know first before I went to him. So if they had that Website or that Web page, I think it could be beneficial."* (Female)

- **Some cadets recommended adding training about Service issues instead of just Academy issues.**
  - *"I just want to say, I think sometimes we're sheltered at the Academy. So maybe if we had some training on the big picture, like sexual assault and harassment is a lot bigger of an issue out in the fleet. And maybe talk about how it affects command climate in the boat and what happens in that arena. Whereas here it's like 'Oh, it's sexual harassment again.' Maybe talk about as a leader, as an officer, you're going to be dealing with it on the boat."* (Female)
  - *"The one we had over the ethics forum there was a panel, but they just talked about out in the fleet how the process works. So it was informational, it wasn't like a normal type of sexual assault training, because it had to do with how does the process work on the fleet and who's part of the team that takes care of it."* (Female)
  - *"I think maybe if there was like XYZ cases maybe from the fleet, because then people wouldn't be trying to identify the people here, but it would still get the message across."* (Female)

- **Some cadets indicated that trainings should also discuss how to handle situations and not just react when an assault occurs.**
  - *"We have trainings that are for specific stuff, but at the Corps it's based on the respect issue. So really they should, if anything, have more trainings about how to handle situations in general and not just 'Oh, this is the sexual assault training and this is what you have to do.' Like broaden it and connect everything and say if you're having a sexual assault issue you're having an honor or a trust and respect issue also. It shouldn't just be this is what you do for when there's a sexual assault. Get to the core issue and then how to solve and fix this one problem."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that sex assault prevention trainings should include how to approach someone who is struggling, however there is a problem if people then need to report that to someone in the chain of command.**
  - *"In suicide prevention it talks a lot about approaching someone who seems to be struggling, and I think that would be very useful for sexual assault prevention. Unfortunately, we then run back into the whole restricted, unrestricted thing. If I approach this person and they spill their guts to me, I get to go tell their captain, and that's exactly what happened."* (Male)

- **Some cadets indicated that having continued interactive trainings would be useful.**
  - *"The only thing I can think of is that one interactive presentation that some of us were exposed to. But other than that, like I can't think of anything."* (Male)
  - *"Instead of a cut and dry PowerPoint, like this is wrong."* (Male)
  - *"I think if anything you could have situations where, I don't want to say role play, but like the 'May I Kiss You.'"* (Male)
  - *"There was the interactive thing [referring to May I Kiss You] where you were sitting on a couch and how to have an appropriate relationship and how it's okay to ask like simple questions, like 'Is this okay, like is what I'm doing okay with you?'"* (Male)
- **Some cadets indicated training that incorporated rates would be useful.**
  - *"To me the most memorable for me was when they shared numbers similar to this."* (Male)
  - *"Seeing the actual numbers."* (Male)
  - *"I think just like at the training where they had this picture [referring to Figure 1 in the cadet handout showing prevalence rates of USC], they probably should have done that, because when I saw this picture, immediately I was like 'Oh, wow, girls are assaulted and guys 1.4 percent of the time.'"* (Female)
  - *"I think that that was kind of rough. But I think that type of training, putting these numbers out there and really giving the straight facts instead of just doing online cookie cutter PowerPoint I think really wakes people up to the reality of it, giving the math of it. It just puts it in perspective."* (Female)
- **Some cadets indicated that the Academy could update the training and market it differently.**
  - *"We were talking about The Invisible War, the documentary that changed a lot of the way the military looked and viewed sexual assault. And we watched a video last year, and it was like very antiquated, I would say, and not applicable to us, but we could have taken the time and watched that documentary, and I think that would have been ten times more beneficial than what we did."* (Female)
  - *"It's just a general feeling of the Corps when it comes to trainings. When people say training, it has a negative connotation within the Corps."* (Male)

Chapter 9:
U.S. Coast Guard Academy Faculty and Staff

Three focus group sessions were conducted at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) from March 23-25, 2015. Each session was scheduled for a 90-minute period. The three sessions were: faculty members, coaches and athletic staff, and military staff. Each session had between 3 and 11 participants. A total of 18 staff members participated.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study began by sharing with the faculty and staff participants the prevalence rates of unwanted sexual contact (USC) from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey* (*2014 SAGR*) (See Appendix J, Figure 1 "Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USCGA Women and Men" for the details shared with participants). They were asked whether they were familiar with those survey results, why they thought the USC rate for women decreased from 2012 (noting that the incidence rate for women at USMA was statistically lower from 2012 to 2014 and the rate for men remained unchanged), and whether they thought the rates would increase or decrease when measured on the next survey in 2016. Participants were also asked about other behaviors experienced, specifically by men as part of USC, such as hazing and "locker room" behavior. Participants further provided comments on the role alcohol plays in USC.

Additional results from the *2014 SAGR* survey were discussed regarding perceived sexual harassment and perceived sexist behavior, with questions asking about their familiarity with those results, whether the rates might be expected to change in the next survey, and the level of emphasis placed on these behaviors by Academy officials compared to the emphasis on USC.

Familiarity with USC incidence rates from 2014 SAGR survey

- **Some staff members indicated they had <u>not</u> seen the USC rates from the *2014 SAGR* survey nor did they have a frame of references to estimate the rates.**
  - *"No."* (Athletic)
  - *"I really wouldn't have any idea what to expect, other than it's probably not zero, and I would hope it would be very small. But I think I do remember there being an email coming out to everyone at the Academy when the survey results came out, and they provided a link if people wanted to look at them. And if I remember right, I clicked on the link and what I found was like a hundred page document. And it was just so overwhelming, it's like I don't have time in, two minutes to try and digest what this means in terms of our Academy."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated they would have expected USC rates to be higher.**
  - *"In that context I would guess that six percent seems low to me. I would have expected it to be higher than that. That's my reaction. So trying to come up with*

detailed reasoning, obviously I don't have the data. But just from whatever source you might have. But when you look at a large number of 18 to 21 year olds living in the same building with each other, and how immature many of them behave at times, I would expect that number to be higher." (Faculty)

- *"I would have expected it to be higher as well just because of what I've seen in the media with similar studies done in other four year universities, that rate seems to be higher. So I would expect it to be similar, this is a four year university as well."* (Faculty)

Reasons for decrease in USC rates for women

- **Some staff members indicated that the rates might have gone down because there are fewer students than in previous years.**
  - *"Less students."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that the rates might have gone down because there has been more emphasis.**
  - *"Maybe more education on it."* (Athletic)
  - *"Just people being informed of what it is, talking about it."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think nationwide there's more of a focus on sexual assault on campus in general. In the last year I have read so much. When the federal government is going to take on the private college sector about this topic, I think everybody reads it."* (Athletic)
  - *"There has been a greater focus on this issue. Across the Services probably as well, that has been addressed more, rather than kind of the elephant in the room. I think maybe that's a possibility that..."* (Faculty)
  - *"The previous Commandant specifically addressed it, and the current one seems to also be interested in fixing the problem."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think better awareness, the education on sexual assault procedures. Procedures on how to report. And the leadership is taking it a little bit more seriously than in years past. Folks are getting kicked out for that or even getting court martialed for that, so I think that's part of it. Last year Take Back the Night is one big event that's done. It's done in April, usually every year. That's a big awareness event. As well as the SARCs being involved. We didn't have a SARC for about a year, almost a year. So that was back in 2012-2013. And when she came on board that helped clear up a lot of issues, the education, the awareness. So she instituted a good program here, a good CASA program. They know the rules, and I think just overall the emphasis on respect has been a big push from our command."* (Military)

Experiences of behaviors associated with USC for men[58]

- **Some staff members indicated they would have thought the USC rate for men would have included and even higher percentage of horseplay and locker room types of behaviors.**
  - *"I would actually expect that 17 percent to be higher, reading the categories that are there. I would think that in the male unwanted sexual contact I would expect it to be more a higher percentage of that type of stuff."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that even horseplay can be serious.**
  - *"A couple cases of high school kids getting in trouble for some sort of, I don't know whether it was hazing, but these types of things that you're talking about, where a locker room type of situation where they're just picking on a kid and these are the things that they're doing. I don't think it's in the form of meaning sexual, it's more of just we're going to pick on this kid and this is what we're going to do to them. And these high school kids will go to jail for that."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that some experiences of USC by male cadets are different than those experienced by female cadets.**
  - *"It could be a little bit, because guys for some reason, especially around this age, horseplay a lot, and they tend to do the flicking game. Where they flick each other's genitalia. And some folks may not like that. I know I wouldn't."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the environment for males might contribute to inappropriate behaviors.**
  - *"It's a large gang in the shower, which could attribute to some of the horseplay, in my opinion. Guys are basically at the same time every day, 50, 60 people in there at one time."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated cadets might be reluctant to report horseplay or locker room types of behaviors.**
  - *"I'd expect actually the unreported when it comes to this type of behavior, a lot of guys with the locker room humor and things with slapping each other in places they shouldn't go to, it's just they accept it a little bit in the man culture of it. So they probably don't want to report that because they just brush it off. They do it to others, it gets done to them, and it's even."* (Faculty)

[58]See Appendix J, Figure 2 "Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USCGA Men" for the details shared with participants

- **Some staff members indicated they would challenge inappropriate behaviors if they observed them.**
  - *"If we see things that are not professional in the classroom, certain things are tolerated, but you know when you see something that's crossed the line. I don't think any of us would refrain from speaking up and say 'Hey, you know, what are you doing?' and having a conversation about being professional and being a good shipmate."* (Faculty)
  - *"It would be dealt with really quickly. There'd probably be some talking, some counseling, say why, why are you doing this, things of that nature. But, you know, I'd find out if the other folks are offended by it. But it would probably involve some other folks to bring to the conversation to talk about this. Because I wouldn't want to make the decision right away based on what I saw."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that it will take leadership and cadets themselves to reduce these types of behaviors.**
  - *"I think it has to come a little bit from us, the leadership, but more so from the cadets. I think they have to step up and say enough is enough. And a combination of leadership and cadet response, like these types of games are not acceptable."* (Military)
  - *"Team captains, instead of us doing it, let's investigate it, let's criminalize it, let's let the cadet leaders intervene and say this isn't cool, let's knock this stuff off."* (Military)

The perceived role of alcohol in USC[59]

- **Some staff members indicated that alcohol is involved in many USC incidents.**
  - *"Usually a prominent role."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that incidents of USC involving alcohol can occur both on campus and off campus.**
  - *"I've seen it both ways. And I have also seen in my time here that somebody has been off campus, an upperclass, and come back and then do a dorm creeping. And then whatever happens downtown ends up back on campus."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated they were not aware of any specific community outreach actions to address use of alcohol.**
  - *"I doubt it, but I don't know."* (Faculty)

[59] The role of alcohol typically emerged throughout each session during discussion of overall USC rates. Therefore, themes related to alcohol are included in this section.

- *"I have no idea. There's community outreach, but that's the Corps going out to perform volunteer work around the community."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that alcohol use can become an excuse for improper behaviors.**
  - *"I think the intersection question is a society thing. We still have the tendency to excuse people for their behavior when they have consumed too much alcohol and I think that's totally unacceptable. It's not about policy, it's about behavior. And the reactions of people around them, the reactions of the people that you're talking to, the reactions of the people who are watching. It creates that situation where it's 'Oh, yeah, but they drank too much.' And the solution comes in the first half of the question. That has to do with teaching these students how to drink responsibly."* (Faculty)
  - *"When they do have the alcohol it's such a big deal, 'Oh, we have alcohol for this event.' And so it just makes this weird association with alcohol. Whereas if it was more uniform, in the background and you could take it or not, it wouldn't be such a big deal if we had it or not. I support more times where it's just there, and there's lot of a high officer to cadet ratios if there's a drinking event, you practice like you play. So we do this thing at the Academy where if there's alcohol being served, they put a wrist band on you and the bartender marks you. So it's like the 0013 policy. And if you hit the three, your wrist band is marked three times, you have to stop drinking. The officers recognize it, make them save it for the next day and approach them, and this is what we saw, this is how it was wrong, and make it very personal. But that's such a high contact, high cost in terms of time, I think we shy away from that."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated they do not think alcohol is used purposely to perpetuate sexual assault.**
  - *"In my opinion I would say most of the time where there seems to be problems on campus, alcohol is involved. You've got the offender gets drunk and makes a poor decision, or the offender and the victim are both drunk. But it seems to me that the offender is generally intoxicated most of the time, it seems to me to be the case, from the instances that I have heard."* (Athletic)

Reporting

Faculty and staff participants were asked a number of questions to help understand barriers to reporting experiences of USC. They were told the number of reports made during the past year and that the number of reports could have been higher based on survey results (See Appendix J, Figure 3 "Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014" for the details shared with participants). Participants discussed reasons why someone would report or not report an incident and leadership's emphasis on reporting. Participants were provided survey results that showed survivors of USC often experience multiple incidents by the same offender and then were asked whether that knowledge would influence more cadets to come forward to report if they believed

their report would stop additional assaults. The section ended with faculty and staff participants providing recommendations that may help to remove barriers to reporting.

Awareness of the number of official reports

- **Some staff members indicated they were not aware of the specific number of unrestricted reports.**
  - *"I'm sure that this information is provided someplace. But it's not something that we would necessarily be looking for to be made aware of. We wouldn't be directed towards those numbers. So, have I seen these numbers before, no. I'm aware of the type of reports that are available, however."* (Athletic)
  - *"I don't know can't speak to that, but it sounds accurate-ish."* [Regarding the number of reports] (Faculty)
  - *"I've never heard about any of it."* (Faculty)

Academy leadership's role in encouraging reporting

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy encourages reporting and makes information available to students so they know how to report.**
  - *"I would say with the trainings that are available that it is, these types of reporting, I would say that they are aware of the types of reporting that can take place, yes."* (Athletic)
  - *"Well, I just went through the new faculty school, the training, and there was a long session on sexual harassment, assault, and the reporting methods. And also, when you qualify as the Chase Hall duty officer, one of our collateral duties on base where we're supervising the cadets for 24 hours, that's like the most important thing, and the qualification process is that you understand the reporting process and who the sexual assault coordinator is."* (Faculty)
  - *"Qualifying as the duty officer in the barracks, as well as going through that training process, it was a large emphasis to us. So I can imagine if, as supervisors, if it was emphasized highly to us, then it's the same to the cadets."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy encourages reporting but could also talk more about relationships and underlying causes of improper behaviors.**
  - *"Yes. I think we're always talking about reporting. And sometimes I wish we were talking about healthy relationships instead, because this is or this is not this, this is the law. And I would like to see us do more underlying healthy relationships stuff versus our training always seems to be about this is harassment, this is sexual assault. Technical side of things versus what causes it in the first place."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated some uncertainty in their role as a mandatory reporter.**
  - *"Well, aren't we required to report it? Aren't we required to report it? We learned in our faculty if somebody came to us with something, we had to tell somebody. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated the degree to which they feel prepared to advise somebody on matters regarding reporting of USC.**
  - *"Somewhat."* (Faculty)
  - *"So we know who the SARC person is. That's why we know about restricted, unrestricted formal complaints, who can register those."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated they had received training on how to advise students on reporting USC.**
  - *"I don't remember that far back to my faculty orientation. But I do know that we are required to complete annual trainings in sexual assault prevention, and sexual harassment prevention, for lack of a better word."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy encourages reporting of sexual assault.**
  - *"Depending on how far back you want to go, it certainly sounds like there's a lot more support for people reporting those things. If we go back to my Chase Hall duty officer training, I don't really recall it being addressed either way. So that's probably an improvement. I certainly have no doubt that they now want people to report."* (Faculty)

Reasons why someone would not report

- **Some staff members indicated that some cadets might be hesitant to report sexual assault due to fears of jeopardizing their career.**
  - *"We had a very high profile case last year and the reporter quit. There was a year-long process and there was an Article 32 hearing, and he got kicked out and she, the reporter, quit too. It was a career ruined. Plus the reporter might, I don't have any data, I've never heard this, but the reporter might have some sort of thing that they did wrong too, like underage drinking or whatever, so but let's not report it for that reason too, to keep myself out of whatever trouble I might be in for getting myself in this bad situation."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that reasons for not reporting are typical of college-age people and not specific to being at a Military Academy.**
  - *"I don't think that's any different than if you were doing this focus group at [some other university]. I don't think that changes because it's necessarily a military thing. I think that's pretty societal."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that there is a culture against reporting.**
  - *"Well, it just comes back to what was discussed earlier. If there's not a culture that embraces reporting of these issues, then they're not going to be reported. And that's what it's saying. If there's a reaction that way, that's what's being said, that's what's being said is this is not a culture that accepts the reporting of these kinds of incidents."* (Athletic)
  - *"[Discussing a recent case] The fact that even her friends were against the fact that she reported it. I don't understand why. I guess the unwanted touching was not a big deal to them. And therefore her reporting it got somebody kicked out, which it shouldn't have, and if it was no big deal, why would you want to make something big out of nothing basically. And I think her response was well, I did not ask for that to happen to me; therefore, it has been reported. And I think eventually the cadets, her friends, her circle ended up supporting her at the end. But in the beginning it wasn't easy for that young cadet to deal with when she made the report, plus deal with the backlash from her close friends, her circle."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated some cadets fear repercussions for reporting.**
  - *"You're also talking about retaliation and things like that, even if you come forward and it's for someone else, you're the person that's going to experience that retaliation."* (Athletic)
  - *"Embarrassment."* (Athletic)
  - *"I guess there's always that assumption that the accuser is lying, because of some incident that happened, like they don't know what else to do, so they're going to go ahead and throw out sexual assault or harassment, and really they're just trying to protect themselves. That's like the myth around it. And I think we are breaking that down year by year, but I think it still exists."* (Athletic)
  - *"I think backlash would be a big reason not to report. People are afraid of how that person's friends are going to treat them and the stigma that will be associated with them, because they'll get blamed for turning someone in, rather than the accused being blamed for acting inappropriately. Like I can't believe you turned that person in and those sorts of things. I think that would be a very large reason not to come forward. I think to come forward, I would hope that the desire to protect other people from having it happen to them would play a role."* (Athletic)

- *"Just I think the backlash. I mean, just the fact that if you're going to report somebody, especially somebody that's popular within the unit or anything, it's hard for people to believe what you're reporting is true about that individual. They have not displayed that type of character. They don't see it in their own eye, and you're just the rabble rouser. I think the victim is probably going to feel not comfortable to share that because they don't want to deal with it."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated some cadets fear getting in trouble themselves for other behaviors.**
  - *"It's never as simple as everyone was sober and bad guy came in and assaulted good girl. It's always like there is some situation that good girl was also maybe doing something wrong and so it's like I don't want to report this guy because then they'll find out what I was doing too and I'll ultimately get in trouble."* (Athletic)
  - *"[Recalling another case] There a lot of drinking, other maybe more minor offenses was going on, and then that stuff will come out in the court martial proceeding. And then everybody was held accountable regardless of the separate offenses that came out, whereas that may discourage people from reporting because 'I'm not getting in trouble to a lesser included offense,' even though what the focus should be is the major."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that the length of time the process takes discourages reporting.**
  - *"I think the cases, once they become an unrestricted report, take forever, and there's a lot of time in limbo. And limbo is not a very fun place to be. I think you can count on six to nine months. And it would be easier to not report that."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated the nature of the investigative process could be difficult on a survivor.**
  - *"I think the investigative process is somewhat invasive. As a victim, if you have to meet with uniformed CGIS [Coast Guard Investigative Service] folks, so it's not super fun. Whether it's here or anywhere else, the victim feels like they're on trial. Which is a painful experience."* (Athletic)

Impact of multiple incidents by the same offender on decision to report

- **Some staff members indicated that it is likely someone would be a repeat offender.**
  - *"[Multiple Yes]"* (Faculty)
  - *"Yeah, this doesn't surprise me, just given what little I know about sexual assault in general, it's that it's not unusual for it to be one perpetrator either repeating offenses on the same victim or repeating offenses on several victims."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that knowledge about repeat offenders might encourage people to come forward.**
  - *"But you would think if they had the information to figure that out ahead of time, maybe they'd come forward as a group. That's consistent with the general trends that you see of once one does come forward, often there are more who then come forward."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think if they knew about it. I think it's maybe clandestine enough or hidden enough that victim A doesn't know what happened to victim B."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think that's a good message, yes."* (Military)
  - *"Yes, there's a value in that. Then you know it's not just you and there would be others potentially who would support and who have also been in the same thing. There was [a case with] one offender and multiple victims, and when one came forward, they all came forward. And it was an incredible support system I think that affected everyone else saying maybe if I do speak up we'll find that I'm not the only one. So I think there is value to that."* (Military)

Reasons why someone would report

- **Some staff members indicated reasons why a cadet would come forward and report sexual assault.**
  - *"To get the person who got them and see justice done."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think to come forward, I would hope that the desire to protect other people from having it happen to them would play a role."* (Faculty)

Retaliation

Survey results in active duty, Reserve component, and Academy populations as well as feedback from active duty Service members in focus groups have indicated that the perception of retaliation from either a survivor's leadership or peers is a barrier to reporting USC. Focus group participants were asked whether retaliation for reporting sexual assault could occur at the Academy and what behaviors they believe might constitute retaliation. Participants were read the following DoD definitions of professional and social retaliation:

> "DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
>
> 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/midshipmen, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on

training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].

2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense."

Participants were then asked if they were aware of these specific prohibitions against retaliation. They were also asked to whom a cadet would report an experience of retaliation against them. The section ended with a discussion of recommendations for eliminating retaliation.

Occurrence of retaliation at the Academy

- **Some staff members indicated that social retaliation for reporting sexual assault is more likely than professional retaliation/reprisal.**
  - *"I would say less so that, the first part [professional]. But I think it's always subconsciously there. I do not think it would be outward enough that it would be like a legal retaliation."* (Faculty)
  - *"I guess it depends how broad your definition of retaliation is. In terms of reputation, I think it would be a larger, greater probability in terms of reputation. Whether or not the victim's name comes out or not, it's as tight as three people living together, the rumors will go out and this person may be lying or something or there's more to it than that. I think there would be the reputation of that person is trying to get people in trouble or something like that. In that sense of going after that person."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think any time you report and it's known that you are involved in this case, and in a small school especially where everyone knows pretty much everyone, when people see you they're going to look at you and say 'Oh, she's the one that made the report.' So when they see you, they don't see you anymore, they see the incident that happened."* (Faculty)
  - *"That we're pursuing this case to an Article 32 hearing and potentially a court martial because the victim wants to push this. Not as the institution just pursuing a crime, but the victim has to say 'Yeah, let's do this.' Sure, but that could increase the ostracism of her if that were true. I think that would happen for every case here probably that goes far. And that would not be good for the victim."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that professional retaliation could take the form of a lower performance report.**
  - *"I would think here that the retaliation would CERs, Cadet Evaluation Reports, for poor performance. So in other words, it could be a form of retaliation."* (Athletic)

- *"And the scenario that comes to mind is if a person reports a sexual assault against somebody who may be a class or two classes above them, and the offender is friends with somebody in that person's chain of command, so that person who's a supervisor to the victim is upset and retribution could be doled out with evaluations or something like that."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that retaliation by cadets would be subtle.**
  - *"They're smart enough, they know they're going to be watched, people that want to do something like that are going to be smart enough not to do it with others watching."* (Male)
  - *"It would happen subtly, in ways that you maybe couldn't tie it to. It might be assigning duties or it might be a lot of things like that could go on. This is probably more the second variety [social], but the cold shoulder, you're getting ignored. And we're a small enough Service that it follows you into the fleet. They say the personnel records are closed, but we're a small town."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that loyalty to each other can result in retaliation against someone who accuses one's friends of something.**
  - *"The idea of the Corps leading the Corps is we built a lot of leadership positions for the cadets to have over each other, so we have diffused a lot of the leadership that officers could have over them down to the cadet level. That scenario of classes band together, and loyalty to friends versus loyalty to the Service or to the values is a big time conflict for cadets in general, just because they're forming into officers. So especially the younger ones, they'll latch to their friends first. So if you accuse my buddy, who's another senior, well, we are going to take care of you. They're not going to do that consciously, but they're just going to have that attitude towards that accuser."* (Male)

Examples of perceived retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated the kinds of behaviors they would consider as ostracism.**
  - *"[For example] I'm in charge of this freshman and she just accused another senior, I don't want to get too near, I don't want to be perceived as treating you any different or better or worse, so I'm just going to avoid you. So I think that isolation is probably more common."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that transfers are made in the best interests of the cadet, but can start rumors or be viewed as punishment for reporting.**
  - *"Moving somebody in companies. You're taking that person out of their comfort zone, or maybe leaving them in their comfort zone would help them to deal with the issue better than taking them away from their friends and putting them in the new*

situation. Now they have to adjust to being in a new company, living in a different area, and dealing with that issue could be a problem." (Faculty)

- *"I feel like there is definitely effort, though, to make that person whole again and to try to cater to what best fits them. I feel like there are efforts there too. It's not just blind, 'Oh, we're moving you, it's good for you.' I think that discussion does happen of what are you looking for, what can we do on this end. I honestly want to believe that that is happening, and from what I've seen it has happened."* (Military)

- *"When you move companies and there's no explanation for it. A cadet was transferred, and we didn't talk about it, he was just there. Then everybody is going to wonder why and you're going to hear all kinds of stuff. And that could feel like that could be care for both sides, which it is, but it could feel like punishment or retribution."* (Military)

- *"It's just a negative stigma any time there's cadet movement out of the barracks. There's a negative stigma. Even if we do talk about it, it's usually a negative reason why that cadet has to move out of a company."* (Military)

Reporting retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated they were not sure who they would advise a cadet to contact to take a report of retaliation for reporting a sexual assault.**
  - *"I wouldn't know where to go right now if that happened. I would have no idea where to go. I would have to ask somebody."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated various authorities they would advise a cadet to contact to report retaliation.**
  - *"I'm not sure what it is here, but anywhere else I would go to whoever the direct link was to OCR for retaliation. Office of Civil Rights."* (Athletic)
  - *"EEO."* (Athletic)
  - *"There are so many mentors, every cadet has numerous people they could count on, whether academically or militarily, I could imagine it would come out in conversation at some point."* (Faculty)
  - *"Counselors, chaplains, their defense attorneys if they have one, which they probably would. SARC. Just about anybody."* (Military)
  - *"Anybody in leadership. Should be able to take that for action. That's not a restricted or unrestricted. There are enough other resources."* (Military)
  - *"DHS [Department of Homeland Security]. I don't think cadets know that that's even available to them. Which it is, but they don't know you can go that route."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that dealing with retaliation can be difficult, especially when the facts are difficult to determine.**
  - *"Putting myself back in the position when I was in the fleet, if we had an incident like this and then somebody came to me as their supervisor and said I believe I'm being retaliated against because I'm perceiving that I'm being ostracized from my division, department, what have you, I would admit that I would be very confused on how to go forward with that. Do I bring administrative action against somebody for not speaking enough to somebody or not sitting with them at lunch? How do you help that person, you want to help them, but as their supervisor how do you help them? I wouldn't know, to be honest."* (Faculty)
  - *"I'm not sure they would think they were free to talk to someone about that unless they felt like they could prove it. It's an accusation that's not going to go anywhere. It's going to be perceived as something that won't actually help them to speak up because it's just going to exacerbate all the problems that created the retaliation in the first place. I think they would look into it, they would try to. But if you can't prove anything, what action are you going to take other than moving someone out of the company."* (Faculty)

Suggestions to reduce retaliation

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy could improve the training and awareness on reporting retaliation.**
  - *"Yes."* (Military)
  - *"And I think that would helpful for not only a sexual assault case but for the other cases. If they think the institution is coming down hard on them and they're not getting answers, it's just a fact of reaching out to the Inspector General to raise some issue on what's happening. Cadets don't know anything about that. It may open up more a can of worms, but it's one of those things that you have got to face, and I think it's a good thing."* (Military)

Social Media

As a follow on to the discussion of retaliation, faculty and staff participants were asked if social media is used as a vehicle for retaliation. The discussion started with a general inquiry of the use of social media among cadets and the rules for use of social media at the Academy. Participants were asked to describe if social media might be used as a form of retaliation and what, if anything, the Academy could do to prevent such use.

General use of social media

- **Some staff members indicated that social media is used for a variety of negative actions against each other.**
  - *"Just bullying and rumors and lots of stuff goes on."* (Athletic)

  - *"That's just cyber bullying in Web form."* (Athletic)
  - *"We've certainly heard enough about it out in just the general populace. To the point where I've heard people have committed suicide over it."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that bullying can be directed at either a specific person or a group.**
  - *"Anybody."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that ostracism via social media can occur after reporting a sexual assault.**
  - *"It could be."* (Athletic)
  - *"Sure."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that the following sites are commonly used.**
  - *"Snapchat."* (Athletic)
  - *"Instagram."* (Athletic)
  - *"Facebook."* (Athletic)
  - *"Pinterest. Instagram is big."* (Military)
  - *"They use it a lot, a lot of social media, quite a bit. How they do it? Usually through their iPhones or smart phones, laptops. It could be any type of devices."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that there are positive uses for social media.**
  - *"It's a good way to keep in touch."* (Athletic)
  - *"Keep in touch, especially so after the seniors graduate and go to their deployments or to their stations, keeping in touch with someone who's in Alaska and you're in Florida."* (Athletic)
  - *"Here I think the ability to use that social media is a freedom. So at the Academy it's viewed as a freedom. It's a closed, restricted environment. It's a freedom, it's a contact to the outside world, it's contact to other people."* (Athletic)
  - *"They're really connected. Over spring break we had an incident that was able to be communicated to everybody very quickly."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that social media sites are sometimes used jokingly.**
  - *"I hear a lot of people, they joke with each other in class. And as faculty we try to prevent this, but the Snapchats, like if somebody is sleeping in the class they'll take a*

picture, 'Look at this sleepy head,' and Snapchat it out to all their friends, and they laugh. I guess there could be more offensive applications of that." (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy would most likely distribute information through email and not use social media for serious issues.**
  - *"Just emails."* (Athletic)
  - *"For something more serious I doubt they'd use Facebook. For something more celebratory, like congratulations seniors on your graduation or something."* (Athletic)

Use of Yik Yak[60]

- **Some staff members indicated that the anonymity of Yik Yak is a main draw for the site.**
  - *"So I was on deck at a meet this past weekend and they were talking about kids [on Yik Yak], using their names. The bravery of anonymity."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that there are potential learning opportunities when something negative happens on a site like Yik Yak.**
  - *"Well, at the beginning of the year we had a Yik Yak scandal. So Yik Yak is where you can post anonymously by location so you can see everything that everybody else is posting in an area. There was a back and forth between Conn College, which is right across the street, and our school, trash talking back and forth and cadets naming other cadets and some bullying and some sad stuff that popped up. And we got the chance to teach responsible social media use out of that one, and encourage cadet peer intervention. And all of the things that should happen did, I think. And then cadets distanced themselves from it. It was good education on our part I thought."* (Military)
  - *"I think we presented it as a problem for the cadets to solve themselves in one way, like 'Hey, you don't want to see your Corps do this, do you?' And so regimental staff or the top cadet leaders took action and discussed it and said this is what we're going to do about it, which is a great way for them to solve their own problems. But I talked about it in a couple different classes too. We printed it out. And there were some ugly words on there and stuff, and I wanted cadets to see it."* (Military)

[60] Yik Yak was mentioned repeatedly in focus groups as a common way to retaliate. As such, facilitators inquired specifically about this form of social media. Yik Yak is a social media smartphone application where subscribers can post comments anonymously. It is geo-based with approximately five-mile radius.

Restrictions on the use of social media at the Academy

- **Some staff members indicated that freshmen cannot use social media, except under certain circumstances.**
  - *"Freshmen cannot."* (Athletic)
  - *"I don't think they're allowed wireless on their phones either on campus. So they have to use their own data plans and things like that."* (Athletic)
  - *"They have access to their phones. They're not authorized to have a Facebook profile or Twitter or Snapchat or anything like that. But they can have their phones."* (Faculty)
  - *"And when they go to their sponsor families, they can turn on things like Skype and stuff like that, as long as they turn it back off again before they come back to the Academy."* (Faculty)
  - *"They have to deactivate it [Facebook] while they're here while they're a fourth class [freshman]."* (Faculty)

Monitoring social media sites

- **Some staff members indicated that these sites should be monitored by the Academy.**
  - *"Certainly."* (Athletic)
  - *"In a setting like this they would, it's a public setting."* (Athletic)
  - *"I'm not sure cadets realize that doing stuff like that could impact their career."* (Faculty)
  - *"When you put stuff on the Internet, it's out there. You can't take it back, it's out there forever."* (Faculty)
  - *"I would be supportive of some kind of auditing system where you look through the fourth classes [freshman] pictures or when they become a third class [sophomore], and somebody in a responsibility leadership role is perusing what's out there. And if you notice one person is posting things that are really inappropriate or are going to lead to problems, then have a conversation where it's a very direct."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets know their posts can be monitored.**
  - *"I think they understand that whatever they post is subject to be used against them. There have been instances where kids have been brought up on alcohol offenses because for some reason in an investigation they go to a Facebook page and there's an underage kid with a beer in his hand. That's an alcohol offense."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated there could be difficulties with monitoring sites.**
  - *"I could see with Facebook, especially people who are not very careful about what picture they put, if it's like summer bikini pictures, I could see a bunch of dudes getting on Facebook and like 'Oh, let's look at cadet A's, oh man, she put all the spring break pictures, oh, man, look at that.' Googling or making fun, whatever they're going to do. But put that up on the Internet, it's not safe anymore, but she's still a cadet, so where's the line? She put it out there, and the Internet is free for everyone."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated they would take action if something questionable occurred on a social media post.**
  - *"If it was a cadet with whom I had a relationship as being an advisee or a student and I felt comfortable pulling them aside and having a conversation as a mentor, I would do it. But if it was a cadet with whom I really didn't have a relationship, then I would probably reach out to their company officer chief and say, 'You know, I heard through the grapevine that this was out there and I'm concerned, you might want to pull the cadet aside.'"* (Faculty)

- **Conversely, some staff members indicated they were unsure of what to do if something questionable occurred.**
  - *"I wouldn't know."* (Athletic)
  - *"I don't know about for us. I don't know about for cadets. I don't think there is for us."* (Athletic)

Suggestions for using social media to provide resources

- **Some staff members indicated that there is a need for discussion about how to be professional on social media.**
  - *"There should certainly be conversations about being professional in these social media venues and keeping in mind what being unprofessional in them, what impacts those might have. But any time someone talks about adding more training, there's too much training already."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think they need to learn, if you just come up with more policies prohibiting stuff. They need to learn how to handle social media. We could not let them do it for the four years that they're here, but now they're starting from scratch when they become ensigns. Just like they need to learn how to drink responsibly."* (Faculty)
  - *"Frankly I don't know if we have a social media policy training or responsible social media training. I think we get a lot of that from our AIS, automated information systems, training and security training. Like to not post things about security type deals. But when it comes to just in general, I don't think we have anything out there."* (Military)

- *"I think that would fall mainly on the company in the Corps that focuses on honor, like the respect, the Corps values type of things. For instance, ethics forum, Charlie Company would be the one to devise that type of training. Or maybe it's a series of all hands on deck creating that. But I don't know what venue it would come about."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy is not very directive in addressing appropriate social media use.**
  - *"There's the general Coast Guard on social media use, but the Academy itself is not directed at all. The only thing I've seen the Academy use is before Christmas break saying don't put your travel plans or anything like that. Personal security issues."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that CASA could provide a way of talking to students about responsible use of social media.**
  - *"I think there's a role for organizations like the Cadets Against Sexual Assault student group. And we talk a lot about taking care of your people, and we are very good at trying to teach cadets to take care of their junior members in a very professional way. But the people at CASA should be looking out for the younger cadets who are now on social media and training them peer-to-peer. 'I noticed, I'm looking at your Facebook, I see this, and here's some suggestions on how you could be more professional in how you present yourself on the Internet.' Rather than a lieutenant going and looking at this nineteen-year-old's Facebook and saying that's inappropriate. I would feel really uncomfortable."* (Faculty)
  - *"I could see a first class female educating a third class female about what's on her Facebook. It would probably be the most effective, appropriate, safe way to do something like that."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that the Academy should hold cadets accountable for negative posts.**
  - *"Yes."* (Faculty)
  - *"Certainly if somebody's peer sees something on Facebook and they feel like it's crossing a line and they report it, I certainly think it's well within the Academy's purview to hold that person accountable. When you're on Facebook a lot of times you're representing yourself, but you're representing a Coast Guard Academy member. The Deployable Operations Group, which doesn't exist anymore, would troll everybody's profile and they would say 'Hey, look at this person's Facebook photos, you need to deal with this.' There is precedent for the Service to jump in and hold people accountable for their postings online."* (Faculty)

- *"I think you'd have better luck holding them accountable for professionalism, slander, those sorts of things, than proving that they intended to stop someone from reporting sexual assault."* (Faculty)

- *"I think, especially if it's a violation of any of our core values, that we could take that for action and conduct unbecoming or whatever, there's a label for it."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that there are sites where people post about their experiences of sexual assault, however, they are outside the Academy.**

  - *"There are a couple of Web sites. I can't remember the name of it, but people write their stories in the military, their sexual assaults, and it's actually predominantly Coast Guard, even though other Services can post."* (Military)

  - *"I think there was one, it was an older one, cadets were on it, but mostly it's active duty, outside of the Academy. There are places you can put anything you want out there."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that use of social media to provide resources to cadets for problems should be explored.**

  - *"And try to have them handle situations without, or know what to do if they don't have a device or outlet. Maybe we do need to embrace social media more and find a way that's comfortable for them to report or discuss on social media."* (Military)

  - *"I think it has to be a resource app that you could just click and it gives you tons of information like who to go to, maybe it has the definitions of restricted and unrestricted and a phone number that you call right away, like a 911 type thing."* (Military)

Perceptions of Leadership

Another major area for investigation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups centered on perceptions of leadership with respect to their engagement in preventing USC. The *2014 SAGR* survey asked if various levels of leadership made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Faculty and staff participants were provided the results of those questions and asked to discuss differences in perceptions of efforts by various leaders (See Appendix J, Figure 5 "Confidence in Leadership" for the details shared with participants).

Discussion of confidence in leadership

- **Some staff members indicated that the results indicate that leadership is serious about sexual assault issues.**

  - *"With rare exception you're talking the eighties and nineties. So I think that's pretty high."* (Faculty)

- **Some military staff members indicated they felt the ratings for military staff should be higher.**
  - *"I'm surprised why we're not at a hundred. We should be."* (Military)
- **Some military staff indicated that lower ratings could be the result of cadets' negative perceptions of the investigation process after allegations of USC.**
  - *"They see something get dragged out for way too long and they don't have the facts. You could have a negative experience with that."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets are more likely to trust leadership that discusses sexual assault issues regularly and seem informed on the issue.**
  - *"The military commissioned officers in charge of a unit, like 89 percent, versus military academic faculty, which is 82 percent. I would imagine that the officers in Chase Hall are talking about this sexual assault/harassment more often than I am in my class. So just by association they think that the commissioned officers in the barracks are more willing to handle it, versus I'm perceived as less likely to deal with it just because I don't have to ever talk about it in the context of my class. So I think it's just that perception bias."* (Faculty)
  - *"Maybe because they perceive civilian faculty as even less understandable, less knowledgeable in the military procedures for handling this, because they're a civilian expert in a specific academic area that doesn't connect to this type of a topic."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated surprise at the low ratings of civilian and athletic staff.**
  - *"Well, I think that there's a gap here between uniformed military members and civilian teachers or coaches. And I'm surprised that those are lower. I think that in some ways those are safer people for the cadets to turn to."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that cadets may not see sexual assault as an issue that civilian or athletic staff deal with.**
  - *"I think maybe they don't hear the message as much from them versus military staff and in the barracks, because we're always talking about this at least once or twice a month. And athletic and civilian faculty, depending on who, I just don't see them at all talking about the seriousness [of] our mission in the Coast Guard is to eliminate sexual assault in the entire Coast Guard."* (Military)
  - *"They may see them removed from the process."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that civilian and athletic staff should make it clear that sexual assault issues are relevant to them.**
  - *"I think there is a huge need for that, because they would be the ones enforcing that this isn't just a military issue, but it's everywhere."* (Military)
  - *"And oftentimes the coaches are the most trusted people on campus for a lot of the cadets. So to hear it from them and reinforce it not in the same manner we would do it, they don't lecture their athletes, but I think it's critical that we are all on the same page with the prevention effort."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that athletic staff might not have many opportunities to bring up issues of sexual assault.**
  - *"I'm just thinking that when would they say it when they're coaching, what venue would they do that?"* (Military)
  - *"I think in some cases the coaches aren't aware of the facts and so what they're hearing from, at least about sexual assault and how to handle it is from cadets, and so they get cadet versions sometimes, and don't always know enough to have the conversation with their teams when that casual conversation comes up about what happened in the past or what's happening now."* (Military)
  - *"It's not in the field or practice. It's usually when something happens or there's mandatory training they're involved. They'll say it, what needs to be said, which is in agreement with all of us. But I don't know if there's a need for them to do it all the time."* (Military)
  - *"I see it from our side of the house doing more of the promoting, because our training has designated times when we have to have these trainings, and it's really our responsibility to carry out that message. But for the coaches I think the only time they really could talk about this is probably in the beginning of their season when they're talking about their expectations and talking about we want you to be a great athlete, but also a great cadet. I just don't see them talking about sexual assault."* (Military)
  - *"I think that's probably why the numbers are lower [athletic staff]. And it's not because they're not making an effort to stop sexual assault, but they're not hearing it from them. And that would be my interpretation of this. Not that they're working against us or anything like that."* (Military)
- **Some athletic staff members indicated that cadets may be unclear on who is considered athletic staff.**
  - *"So you made the distinction. And I think those numbers reflect what was being said. I also think it reflects, whenever you put Academy senior leaders, I don't necessarily think of the dean when I think of senior leaders. I think of the person in charge of the whole place, so that would be the Admiral. So there is a military, there's a*

leadership position in there. Commissioned officers in charge of their unit, 93 percent, 89 percent commissioned officers. Again, just supporting what was being said there, as opposed to athletic staff. I don't necessarily think that many of us here fit into two of the categories here. So many of us here fit into the civilian academic faculty and the athletic staff. Was there a distinction that was made when you said athletic staff? So what I'm saying is, in terms of the distinction, there could be cadets here that don't think of us as civilian academic faculty and they don't think of us as athletic staff either." (Athletic)

– *"We're not athletic staff. If this said athletic coaches, I think it would elicit not a different response, but it would elicit a clearer response for the responder. When you are put in athletic staff I think it clouds up who that is referring to. So I'm not sure. I'm not sure that that is reflecting the population that's in the room right now."* (Athletic)

- **Some athletic staff members indicated that most cadets do not have frequent interaction with athletic staff, relative to their level of interaction with military leadership.**

  – *"I think another thing that might skew it is, and I don't want to make excuses for us, but some of us are gender specific coaches. So naturally there's going to be predisposition for female athletes to report to female coaches and male athletes to male coaches. Also, female cadets not to feel comfortable with male coaches because they just don't interact with them. Your average female cadet probably won't go report to your men's coach, only men."* (Athletic)

  – *"I think it's more of a lack of access to the people who are offended more than anything else. We all teach classes, but I don't know a cadet who I'm going to have two days a week in a class for a quarter well enough for them to report to me primarily, as opposed to someone who wears a uniform and is potentially a colleague down the road and is a true stakeholder."* (Athletic)

  – *"My athletes may feel very comfortable reporting to me. But that's not 76 percent of the population. So I think there's some inherent difficulty in the question, at least as we're perceived. That's not to make excuses for us. I think it's more just a lack of access than anything else."* (Athletic)

- **Some athletic staff members indicated that cadets may not be aware that athletic staff receive training on sexual assault issues.**

  – *"I think they're probably reflective of the cadets' understanding of the certifications or qualifications that we go through. You're there with like your dean of students, our Academy senior leaders. Every fall there's some kind of training or group presentation on SARC, on something else. And that that would go into pretty much everybody there who's in uniform, that cadets are going through training that's similar to the officers, so they're aware of it because they go through it. And they're probably not as aware that we go through it too because it's at a separate time or*

something to that effect because we're not military or in uniform. So I think it's more reflective of their knowledge." (Athletic)

Athletic Teams

Findings from the *2014 SAGR* survey suggested that in some instances behaviors among athletic teams and/or specific athletes contributed to unwanted gender-related behaviors at the Academy. Faculty and staff members were asked to discuss whether they perceived any issues with teams or athletes and whether standards for conduct applied equally to athletes and non-athletes. The results of the *2014 SAGR* survey were again shared regarding leadership's efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment, and staff members were asked to discuss whether efforts were the same or different for members of the athletic staff as other types of Academy leaders. Note that unlike the three DoD Academies that are Division I, USCGA participates in Division III athletics.

Standards and conduct of athletes

- **Some staff members indicated that because so many cadets are athletes that any offender is likely to be an athlete.**
  - *"Well, 65 percent are athletes here. So it's just a big chance that if somebody does something here, that it's a cadet. And if you throw the club sports in with the varsity athletes, you're probably up around what, 80?"* (Athletic)
  - *"You know, such a large percentage of the Corps is involved in athletics, it's really hard to make generalizations about athletes that doesn't apply to everybody. We've got I think over 60 percent are involved in varsity athletic sports, and if you open that up to the clubs, you're well over 80 percent of the entire corps is involved in athletics."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that the culture of athletics does encourage more unwanted sexual behavior.**
  - *"It relates to the horseplaying issue again. When you have a group of individuals, and I will say primarily men, acting very immaturely and playing the genitalia game, it tends to carry off the court, off the field. And in situations where they may be isolated, such as going down on a trip or overseas to play sports, they may still continue that behavior. And it could happen. I'm not saying it does, but I wouldn't be surprised if it does come up."* (Athletic)
  - *"Yeah, [it's a cultural thing] and if you add alcohol to the factor, things can get crazy."* (Athletic)
- **Some staff members indicated that because athletic teams are well integrated into the general Academy population that the standards are the same.**
  - *"I think the difference between the Coast Guard Academy from the other academies is football, for instance, like the other three academies, those are major high level*

Division I athletics. So for the most part those, the football players are really never around, especially the first semester, so they're isolated. So that could lend to that maybe at the other academies. Whereas here, speaking from experience, you just basically go to practice and the games, and then you're on your own as a more integrated member." (Athletic)

- *"I would say yes [standards are the same]. You're a member of the organization. There's no person who is going to be of a higher standard. Or stated to have committed or alleged to have committed some things and then people thought he did. Here you're a member of the organization before you're anything else. Before you're a fourth class cadet you know you're a member of the organization. So here in terms of are people held to the standards, yes, because you're a member of the organization before anything else."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that leadership may not hold athletes to the same standards.**
  - *"I think that at least I look at teams differently and I think I do hold them to different standards, because I was just thinking about spring break and when some of the teams came back I didn't want to ask certain questions of them because I guess I'm assuming things happened that went bad. And that should be a red flag that I'm not pursuing these and asking questions because I think something was happening, and I think that's a problem. There shouldn't be a team that I think 'oh, I don't really want to know what they did on that spring break together.' I do think some teams are fine, and I would be much more apt to talk to a different team about their whole break and what they did and, team dynamics, but then not so much some other teams. So I guess I do view them differently."* (Athletic)

General perception of athletes and sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that perceptions of athletes are positive.**
  - *"There are quite a few I would say some star athletes here at the Academy, some nationally ranked individuals, and in my opinion, they've always carried themselves with the highest respect."* (Athletic)
  - *"I've been impressed with them."* (Athletic)

Culture

Faculty and staff members were asked to describe the general attitude at the Academy regarding sexual assault, including their attitude toward the training they receive and its effectiveness, the degree to which the Academy emphasizes sexual assault prevention in relation to other programs, how the emphasis on sexual assault at the national level reflects at the Academy, and how well the peer program works at their Academy. They were also asked whether issues of sexual harassment and sexist behavior receive the same emphasis as sexual assault. Finally, participants were asked for recommendations on ways to change the culture to reduce inappropriate behaviors.

General attitude among students about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated they think students view sexual assault as less of a problem at the Academy compared to other campuses.**
  - *"Oh, not as big a problem."* (Military)
  - *"There's the sense that it's safer here."* (Military)
- **Some staff members indicated that the standards of the Academy are much higher than those at civilian colleges.**
  - *"I think our threshold for acceptance is a lot lower than that of society. So like six percent is way too much for the Coast Guard Academy, whereas six percent at university, state college, whatever, is great. So I think our cadets understand that we have different standards. We hold ourselves to a different set of standards as far as the perception. I imagine the cadets, if their perception is the Rolling Stone articles and what's going on with the fraternities, and they think that's indicative of our society, they know we're doing great, whatever is occurring is much better than in the outside world. So they probably feel safer here. And they have a lot more personal mentors, but one-on-one interactions with teachers and leaders that would give them more outlets for reporting."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that although cadets feel safe on campus because of all the regulations, it does not necessarily prepare them for situations and life outside the Academy.**
  - *"I think, yeah, we have more of a regulatory society here than other campuses, which can be good and can be bad in terms of preventing sexual assault, because when people go out to the university of wherever and they go to frat parties, bad things tend to occur there."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think the safety we have here hurts them when they go out in the real word in a group or the first time they are starting to drink. I think they lower their shields a lot more than they should when they're out in the bars or out in the fleet."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that it may be difficult for cadets to see sexual assault as a problem if they do not have a personal connection to it.**
  - *"An 18 and 22 year old, you basically feel you're invincible. And no matter how many times somebody else said that something is a problem, it's not really a problem until it's part of your life. So how much would the Corps think sexual assault is a problem unless it happened to them or one of their good friends."* (Faculty)
  - *"I think for a lot it doesn't become an important issue until it somehow affects them, either personally or a friend."* (Military)

- *"They probably all lump that together as just prevention training that they've got to go to and listen to. And again, it's not serious until it's affecting them."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that male cadets are now more afraid of interacting with fellow cadets in case one of them says or reports something.**
  - *"That's right."* (Military)
  - *"I hope that doesn't exist, but I think in a way women have this power or upper hand. So should they make any kind of report or suggestion that a man is inappropriately touching or commenting, that's something that would ruin them."* (Military)
  - *"I think it's natural for, in this day and age, for males to be very aware of their surroundings. Especially if they're counseling a younger cadet of the opposite sex, maybe to bring in the same gender female in the room."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that it is helpful that the Academy has a high percentage of high performing females compared to other academies.**
  - *"There's so many high performing females, the guys don't have anything on them. They're doing really well in school, they're in leadership positions, there's a critical mass amount of them that they're doing well. And I think that that matters."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that it is important to remember about the offender's rights in addition to the victim's.**
  - *"I think in regard to sexual assault that it needs to be talked about, but I think it's important that the offender has rights too. And oftentimes we disregard that person who's being accused and focus on the victim. But until we have all of the information, I think the accused also needs to be protected as best as possible And as soon as it becomes public information that this person is involved, and if it turns out that it didn't happen or it was a false report, which I hate to say that, sometimes there are, that person can't recover from that. Forever they're going to be labeled or assumed to be that guy or girl. So an effort to protect that is important. Then again, us protecting them is super-secret. We never really want to talk about what's going on, and there are rumors, so that's a slippery slope too. So I don't know is the answer."* (Military)

Attitudes about the focus on sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault is a high priority among issues cadets are expected to take seriously.**
  - *"I would think in the current culture, if I based it on my experience here at the Academy, I would say it's high. I've attended several of those trainings, so I would say it's high, I would say the culture is, it's a culture of awareness."* (Athletic)

- *"You get a second try with alcohol. You're not likely to get one with sexual assault. But with the reporting fewer people are being punished for sexual assault because they're not coming forward."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets take the issue of sexual assault seriously.**
  - *"I think they do take it seriously. Those who act as the CASA reps take that to heart. But I think this population, like any other college in the country, probably has a lot of it tied to alcohol abuse and what they're doing outside the gates. The two are pretty closely intertwined."* (Athletic)

- **Some staff members indicated that sexual assault training and general awareness has increased over the last couple of years.**
  - *"Yes."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated they have received a specific consistent message from leadership about sexual assault.**
  - *"I don't think months. I think it's any time the Commandant would want to visit and he would want to address the faculty or the Corps. That was one of the three or four specific messages he had for everyone is that sexual assault in the Service will not be tolerated."* (Faculty)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets may not see it as a high priority and rather just a reaction to sexual assault being a current issue.**
  - *"I think they see it as just a reaction to the Commandants mandate from last year and this year's Commandant of what's going on in the world with the DoD sexual assault. I just think it's the reaction to what's going on. Is it sustainable, that's yet to be determined."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that an important message to cadets regarding sexual assault is that everyone is responsible for preventing sexual assault and there are no bystanders.**
  - *"There are no bystanders, that message came out. I think that's an important message, because no one thinks it's going to happen to them. So just being aware that it could happen to someone around you and just being aware to prevent that is a big step."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that cadets look out for each other.**
  - *"I've heard that they do. When we've talked about this they say we're brothers and sisters, we're like family, and they think that their friends would look out for them."* (Military)

- *"Especially with people outside of the Coast Guard. So if you were mixed with other college students, I think there would be a strong unity or bond to protect each other. I think it's tricky when it becomes a cadet to cadet situation."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that the large number of trainings may result in cadets not listening to the trainings as much.**
  - *"Just from what I hear, I think they do it too much. 'Oh, another sexual assault training. Oh, got another sexual assault training.' Maybe too much where they're going, but now it's just going in one ear and out the other."* (Athletic)

Role of peer programs

- **Some staff members indicated that CASA is a group where sexual assault is taken seriously.**
  - *"Well, the folks that are members of CASA. They volunteer. They're taking a firm stand against it."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated that there are about four or five CASA members per company.**
  - *"There's like four or five in each company maybe, at the max."* (Military)
  - *"So I'm thinking about five to ten percent maybe of each company."* (Military)

- **Some staff members indicated they were pleased with the Academy's student programs related to sexual assault.**
  - *"I think one thing I was surprised about when I got here and I didn't expect, I think it's a good thing, is the fact that they are training cadets to take unrestricted reports. They're very identifiable with the different colored name tag up in the barracks. I think that's a great thing. And maybe that will serve as somewhat of a deterrence for the potential offender, because they know that there's so many outlets for the victim and for victims to report. If one of the people happened to be your friend and somebody that they trust or somebody that they know by reputation and someone that's trustworthy, then they would be more apt to do that. If they don't have that, then they would be more apt not to do that."* (Faculty)

Training and Education

Training that has been conducted on sexual assault prevention and response is a recurring topic for surveys and focus groups. The Academies also address gender-related issues within many of their professional education and leadership programs. Faculty and staff members were asked for recommendations to improve training and education on topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide examples they had received in the previous year that were most effective and least effective.

General discussion of training and sexual assault

- **Some staff members indicated that making training relevant to the lives of cadets would be useful.**
  - *"I think the closer you can make it to their experience, the better, the more impactful. If you bring somebody in from within the organization, and I think this comes back to that culture, if somebody from within the organization came up and gave a firsthand account and relayed the process and how because of the process that's in place they were able to do this, there was no retaliation, it all responded appropriately, the more impact it's going to have on them in terms of their trainings. The further away you get from them, for example, if you're just going to do it online, get in front of a computer and blaze through and answer, that would be the least impactful."* (Athletic)
- **Some faculty members described the training that they believe their students like the best.**
  - *"The one where we pretty much provided them with scenarios, class specific. Here's a scenario you might have as a fourth class, third class, so and so, this guy's a JO [junior officer], and we step back and just ask questions, what do you think about that? They had the speakers who talked to them about how that stuff works in the Coast Guard, and then we had the breakout sessions. They gave us really positive feedback or they gave me positive feedback."* (Faculty)
  - *"They seem to really like the small breakout focus group type things that have subjects, what-if scenarios, this is a case that actually happened in the Coast Guard, what would you do? Things that they see a direct learning and knowledge base that will help them in their career. And they do not like sitting in Leamy Hall for a mass training."* (Faculty)
  - *"If we really care about them learning something or taking action or changing their values, it has to be small group and it has to be more tailored. And you have to feel like the trainer cares about you learning it, rather than just talking at you for an hour."* (Faculty)
- **Some staff members indicated that a diversity of training is important.**
  - *"I think the best way to reach them would probably be a media type of outlet, maybe a documentary, but graphic, to the point. But to the point also where it hits, it makes you feel like 'Wow, like I couldn't believe that happened.' This actually happened and actually shows a dramatization of it."* (Military)
  - *"I don't know that we've ever brought an outsider that does stuff at other campuses, like the May I Kiss You show, or something else, Sex Signals. I would love to see that kind of road show come through here. I don't think that we've done it in a couple of*

years. And something else, like I've heard there's an acting out of a court case. I think that kind of thing would make a good impact on the cadets." (Military)

- **Some staff members had mixed perspectives about alumni having a role in training.**
  - *"I think that would be yes and no, it depends. I think if it's someone that they can relate to. It depends on the speaker."* (Military)
  - *"We brought somebody back who got in trouble with alcohol and they came and talked to the cadets. They were two years graduated. And that was really powerful."* (Military)
  - *"They just have to relate to that speaker. And it has to be a younger speaker as well too."* (Military)
- **Some faculty members indicated that students do not give them much feedback about training.**
  - *"It's more that rolling the eyes, yeah, we had trainings. Sorry, I wanted to come and get help, but we had trainings."* (Faculty)
  - *"Generally if I'll hear about something, it's like a specific training or something that's out of the norm. Like one that I participated in, I'll ask my class in the first five minutes of class what did you think about it. Like I did that professional conduct and risk training, I thought it was really good, so I asked the class what did you all think of this. And they didn't hesitate to give their opinions. So I think if they're prompted they'll tell us."* (Faculty)

Recommended improvements to training

- **Some staff members indicated that having information available on a web site or cards would be useful.**
  - *"We've gone through that training, but if you have that more readily available to you, the levels of reporting who is capable of doing that, I think it would feel better. When you're getting your CPR on the back sometimes they would issue a card that would give you some three general steps, where to go, how to execute. So there is a little reference card that we can go to. I think it would be a good thing just make us more comfortable in terms of our role and the role that we have and the direction that we give people."* (Athletic)
- **Some faculty members offered suggestions on ways to improve their input on gender-related topics.**
  - *"So it takes five minutes out of homework Q & A or the lecture or whatever it is that you had planned. I think sometimes it's very worthwhile to do that, but you certainly can't do it every day. It would be easier to do that sort of thing if there were a little more communication on the end. If they had a particular training that was felt that it*

was high priority, give us the information a few days ahead of time, how about you spend the first five minutes of class talking about if you have time to do that. And I think many teachers would probably do that." (Faculty)

- *"If there was some time in the schedule where they built it into the block and the teacher knows these ten minutes I'm dedicated to training or review or whatever, I think that would show that the Academy really cares about absorption of training and not just delivery. We know they're very serious about delivery."* (Faculty)

- *"There's a separation perceived between the company and officers, who are very well versed in this stuff, and the teachers, military faculty. So I have a peer who's a company officer, but I just feel so disconnected from him because what he cares about, he doesn't care about what I do and there's no connection, no forced linkage. Like if you had something like this, it might force some linkages, which would help the message be uniform. We're doing a pretty good job at giving a uniform message, but we could do better."* (Faculty)

Chapter 10: Discussion

The *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups* (*2015 SAGR*) study was conducted to understand how policies and programs addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment affect the cadets and midshipmen these programs are designed to support. The focus groups are conducted in alternating annual cycles with surveys to provide both qualitative and quantitative data to help DoD and MSA leadership create the safest environment possible at the MSAs for developing the nation's future military leaders. The perspectives of the cadets and midshipmen are invaluable in assessing how well the MSAs are doing and identifying areas where they could improve. The perspectives of the staff members who interact daily with the cadets and midshipmen are likewise invaluable in understanding the social dynamics at the MSAs and how best to continue to shape the safest environment.

This *2015 SAGR* compliments the assessment performed by SAPRO of each of the DoD MSAs. SAPRO is responsible for assessing the implementation and execution of policies and programs, while the SAGR focus groups assess the subjective reaction and provides data to support and inform SAPRO's mission. Comments from focus group participants reveal how well they understand the policies and programs, how they interpret the intent, and how well these policies and programs are accepted. The participants also suggest new ideas that have the benefit of some assured credibility (i.e., buy-in) since they come from the individuals who would be directly affected.

As noted in the introduction to this report, the comments and opinions of focus group participants do not reflect everyone's opinions. Results cannot be generalized to all cadets and midshipmen. However, each idea put forth is worthy of consideration. In addition, the nature of unwanted interpersonal behaviors is such that no one solution fits all situations. The MSAs have undertaken many efforts to address inappropriate behaviors–this report provides information to understand how cadets and midshipmen react to policies and programs and offers for consideration several new approaches that are compatible with the fluid environment of interpersonal relationships and social normative behavior.

This discussion chapter pulls together results of the 2015 effort by summarizing major themes heard in the focus groups from both cadets/midshipmen and staff members across all MSAs. We have organized this discussion by the major topical areas throughout the report. Within each area we comment on the themes that we heard consistently across the DoD Academies and note where there are potential opportunities for action.

Common themes

DMDC has conducted focus groups every other year at the MSAs since 2007, each time asking questions about sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other unwanted gender relations. The questions are different from year to year, but the goal is always to understand how the cadets and midshipmen perceive the issues. We typically ask how the policies and programs affect them; whether these programs and policies are working to make the Academies a safe place to live and study; and what the Academies can do better. This year, as in the past, we heard many

comments about the training they receive (both positive and negative points) and the actions of leadership both in preventing inappropriate behaviors and responding to incidents. We also heard how cadets and midshipmen react to the rules that govern their campus life. The following sections highlight some of the major findings.

Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment. Cadets and midshipmen, in general, appear to have knowledge of the incidence rates of unwanted sexual contact, perceived sexual harassment, and sexist behavior that occur at their Academy as measured by the *2014 SAGR* survey. In some instances they indicated they had heard incidence rates but were not sure of the exact source. Cadets and midshipmen were not consistent in their beliefs that the rates were higher than, lower than, or about what they would have expected them to be. Common themes about unwanted behaviors overall include:

- Where the 2014 incidence rates of USC were lower (USMA women and both women and men at USNA), cadets and midshipmen cited greater awareness and emphasis on SAPR programs and policies as possible drivers of the reductions. They indicated that greater emphasis on bystander intervention might have had an impact as well. USMA cadets also indicated that the CASHA program has been helpful in influencing a culture of greater awareness, largely because cadet peers are involved in promoting the message and conducting the trainings. At USNA, senior leadership addressing the brigade in February 2013 was believed to have had a major impact on the decline in USC rates. Some midshipmen indicated that the strong emphasis by the Academy has led to some degree of avoidance behavior (i.e., male midshipmen avoid interacting with female midshipmen to prevent any chance of being accused of improper behavior). This notion was expressed at all Academies but most strongly at USNA. Reflecting this mindset, cadets and midshipmen mentioned fear of being "SARC'd" or "SAPR'd" if they were perceived to have behaved inappropriately. While this term reflects a possible negative view of the SAPR program, it also indicates that cadets and midshipmen take sexual assault seriously.

- Across all Academies there was consensus that senior leadership takes sexual assault prevention very seriously and that any inappropriate behaviors would be addressed immediately.

- Cadets and midshipmen suggested that the decreasing USC rates might reflect the increase in the proportion of women among the student body. Students speculated that this higher proportion might have led to lower USC rates because the greater proportion of women contributes to a cultural shift leading to greater respect (i.e., greater acceptance of women at the MSAs, less "dehumanizing" of a potential target) resulting in more discussion between the genders on interpersonal relations.

- Cadets and midshipmen generally agreed that USC rates for men would not likely be much lower in the future. The survey data indicated that hazing, horseplay, and "locker room" behaviors are more likely to be experienced by men and this was supported by focus group feedback as possible drivers. Greater awareness that these types of behaviors are inappropriate might lead to some decrease in USC rates for men, but since rates are already low, participants did not believe future decreases would be large. Male cadets

and midshipmen also indicated that most of their peers would stop this type of behavior if asked and that most men would not be inclined to report, rather choosing to either confront the offender or forget about it.

- In all focus groups, alcohol was believed to play a role in many unwanted behaviors. A common theme was that where alcohol is involved in USC, drinking is most likely to start off campus, and with the incident occurring back on campus. Focus group participants agreed that it would be less likely (although not impossible) for someone to purposely use alcohol to perpetrate USC; rather students indicated that alcohol is involved as a contributing factor (e.g., impairing judgment) and not a "tool' toward an objective. A number of cadets and midshipmen added that with the emphasis on bystander intervention and watching out for each other, they felt that someone would likely step in if they perceived a fellow cadet/midshipman was purposely trying to inebriate someone for sex. Because alcohol is involved in many incidents, focus group participants recommended continued emphasis on responsible use.

- Where the rates of perceived sexual harassment and sexist behaviors increased from 2012 to 2014, cadets and midshipmen indicated the increased emphasis might have caused greater awareness of the behaviors that are unacceptable. Some staff members also noted that sexual harassment, while emphasized, does not receive the same level of emphasis as sexual assault, possibly contributing to the increased rates. Focus group participants also indicated that the changes to combat exclusion policies for women stimulated more discussion with some comments being perceived as sexist. In general, focus group participants noted that cadets and midshipmen arrive at the Academy bringing a wide variety of social norms for what is acceptable. The various programs and trainings address the need for a respectful, professional culture where cadets and midshipmen recognize improper behaviors/comments and hold each other accountable. Cadets and midshipmen also noted that not everyone is comfortable with confrontation after unwanted comments or behaviors, and therefore trainings should continue to emphasize appropriate behaviors and provide skills for addressing situations where they occur (e.g., assessing a situation, communicating objections, breaking "group think" attitudes).

Reporting. MSA and DoD officials want to know when a sexual assault or unwanted behavior occurs so they can address the violation immediately and decisively. When a sexual assault or an incident of sexual harassment occurs, the MSA cannot take action unless they know about it. Unlike many crimes where there is visible evidence, sexual crimes leave little trace and are private, leaving few third parties to report the occurrence. Common themes that address reporting are:

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that the permanent party Academy leadership consistently encourage reporting. They felt that senior leaders, officers, and NCOs who deal daily with cadets and midshipmen all encourage reporting. Cadet/midshipmen leaders were less consistent in urging their fellow students to report. Whether people are comfortable reporting to their leadership is tempered by their individual relationships and trust in a particular leader.

- The reasons cadets and midshipmen believed someone might not report are consistent with the reasons for not reporting endorsed in previous surveys. Among the most frequently cited reasons for potentially not reporting were fear of being blamed for causing the incident, causing the offender to be thrown out of the Academy, being the subject of rumors and gossip, and becoming involved in a lengthy investigative process. Related to the lengthy process, focus group participants noted that use of time is a factor in every decision, hence deciding to report is weighed against the potential impact on academics, sports, or other activities.

- An overarching reason for not reporting based on survey findings is fear of damage to one's reputation. The Academy is a highly competitive environment and any negative perception against someone can have consequences in how they are perceived by others. Cadets and midshipmen consistently indicated that someone would weigh the benefits of reporting sexual assault or sexual harassment against the perceived impact on their reputation and standing. Closely associated is the potential damage to one's social standing. Ostracism, shunning, and victim blaming are all feared outcomes of reporting.

- Another perceived consequence to reporting was the potential for punishment for collateral misconduct. Cadets and midshipmen seemed to be unclear on the actual policies. While the Academies concentrate on survivor care, cadets and midshipmen believe that offenses committed by the survivor (e.g., underage drinking, fraternization) are concurrently addressed and adjudicated. Thus, the disincentive to reporting is fear of incriminating oneself. Staff members indicated that there is no single policy that can be applied to every situation involving violations by survivors. The opportunity exists to clarify how officials deal with collateral misconduct and communicate that to students and staff.

- Focus group participants noted that sometimes cadets/midshipmen do not sense value in reporting and are concerned that nothing will be done. To maintain privacy, it is not always appropriate for Academy officials to share the details of ongoing investigations. However, focus group participants consistently indicated that small group discussions of cases, such as XYZ cases, if done well (i.e., not boring presentations), can help dispel rumors, emphasize the importance of eliminating sexual assault, and understand the process and outcome of a case.

- Focus group participants indicated that knowing many offenses are committed by the same offender, typically a fellow student, would help encourage someone to come forward knowing they might be stopping an offense against someone else. That was one of the strongest reasons for reporting sexual assault in survey results.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that a cultural change toward more empathetic support toward survivors could allay some of the fears and encourage more people to report. While focus group participants did not suggest specific actions, a step could be to emphasize the importance of peer support. Training that stresses the fallacy of victim blaming, restraint from gossip, and greater appreciation of the emotional state of a survivor could start to shape a more sympathetic, supportive culture in contrast to a judgmental, critical mindset.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that it is not always clear to them who can take a restricted or unrestricted report. Additionally, some cadets/midshipmen suggested that it would be beneficial if more permanent party officers and NCOs were able to discuss issues without being required to report it. While not everyone would be comfortable discussing such highly personal events with their leaders, some would seek guidance from their officers and NCOs if it would not cause an unrestricted report. A number of faculty and staff members also indicated they are not clear on their responsibilities for reporting once they become aware of a situation. The lack of clarity suggests Academies might include additional discussion of policies in their training. There might also be an opportunity to consider changes to policies on mandatory reporters to expand the scope of resources.

Retaliation. Focus group participants shared a number of reasons why someone might not report sexual assault or sexual harassment. Many of the reasons reflect fear of some sort of backlash or retaliation. In 2014, survey results indicated that about 41% of survivors who reported a sexual assault experienced some form of perceived retaliation. The focus group facilitators read the DoD definitions of retaliation to participants, and then led a discussion about its occurrence, asking for Academy-unique examples of perceived retaliation. Common themes that address retaliation are:

- Focus group participants consistently noted that professional retaliation, in the form of a negative personnel action affecting someone's career, would be very unlikely at the Academies. They felt that permanent party leadership would not be likely to retaliate if a cadet or midshipman came to them to report an incident. Cadet/midshipman leadership would likewise be unlikely to retaliate, although as focus group participants noted, there is little in the way of negative personnel actions a cadet/midshipman leader could affect, other than possibly having input to one's military performance ratings.

- Focus group participants indicated that while overt professional retaliation would be unlikely, there could be subtle reactions among leaders having knowledge of a report. To the extent a survivor would be treated differently, even subtly, such treatment could be perceived as retaliation. For example, well intended actions by leadership would be viewed as retaliation, such as moving a survivor to a new company/squadron to separate him/her from the offender could be perceived a punishment, thus causing the survivor to be uprooted from their social environment and fueling rumors in the new unit. Focus group participants also thought another example could be delaying giving a position or opportunity to a survivor thinking "they are not ready" given the issues they are dealing with. While none of these examples were witnessed by focus group participants, being aware these perceptions might arise offer leaders an opportunity to consider all aspects of their decisions and behavior vis-a-vis a survivor's perceptions. Also, involving a survivor in decisions impacting their environment and preferences could reduce their perceptions of experiencing retaliation.

- By far, focus group participants indicated that ostracism and maltreatment (shunning, victim blaming, gossiping) are the more common forms of retaliation for reporting sexual assault. Participants communicated the sense that these negative reactions often occur as a consequence of reporting, not necessarily as a punishment for reporting per se. Several

perceptions underscore ostracism. First, it was noted that people tend to take sides; people make judgments based on feelings, not facts. Depending on with whom they are most familiar, people tend to believe their friends. A common belief is that "he or she is a good person and could not have done that." Hence the credibility of the survivor is often in question in favor of the offender. There is also a loyalty factor that calls into question how one could "betray" a fellow cadet/midshipman by reporting. Additionally, there is a fear that if someone accused a fellow cadet/midshipman of an offense, might they also accuse others in the future. People might back away from survivors or become less involved. All of these behaviors can result in perceived ostracism, which becomes highly problematic when one considers the importance of reputation. The earlier discussion of cultural change toward greater empathy toward survivors might help alleviate this tendency for judgment and ostracism.

- Focus group participants noted that ostracism is difficult to address. While leaders might observe a change in the way fellow cadets/midshipmen interact with a survivor, they cannot "demand someone be nice to someone else." The opportunity might, however, be to address the facts of a situation, raise awareness that ostracism/maltreatment is occurring, and strengthen the idea that survivors have been through a traumatic event and need support, not negative reactions from those closest to them.

- Focus group participants were mixed in their understanding about how and whether to report retaliation. Academy leadership might consider providing guidelines for cadets/midshipmen as well as staff members on detecting retaliation and avenues for reporting it.

Social Media. At the MSAs, cadets and midshipmen use many forms of social media to keep in touch with each other as well as family and friends. Social media can also be used for expressing opinions about life at the Academy, good and bad. Comments from earlier surveys, as well as focus group comments from active duty members, highlighted aspects of social media that are sometimes used for making inappropriate comments about others (often harassing or sexist) and to retaliate against someone for reporting sexual assault (cyber bullying, spreading rumors, chastising someone for reporting a friend, making false accusations about the veracity of a report). Of particular impact at the Academies is Yik Yak, an anonymous, geo-located forum smartphone application. Based on feedback from cadets and midshipmen on the widespread use of Yik Yak, the *2015 SAGR* focus group facilitators asked specifically about the use of this application in retaliation. Common themes involving use of social media are:

- Focus group participants indicated that the protection of anonymity draws some people to applications such as Yik Yak for posting comments they would likely not express in person or post on sites such as Facebook. Cadets and midshipmen indicated that the Academy often takes action when someone posts a negative comment or accusation, such as criticizing a leader or decision on other forms of social media, but this is difficult when anonymous. Hence the anonymity of Yik Yak can be an attractive outlet.

- The general consensus among focus group participants is that posts reflecting negative opinions of the Academy do not typically address sexual assault cases (covering a host of day-to-day topics from food in the dining hall to leadership decisions). If posts are made

about a sexual assault case, they often question the truth of the claim (i.e., victim blaming), contributing to rumors and ostracism of the person who made a report.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that because sexual assault is such a sensitive topic at the Academies, comments on a sexual assault are increasingly removed through a process of "down voting." Cadets and midshipmen self-police the posts and tend to remove comments that call attention to an already heightened topic. Furthermore, cadets and midshipmen indicated they are sensitive to posts that make the Academy look bad, hence they "down vote" such communications.

- Focus group participants indicated a positive aspect to social media in that posts reflect the "pulse" of the Academy and can be used to correct misunderstandings, address issues, etc. Participants also noted that Yik Yak appears to be waning in use, as many fads tend to wane after time. However, something new typically surges to the forefront. Discussing posts and encouraging self-policing could serve a positive function in dispelling rumors and shaping attitudes about what is proper and improper use of such media. In that sense, social media is just a vehicle for underlying messages targeted for discussion. Responsible use of social media and accountability may be topics for further emphasis.

- Faculty and staff members indicated that reading comments on Yik Yak can sometimes be valuable in understanding the attitudes of the cadets and midshipmen about current activities on campus. All focus group participants shared the belief that shutting down applications such as Yik Yak would likely be perceived negatively as an over-reaction by leadership. Shutting a site down would likely drive people to some other site.

- Focus group participants indicated that a clear position on use of social media would help shape its use. There appears to be a variety of beliefs of what is acceptable, mirroring the same problems seen with acceptable verbal comments. Participants also noted the challenge of restricting or "policing" sites and allowing freedom of expression. The resolution appears to lay more in developing a sense of mature, responsible, and professional communications and less on the media. Furthermore, accountability lies in the content of the message, not how it is communicated.

Perceptions of Leadership. A question on the *2014 SAGR* survey asked cadets and midshipmen to rate the extent to which various leaders made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Focus group participants were given those results and asked to reflect on why some levels of leadership were rated higher than others. Overall, the survey found the highest marks for Academy senior leadership, followed by military staff who interact frequently with cadets and midshipmen. Lower marks were generally given for civilian faculty and athletic staff. All results are shown in the respective appendices. The survey results to some degree reflect confidence in leadership taking sexual assault and sexual harassment seriously. The discussion can be used to bolster actions by various leaders or correct misperceptions. Common themes about leadership are:

- Cadets and midshipmen consistently indicated that faculty and staff members take sexual assault seriously. The relative order of the ratings reflects to some degree the role of the

staff members. For example, cadets and midshipmen were not surprised the highest ratings were for senior leaders, followed by their military leaders (TACs, AOCs, Company officers, etc.). Focus group participants said they expect these leaders to set the priorities and emphasize prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Participants indicated they do not expect other staff members (faculty or athletics) to discuss sexual assault as much.

- Staff members also indicated that their perceived role in sexual assault/sexual harassment prevention is a factor in how cadets and midshipmen rated them on making honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. While virtually all staff members know that sexual assault prevention is a top priority, not all staff members sense a specific role for themselves. Focus group participants commented that the emphasis varies by academic or athletic department. Faculty members are expected to meet curricula standards and adding discussions of sexual assault can be challenging. Other staff members indicated they did not feel prepared to discuss such topics. An opportunity might exist to develop a common strategy and training to involve faculty and staff in broadcasting messages about prevention.

- In general, the degree to which cadets and midshipmen interact with faculty and staff reflects the relative order of ratings. For example, unless one is a varsity or club athlete, there is not much interaction with athletic staff during a physical education class. Similarly, cadets and midshipmen interact less often with faculty than their military leadership (TACs, AOCs, Company officers, etc.). Exposure to these different types of staff members might therefore be reflected in the ratings.

- Cadets and midshipmen also noted that, while the ratings for their military leaders are in the 80-90% range, the smaller percentage who indicated leaders do not make efforts to stop sexual assault might be reflecting on a specific instance where a leader did not support them or exhibited a poor example. The implication is that cadets and midshipmen observe leaders' behaviors carefully and if the Academy is serious about preventing sexual assault, all leaders need to promote the message.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that the ratings of their leaders might also reflect the degree to which they have a personal relationship with them and feel comfortable discussing very sensitive issues. Additionally, female cadets and midshipmen gave slightly lower ratings to the various levels of leadership. Cadets and midshipmen thought this might be due to fewer female leaders with whom a female cadet/midshipman could discuss a sensitive topic (possibly rating the predominantly male staff lower reflecting less ease in talking to them).

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated they like to hear from their leaders, especially military, about real life experiences and how they handled situations. This type of role modeling can help them grow as they become leaders. Some cadets and midshipmen added that additional discussion about sexual assault among men would be helpful.

- Faculty and staff have daily contact with cadets and midshipmen and are often highly influential as mentors and role models. Focus group participants offered a number of

examples of how staff members address issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment, but there does not appear to be a consistent theme or approach. Some staff members take initiative to address issues while others do not because they are uncertain of their role (such as communicating a consistent theme or as mandatory reporters). An opportunity exists to leverage staff members' relationships with their students by developing a strategy that includes them, sharing more information about policies and programs, informing them of cases so they can help dispel rumors, and providing guidance on how to advise students.

- Cadets and midshipmen gave mixed perspectives on the ratings of their cadet/midshipman leaders. Some indicated that once a cadet/midshipman is in a leadership position, they expect them to take issues seriously and reflect the emphasis the Academy places on sexual assault and sexual harassment. Others felt that their cadet/midshipman leaders either have other priorities that diminish the emphasis they place on these issues or do not really have much authority or the skills to deal with issues. Thus they rate their cadet/midshipman leaders lower.

Athletic Teams. The three DoD MSAs are classified as Division I by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).[61] As such they abide by NCAA rules requiring a minimum number of teams in various sports for both men and women, scheduling criteria, and financial aid/athletic scholarships. Each MSA also offers a number of club sports and intramural teams. Cadets and midshipmen are encouraged to join a sport activity to improve/sustain their physical fitness as well as learn team dynamics. Based on comments in the *2014 SAGR* survey, as well as recent examples in the press of misbehavior of some athletes and team, focus group participants were asked to share their perceptions of athletes and teams with regard to sexual assault and sexual harassment. Common themes are:

- Cadets and midshipmen expressed many views about the standards to which Division I athletes are held, both in terms of recruiting standards for entering the Academy and for performance and behavior once in the Academy. In general, many cadets and midshipmen believe athletes are recruited primarily for their athletic ability. While athlete candidates must meet the same minimum academic and moral/character standards as other candidates, they are competing for appointments to the Academy on the basis of their athletic ability and this is believed to take priority. Once selected, athletes are given help where they might be behind their peers in, for example, academics. The perception expressed in the focus groups, typically by the non-athlete participants, is that inappropriate behaviors by Division I athletes are not always addressed as swiftly or decisively as would similar behaviors be by non-athletes.

- Members of the athletic staff offered a different view of recruiting and performance standards than that expressed by other staff members and cadets/midshipmen. The consensus of athletic staff members is that their candidates are screened as thoroughly if not more so than non-athlete candidates. Athletic staff members noted that the typical candidate is interviewed extensively and goes through a very rigorous process to assure the recruiter that they can perform well in their role as a cadet or midshipmen. Athletic

[61] USCGA is classified Division III.

staff noted that an athlete does not help their team if they fail academically or for a behavioral reason.

- Athletic staff pointed out that the improper behavior of one athlete tends to be generalized to an entire team due to the visibility of the team. Division I teams are high profile, much more so than club teams, academic groups, or special student interest groups. Athletic staff indicated that when a Division I athlete misbehaves, people tend to identify that person with the high-visibility team, whereas they would not do so based on that person's affiliation with any other group or activity. Cadet and midshipmen focus group participants also noted that there are non-athletes who misbehave, so inappropriate behaviors are not exclusive to athletes.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that there are many outstanding leaders among Division I athletes where the qualities that make a person an outstanding athlete carry over to their conduct as cadets and midshipmen. Focus group participants noted that sometimes athletes enter the Academy without a clear understanding of the behavioral standards or other requirements for success at the Academy; their focus is on their sport. When they realize they must meet other requirements, they opt to leave or they conform. This suggests a potential opportunity for the MSAs to share a more detailed perspective on life as a cadet/midshipman when recruiting athletes.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated they do not hear as much about sexual assault prevention from their coaches or athletic staff as they do from other leaders. The lower ratings of confidence might reflect a mix of attitudes about coaches versus athletic staff. Cadets and midshipmen indicated that coaches often discuss proper behaviors with their teams, whereas athletic staff members, because of the nature of their jobs, have less time and less of a relationship with their athletes for discussing topics other than the activity at hand.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that inappropriate behavior often occurs, especially on male teams, as a result of the "bro culture" and general horseplay activities. There appears to be a "group think" dynamic where people, especially lowerclassmen, participate in activities out of expectation and effort to fit in. The challenge is to raise critical thinking about how inappropriate behaviors impact others while still fostering a team mindset.

- Cadets and midshipmen suggested that student leaders on athletic teams have considerable influence over what is acceptable to their teammates. Team leaders can be effective in setting the example and breaking the norm. This observation presents an opportunity for the Academies to leverage their team leaders and captains to set the example and instill a cultural norm for appropriate behaviors and attitudes.

Culture. Military performance is based on order and discipline and as a result many rules and regulations guide individual as well as group behavior. Sometimes actions, especially in interpersonal relationships, do not follow the intent of the policies and rules. Organizational culture is an overarching concept, distinct at each Academy, of normative behavior within which members operate. For the focus groups, participants were asked to discuss their understanding of

the culture at their Academy with respect to sexual assault and sexual harassment—the shared understanding of priorities, why improper behaviors occur, and how to foster a culture to reduce/eliminate improper behaviors. Common themes regarding culture are:

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated they feel safer from sexual assault at their Academy than they believe they would be if they attended a civilian college or university. They cited the numerous programs and resources available as reasons they would feel safer, especially the emphasis on bystander intervention. They also noted that there is a strong bond among peers where they watch out for each other to intervene when they see a risky situation unfolding. Cadets and midshipmen indicated that this sense of responsibility for each other is ingrained in them through their training and the emphasis exhibited by leadership on preventing sexual assault. They do not perceive either the resources or the interpersonal unity to be as apparent at other schools and is a strength of the Academies.

- Upper class cadets and midshipmen commented on the changes they have observed over the past few years. For example, a number of focus group participants said their companies/squadrons are much less tolerant of inappropriate comments and jokes than they would have been two years ago. Peers are more likely to speak up when someone is out of line with a comment or behaviors. Whether the culture has changed to reflect new values or they are doing this out of a sense of avoiding collective punishment is difficult to discern. But as willingness to deal with inappropriate behaviors at the peer level increases, accountability will become the norm, as evidence by the increasing confidence in the peer programs expressed in the focus groups.

- All focus group participants noted that the senior leadership at their Academy has made sexual assault prevention a top priority. Prevention of sexual harassment also receives emphasis, but participants indicated that sexual harassment and sexist behaviors are emphasized less frequently than sexual assault. While sexual assault might be the more "egregious" problem, verbal behaviors can set a culture of acceptance for unwanted gender-related behaviors including sexual assault. The opportunity exists to build on the priorities already in place to link all forms of improper behavior. As cadets and midshipmen become more accountable to each other for stopping all improper behaviors, those who choose to act improperly will stand out even more. Early intervention toward improper verbal comments might forestall progression to more "egregious" behaviors.

- Focus group participants indicated that cultural change is the most effective way to diminish sexual assault and sexual harassment and they have seen a shift in how leadership discusses the topic that aligns with this. Rules and training establish the boundaries of acceptable behavior, but everyone must internalize a sense of responsibility for abiding by accepted behavioral norms and confronting those who do not. Participants noted that oftentimes the messages they receive about sexual assault are not seen as applicable to many cadets/midshipmen—they neither see themselves as behaving improperly nor have they experienced many unwanted behaviors. Cadets and midshipmen noted there are many "gray areas" with regard to improper behaviors. So they are less inclined to see the relevance to themselves. That mindset needs to change to make sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention a shared value.

- Another opportunity for cultural change stems from the many comments cadets and midshipmen made about their concern for their personal reputation and standing at the Academy. It appears that cultural change is needed to focus attention toward the good of the student body, not just how sexual assault and sexual harassment behaviors affect one individually. Striving to instill more of an outward focus can potentially lead to a different set of cultural norms of shared responsibility and accountability. This is also a mindset necessary for their roles as future officers once they leave their Academy.

- While not a specific topic for discussion, comments were made during focus group sessions that both indicated the presence of victim blaming and the potential repercussions of this rhetoric. Specifically, some focus group participants made statements that the majority of reports made to the Academy are "false reports" whereby the accuser was lying. Often this rhetoric was based on a misunderstanding of why sexual assault cases do not always lead to official action or criminal punishments. Though this perception of victim blaming was heard within the groups, cadets and midshipmen also identified these misperceptions as a specific barrier to reporting, stating that someone who reports might be blamed or not be believed and this would subsequently subject them to scrutiny. Similarly, in discussions about retaliation, cadets and midshipmen often cited the belief that a survivor was perceived as lying as a justification for retaliatory behaviors. For example, peers may ostracize the survivor for fear of also being unjustly reported or may openly engage in harassment or maltreatment of the survivor to punish them because they believe the victim is lying about a fellow cadet/midshipmen. The Department and the MSAs have a goal of increasing reporting and eliminating retaliation. As such, education on rape myths (e.g., beliefs that serve to justify a sexual assault such as the survivor deserving it or lying about it) and the difficulty of prosecuting these cases may help to promote a more supportive culture for a survivor of sexual assault. In fact, some cadets at USAFA mentioned increased training on this topic and the benefit of such discussions.

- Many focus group participants noted that cadets and midshipmen come from all backgrounds and bring different sets of values and varying degrees of maturity with them to the Academy. The challenge is to level-set their values especially with regard to gender relations. This overarching theme reinforces work already underway at the Academies where they continually emphasize respect, civility, and cooperation.

- Staff members in the focus groups noted that "group think" affects values when cadets and midshipmen make an assumption that comments and behaviors are acceptable because no one challenges them. This uncritical thinking may perpetuate inappropriate behaviors. In consideration of comments that sometimes training topics do not seem relevant to most cadets and midshipmen, the opportunity exists to discuss different values and whether or not they fit the military environment. A goal would be to reward people who are willing to break the "group think" mode and speak up.

- Focus group participants mentioned the peer programs in place at their Academies and indicated improvement in these programs over time.[62] In general, the common theme is that the efficacy of the program depends on the credibility and respect for the peer. In some instances, cadets and midshipmen would readily go to a peer program representative to discuss a personal issue because they represent low threat (as in someone to talk to for advice when making a decision to report an incident). In other instances, cadets and midshipmen indicated being hesitant to talk to their peer representative if they thought the information would leak out or if the representative was someone they did not know well or respect. Comments reflected the same attitudes toward the training provided by peer representatives. In many cases it was noted that peers put considerable effort into the training they present and it is well received. But when the training is a PowerPoint "check the box" type of training, it falls into the category of boring and useless. The opportunity appears to capitalize on the growing success of the peer programs by continuing to select representatives who are well respected and believe in the program—cadets and midshipmen pick up on sincerity and credibility quickly and react accordingly.

- Peer leadership as a cultural norm came up in discussions. As noted previously, peer program representatives are most effective when they are respected and credible. But focus group participants noted there are also cadet/midshipmen leaders within the Corps, Wing, and Brigade who can exert great influence on attitudes. Whether by position or strength of character, these peer leaders can be very effective in modeling acceptable behavior and holding those accountable who misbehave. Because social acceptance seems to be a powerful driver of behavior, a peer leader can quickly shape one's behavior by the way they react to something inappropriate. For example, focus group participants noted that within athletics, team captains are often very influential in shaping the collective values of their teammates. The opportunity exists to continue to leverage peer leadership in changing the culture of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable in terms of gender related behaviors. Additionally, focus group participants noted the power of good role models. Cadet/midshipman leaders who are already respected by their peers can be very effective if they accept the responsibility for furthering a respectful and professional culture. It is clear from focus group comments that dignity and respect are already highly ingrained in the culture. The priority has been clearly set by leadership and now the task is to instill actions at the levels that are most effective on a daily basis.

- Focus group participants often noted that cadets and midshipmen can be critical of each other, yet when an outsider criticizes the Academy, they band together in defense. This is a shared value than can be leveraged to foster more respectful behaviors toward each other. If cadets and midshipmen are proud of their Academies, and react when someone criticizes them, discussions might capitalize on what it is that makes the Academies good and how they can be more accountable to each other so internal behaviors indeed reflect

[62] The peer programs are: Cadets Against Sexual Harassment and Assault (CASHA) at USMA; Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Education (SHAPE) peer educators and midshipmen Guidance, Understanding, Information, Direction, and Education (GUIDES) at USNA; and Personal Ethics and Education Representative (PEER) program at USAFA.

what they say when they are defending their Academy. Cadets and midshipmen across all Academies mentioned how leadership's increasing emphasis on shared values and respect has made an impact.

Training. Training in the military is ubiquitous. As noted in the discussion of culture, the military, including the Academies, operates on order and discipline. Training provides the rules and expectations for conduct. Whether in comments on surveys or in focus groups, training is always a topic for lively discussion. As noted in the focus group comments, training has instilled a sense of priority—everyone understands that improper sexual behaviors will be addressed quickly. Participants also noted that too much training can be counterproductive, and may result in people becoming desensitized to the message. Common themes about training are:

- While not a specific question posed in the 2015 focus groups, it was noted that there were far fewer comments than in the past about training that is "death by PowerPoint." Cadets and midshipmen still commented that some training is repetitive and not engaging, but the fewer comments about "boring" training was noticeable.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated that their peer-led training is effective when they respect the peer program representation and the message is meaningful. Because topics of sexual assault and sexual harassment might not appear to apply to many cadets and midshipmen, the peer-led sessions offer a forum to identify ways in which issues both apply and can be dealt with effectively. In other words, the large group sessions establish the rules and priorities, while the small group sessions help cadets and midshipmen internalize the values for proper conduct as they see them applying within their smaller social group (i.e., their company or squadron and circle of peers).

- Focus group participants commented that when they hear about sexual assault incidents they do not often hear much about the case. They recognize that officials cannot share details of an ongoing investigation or adjudication, but sharing as much as possible as soon as possible (e.g., XYZ cases or announcements) could forestall the inevitable rumor mill. It is clear that people fill in the gaps with what they know about the parties involved in an incident. Once a position is established, people tend to not change. So training might include as many details as possible when an incident becomes public knowledge. Discussion could also address this natural tendency to speculate and how that can often cause considerable harm through rumors and victim blaming. Because many cases become high-profile, the Academies might adopt a strategy of information sharing that cadets and midshipmen can anticipate

- Cadets and midshipmen noted improvement in bystander training and increasing willingness to intervene. They indicated that continued training on bystander intervention skills would be helpful. They have had training on the types of behaviors that constitute sexual assault and sexual harassment and the need to intervene, but not everyone appears to know exactly how to intervene. Discerning that a situation requires intervention and the best approach to take can be awkward.

- Some cadets and midshipmen noted that trainings are sometimes scheduled on short notice or at inconvenient times. While there is "no good time" for additional training,

cadets might view short notice or inconvenient sessions as annoying, setting up a negative attitude going into the training. Consideration might be given to longer range planning for specific training sessions so that cadets and midshipmen can mentally work it into their busy schedules and not feel they are forced to reprioritize their other plans (for academics, athletics, military duties, etc.).

- On a cautionary note, participants noted that when the same message is repeated frequently it loses some of its effectiveness. Participants recommended keeping the messages fresh and relevant to the lives of cadets and midshipmen. Toward that end, participants recommended allowing for smaller group sessions where cadets and midshipmen can ask questions and discuss how topics affect them.

- In the focus group discussions on retaliation for reporting sexual assault, a number of cadets and midshipmen indicated they were not aware one could report retaliation. Identifying and reporting retaliation could be emphasized in training. While most focus group participants noted that it would be challenging to address ostracism and tell someone "be nice to him/her," it is nonetheless important for everyone to recognize the signs of ostracism for reporting sexual assault and take positive steps to stop it, whether it is by intervention of leadership or restraint on behalf of a survivor's peers. Recognition that ostracism occurs and is not condoned can be a first step in heightening awareness.

- Cadets and midshipmen indicated they would like more input into training. The overall sense from focus group discussions is that training tends to push out information. Cadets and midshipmen indicated that discussions provide a better forum for understanding. It might be useful to incorporate more opportunities for feedback following various types of training to assess the ideal methods for achieving learning objectives and enhance "buy-in" in the process.

Conclusion

The *2015 SAGR* focus groups were designed to assess issues and provide recommendations for improvement on gender-related topics from the perspectives of the people who are affected the most–cadets and midshipmen. Supplementing the discussion are the perspectives of those who are closest to the cadets and midshipmen–the members of the faculty, military staff, and athletic staff who interact with them frequently. The discussions were in all instances lively and frank, giving testimony to the degree to which the Academies have instilled a sense of priority and urgency in combatting inappropriate gender-related behaviors. One major "take-away" from the focus groups is this sense of urgency and the amount of progress the Academies have made in raising the level of awareness about the importance of these issues. Although it might not be possible to eradicate sexual assault and sexual harassment completely, there is no doubt in the minds of the cadets and midshipmen who we talked to that the Academies and Services do not condone such behaviors. Focus group participants frequently mentioned that cultural change is the key to eliminating unwanted behaviors and fostering teamwork, civility, and respect for all. Awareness of the comments contained in this report and actions taken as a result of them are part of the process of achieving these goals at the MSAs.

References

DMDC. (2014). *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey: Overview Report* (Report No. 2014-016). Arlington, VA: Author.

John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, Pub. L. No. 109-364, H.R. 5122 (2006).

Appendix A.
Cadet/Midshipman Focus Group Guide

2015 Student Focus Group Guide

Introduction to the Focus Group

Time for briefing and introductions: 5 minutes

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ and I am with the Defense Manpower Data Center also known as DMDC. My colleagues with me this morning/afternoon are _____ and _____, also with DMDC. We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, as was done two years ago, focus groups are being conducted to provide information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies. Focus groups will also be done at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is **a voluntary focus group**. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to sit quietly while others participate or to leave.

I have provided each of you with a handout. Please turn to page 1. You can follow along while I share with you the purpose for this focus group and the ground rules we will follow.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on at the Academies, members of Congress and your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. [For U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine say – While this Congressional requirement does not cover your Academy, your leadership asked to participate because they know these are important issues]. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.
- Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced any of these behaviors, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues at your Academy. You're the experts on what it's like to attend the Academies and we want to hear your opinion about Academy life. It doesn't matter if you *have* or *have not* had gender-related experiences. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for you.

I want to thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group and go over a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and _____ will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what _____ is typing.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law, DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your roommate's name, or your squadron or company identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box on your handout.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

On the next several pages of your handout are results from the 2014 survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. I will call your attention to the specific item as we reach that part of the discussion.

Please note that the results I will share with you come from the 2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey. This survey was conducted in spring of 2014 with results reported to your Academy and Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in February 2015. Our report is available at the Web site shown if you are interested.

I have several questions to ask you today, with a few subtopics in each. I will watch the time so we will be able to cover all questions by the end of this session at (give specific end time).

Let's begin our discussion today with some results of the survey on sexual assault and sexual harassment. Please turn to page 4 of your handout. Here you will see some of the results from our 2014 survey that we will discuss today.

- **Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment**
  - Let's begin by looking briefly at some of the results from the survey we conducted in Spring of 2014. Please take a look at the first section of the handout we provided to you. [Review 2014 estimated prevalence rates in handout.] Have you seen these estimated prevalence rates? Why do you think the estimated prevalence rates decreased between 2012 and 2014? [Probe for reasons for downward trends or why someone might not have an opinion.]
  - What are the possible drivers for the decrease in rates? What happened that might have resulted in the lower prevalence rates in the 2013-2014 school year? Do you think the lower rates are sustainable? Will they stay the same or go up or down the next time we do the survey in Spring 2016? Why?
    - For juniors and seniors: Is the emphasis on sexual assault and sexual harassment similar this year to that in 2013-2014?
  - For Seniors: A lot has happened between 2012 and 2015. What changes have you seen? Has the focus on preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment been consistent over the years? Have the changes been positive or negative? How so?
  - Are experiences of sexual assault different for men? See the second figure in your handout. [Share the results of the hazing, locker room, being dared questions.] Are these potentially the drivers of sexual assault with male survivors? What can be done to reduce this type of unwanted behavior?

- **Reporting**
  - Now let's switch to a related topic about reporting sexual assault. Please see the third section of the handout. [Share statistics from the MSA report at each Academy.] These are the number of reports last year. Are you aware of this number of reports? Would you think it would have been higher or lower? Why?
  - Does Academy leadership encourage reporting? [If no response: Does Academy leadership talk about reporting sexual assault?] At what level (senior leaders like the Superintendent and Commandant, officers/NCOs, cadet/midshipman)? Do your coaches and academic faculty talk about reporting? Anyone else [for example, counselors, SARCs]? Do your peers encourage reporting?
  - What are some reasons why someone would report?
  - What are some reasons why someone would not report?
  - One thing we have learned from our surveys is that survivors of sexual assault often experience multiple incidents of unwanted behaviors.

Please take a look at table number 4 in your handout [Share results on more than one experience and the same offender involved.] Reporting could reduce multiple incidents by identifying the offender and halting criminal behaviors before they continue with that same person or someone else. Would knowing that make a difference in someone deciding to report?

- What more can be done to encourage reporting?
- Survey results show that students say they know how to report. Yet when asked to whom they would make a restricted report, they often identify individuals who are not authorized to accept a restricted report. Why do you think this is? [Probe: is it because they want to tell someone other than the individuals who can take a restricted report? Do you think they don't know who can take a restricted report?] Are the two types of report, being restricted and unrestricted reports, helpful?
  - Could there be additional types of reports or recipients?

- **Retaliation**
  - I would like to shift the discussion now to a topic related to reporting sexual assault. Complaints of retaliation against someone who reports sexual assault have received considerable attention by DoD leadership and in Congress.
  - DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
    - 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/cadets, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
    - 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as designated by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense.
  - Were you aware that these prohibitions exist?
  - What kinds of behaviors would you consider "ostracism" or "maltreatment" in response to reporting a sexual assault here at the Academy?
  - Do you think retaliation might occur here at this Academy if someone were to report a sexual assault?
    - Who do you think would retaliate? Peers? Academy leadership? Cadet/midshipman leadership?
  - What do you think retaliation would look like? What specific types of actions would you consider to be retaliation?

        - What would motivate someone to do that?
    - Can retaliation also occur against someone who steps in to help someone or openly supports someone who reported?
        - Would such a supporter ever be retaliated against? What would that look like?
    - Can retaliation occur against someone accused of being the alleged perpetrator of sexual assault?
        - What would that type of retaliation look like?
    - Could retaliation or the perception of retaliation affect relationships within your squadron/company? How?
    - Do you believe your officer and NCO leadership know when retaliation is happening? How do you think they deal with retaliation? Would they actively address it? How would they do so?
    - We have heard that in some instances people perceive actions by officials that they consider retaliation but the actions were not retaliation and were not intended to be retaliatory, but were taken in an attempt to support the survivor [example, expedited transfer]. In other words, the leader was trying to be helpful but the person who reported the sexual assault perceived the action to be negative.
        - Can you think of any examples where that might happen?
        - From a survivor's perspective, do you think they would see that type of action as positive in helping them deal with a stressful situation or negative as action against them [if asked, give examples such as counseling or placement on limited duty]?
    - What could be done to reduce or eliminate any form of retaliation or perceptions of retaliation?
    - To whom would you report an instance of retaliation?

- **Social Media**
    - The Department has taken a hard look at social media across the force. How do Academy students view the use of social media in general? Is this a venue students use to communicate with each other? Please describe.
        - What are the most commonly used social media sites among cadets/cadets here at this Academy?
        - What are the positive aspects of the use of social media?
        - What are the negative aspects?
    - Going back to our discussion about retaliation or reactions to reports of sexual assault at the Academy, does social media ever play a role? If yes, how so?
    - How do you think the Department and the Academy can address the negative use of social media?
        - Are there any particularly negative uses the Academy should actively address?
        - Should the Academy monitor these sites? Should cadets/cadets be held accountable for negative comments made on social media if

        the comments are made with the specific intent to discourage reporting relating to a criminal offense of sexual assault?
    - Why do you think fellow students might turn to social media to say negative things about each other? What is the motivation?
    - Can the Academy use social media to address issues of sexual assault? Could the Academy develop additional media resources for sharing, for example, information about prevention or resources available to survivors?
        - Could the Academy develop an application like a helpline for prevention of a sexual assault? For example, if someone needed help getting out of a risky area or situation?

- **Leadership Perceptions**
    - Let's shift to a new topic now. Each year in the survey we ask if cadets/cadets think their leaders make honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Please see the section in the handout on leadership. [Share results of survey on confidence in leadership at the various levels: Academy leadership, Faculty/Staff, Cadet/Midshipman leadership, students]. Are those about right?
        - How do these levels of leaders show they are serious? What do they do or say? Can you provide examples?
    - Do any of these levels of leadership demonstrate they are not that serious? Can you provide examples?
    - What type of statement or actions would impress you?

- **Athletic Teams**
    - Athletic staff consistently had the least positive ratings among the levels of leadership. [Emphasize this is athletic staff, not student athletes.] Why do you think that is? For those who do not have much contact with athletic staff, how do you think they form their opinions about this?
    - We also heard on the survey that there might be more problems with unwanted gender related behaviors such as sexual assault and harassment by athletes and within athletic teams. Without naming specific teams or individuals, do you think this is something that happens more among athletes? Does leadership hold them to the same standards on these issues as other students? Do peers hold athletes to the same standards?
    - What is the general perception of athletic teams and sexual assault?
        - "Bad apples" and stricter admission policies were brought up in the survey comments in 2014. Do students believe that recruitment for athletic purposes is fair? Is there a need for a change in admission procedure?
    - What recommendations do you have for improvement?

- **Culture**
  - Now let's talk for a few minutes about the culture here at the Academy regarding sexual assault. What is the general attitude among students about the focus on sexual assault?
    - Is sexual assault an important issue at the Academy?
    - Is it taken seriously by students, faculty, and athletic staff?
    - Does sexual assault have the same emphasis as other areas, such as use of alcohol, safety, or suicide prevention?
    - Are there any aspects of other programs that grab your attention? Could they be used to increase emphasis on sexual assault?
  - Sexual assault has surfaced as a national issue. How does it reflect at the Academy? Are there similar issues? Are issues of sexual assault worse or better here? Is there anything the Academy could do better that is done at civilian universities?
  - Are there groups within the Academy where it is taken more or less seriously? [If asked, give examples of groups like sports teams, clubs, class years, squadrons, upperclassmen.]
    - Is there any general feeling that the genders should be separated? In the dormitories? In training sessions?
  - How can the culture be changed to improve the way sexual assault is addressed at the Academy?
    - Students indicated that training on respecting one another would be useful in changing culture. Do you agree? What would that look like?
    - Is there a need to address gender equality? How can the genders be made to feel more equal at the Academy?
  - What peer program is in place here? Please describe. Is it effective? Why or why not? How could it be improved?
    - Many students have indicated these programs were beneficial. Would students prefer to receive training, notices, small, open-group discussions led by members of these programs?

- **Preventing sexual assault**
  - The Department and your Academy have taken many steps to prevent sexual assault. I would like to ask you a few questions about the programs and resources the Academy has put in place for prevention.
  - First, what are some of the programs and resources here at your Academy that address sexual assault prevention? Please describe.
    - What makes these programs effective? What more could be done?
    - Think for a minute about other prevention-related programs at the Academy such as smoking, drinking, suicide, etc. What about those programs do you see as particularly successful? Could those features be adapted to sexual assault prevention?
  - Do students feel they can discuss situations where they see someone at risk either with the person directly or with Academy officials [if asked,

clarify that if a student sees a fellow student in a risky situation that they can speak up and warn the fellow student or alert an official.]
  - Does your Academy seek input from students when they design or implement a new prevention program? Do you have any examples? How could the Academy use student input better?
  - Are you aware of any local community resources that help in preventing or responding to incidents of sexual assault? How are those resources publicized to the Academy?
  - What role could the alumni play in sexual assault prevention? Why?

- **Training**
  - We receive numerous comments in our surveys and focus groups on the training the Academies provide in sexual assault prevention and response. We will not go into detail today on these topics, but in general, what is your opinion about the training you received in the past year?
    - Is it effective in reducing sexual assault?
    - Has the training changed in any way from previous years? How?
  - What could be improved in terms of training?
    - Would information such as case studies or XYZ reports be beneficial to give you more details about incidents that have occurred?
    - Does your training have an adverse effect on reporting?
    - Would publicizing disciplinary outcomes to students/faculty help in prevention?
    - Would sharing the life-long impact of experiencing a sexual assault help students recognize the serious nature of sexual assault? Does the Academy already do this? [If asked, clarify that training could include examples of the psychological impact on a person. Students sometimes tell us that they have never experienced sexual assault nor do they know anyone who has experienced it, therefore it is not particularly relevant to them. Would hearing more about the impact help raise awareness of the serious nature of sexual assault?]
    - Should there be different trainings for sexual harassment and sexual assault? Is the Academy focusing on one over the other?
  - Are there opportunities to improve the training? How? What should be included? How should it be delivered?
    - Does your sexual assault curriculum prepare you personally to combat sexual assault? [Clarify that training helps them avoid risky situations, intervene when they see a threat to fellow students, and/or deal with a situation where unwanted behaviors have happened to them.] Are these issues discussed in classes or leadership training, or only in specific sexual assault training sessions?

        - Does your training effectively prepare you to prevent or respond to sexual assault as a leader? Where do you receive that type of training?
        - "Preventative training" was mentioned as something that students wanted. What would this look like?
        - In our 2013 focus groups, many students indicated they wanted teachers, military personnel, etc., to share their experiences dealing with issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Do these individuals do this at all?
        - To make training more meaningful, students indicated that addressing the situation in a "professional" way would be beneficial. What would this look like?
    - [Seniors only]. Did your Pre-Command Course include any discussion on how to handle issues of sexual assault when you have leadership responsibilities?
        - Do you feel prepared to address issues that might arise with your subordinates? Please discuss.

- **Use of Alcohol**
    - Our surveys indicate that alcohol is frequently involved in incidents of sexual assault. Do you think that is the case here at your Academy?
    - Aside from what we might call normal social use of alcohol, do you think someone might use alcohol to facilitate having sex with someone? How so? [If asked for clarification, say someone might pre-plan using alcohol to make it easier to have sex.]
        - Are there specific locations or activities that facilitate the use of alcohol? On campus? Off campus?
    - What would you recommend to reduce the use of alcohol in situations that lead to unwanted sexual behaviors?
        - Are current policies enforced?
        - Are there any policy changes you would recommend?

- **Additional recommendations for addressing unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment**
    - What else would you recommend to address sexual assault and sexual harassment?
    - What did we forget to ask you about?

Concluding Comments

We want to thank you in advance for your time today in this focus group session. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments anonymously. There is no attribution to any of you for the specific comments you made today. Please also respect that non-attribution when you leave here today. Our goal is to provide the best data possible, and you have helped us greatly today with your comments and insights.

One last comment – on the last page of the participant handout you will see a list of resources available to you if you would like to follow up with us or have any questions. That is yours to keep. It also lists Academy resources if you would like to talk further to someone about this study or any experiences you might have had with unwanted gender-related behaviors.

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix B.
Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Focus Group Guide

2015 Faculty/Staff Focus Group Guide

Introduction to the Focus Group

Time for briefing and introductions: 5 minutes

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____ and I am with the Defense Manpower Data Center. My colleagues with me this morning/afternoon are _____ and _____, also with DMDC. We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, as was done two years ago, a series of focus groups are being conducted to provide information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies. Focus groups will also be done at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is **a voluntary focus group**. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

I have provided each of you with a handout. Please turn to page 1. You can follow along while I share with you the purpose for this focus group and the ground rules we will follow.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you and students to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

- This is the second year we have invited members of the faculty, athletic and activity staffs, and military cadre to participate. Because you interact with the students, we believe you are in a position to share valuable insights with us on these important issues. We do not want to discuss any specific cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for the students.

I want to thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group and go over a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and _____ will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what _____ is typing.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law, DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your roommate's name, or your squadron or company identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box on your handout.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

On the next several pages of your handout are results from the 2014 survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. I will call your attention to the specific item as we reach that part of the discussion.

Please note that the results I will share with you come from the 2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey. This survey was conducted in spring of 2014 with results reported to your Academy and Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in February 2015. Our report is available at the Web site shown if you are interested.

I have several questions to ask you today, with a few subtopics in each. I will watch the time so we will be able to cover all questions by the end of this session at (give specific end time).

Let's begin our discussion today with some results of the survey on sexual assault and sexual harassment. Please turn to page 4 of your handout. Here you will see some of the results from our 2014 survey that we will discuss today.

- **Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment**
  - Let's begin by looking briefly at some of the results from the survey we conducted in Spring 2014. Please take a look at the first section of the handout we provided to you. [Review 2014 estimated prevalence rates in handout. Note that these rates are for students only and do not include faculty or staff members.] Have you seen these estimated prevalence rates? Why do you think the estimated prevalence rates decreased between 2012 and 2014? [Probe for reasons for downward trends or why someone might not have an opinion.]
  - What are the possible drivers for the decrease in rates? What happened that might have resulted in the lower prevalence rates in the 2013-2014 school year? Do you think the lower rates are sustainable? Will they stay the same or go up or down the next time we do the survey in Spring 2016? Why
    - For those of you who have been at the Academy for several years, is the emphasis on sexual assault and sexual harassment similar this year to that in 2013-2014?
    - A lot has happened between 2012 and 2015. What changes have you seen? Has the focus on preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment been consistent over the years? Have the changes been positive or negative? How so?
  - Are experiences of sexual assault different for men? See the second figure in your handout. [Share the results of the hazing, locker room, being dared questions.] Are these potentially the drivers of sexual assault with male survivors? What can be done to reduce this type of unwanted behavior?

- **Reporting**
  - Now let's switch to a related topic about reporting sexual assault. Please see the third section of the handout. [Share statistics from the MSA report at each Academy.] These are the number of reports last year. Are you aware of this number of reports? Would you think it would have been higher or lower? Why?
  - Does Academy leadership encourage reporting? At what level (senior leaders like the Superintendent and Commandant, officers/NCOs, cadet/ midshipman)? Do you talk about reporting with your students? Do students encourage each other to report?
  - What are some reasons why someone would report?
  - What are some reasons why someone would not report?
  - One thing we have learned from our surveys is that survivors of sexual assault often experience multiple incidents of unwanted behaviors. Please take a look at table number 4 in your handout [Share results on more than one experience and the same offender involved.] Reporting could reduce multiple incidents by identifying one offender who repeats.

Are you aware that some survivors experience multiple incidents? Would knowing that make a difference in someone deciding to report?
  - What more can be done to encourage reporting?
  - Survey results show that students say they know how to report. Yet when asked to whom would they report, they often identify individuals who are not authorized to accept a restricted report and do not know to whom to report. Why? Are the two types of report, being restricted and unrestricted reports, helpful?
    - Could there be additional types of report or recipients?
    - What are you told about discussing an incident of sexual assault with one of your students? What guidance would you like to have?

- **Retaliation**
  - I would like to shift the discussion now to a topic related to reporting sexual assault. Complaints of retaliation against someone who reports sexual assault have received considerable attention by DoD leadership.
  - Do you think retaliation might occur here at this Academy if someone were to report a sexual assault? Why?
    - Who do you think would retaliate? Peers? Academy leadership? Cadet/midshipman leadership?
  - What do you think retaliation would look like? What specific types of actions would be retaliation?
    - What do you think would motivate someone to do that?
  - Do you think retaliation also occur against someone who steps in to help someone?
    - Could a bystander ever be retaliated against? What do you think that would look like?
  - Can retaliation occur against someone accused of being the alleged perpetrator of sexual assault?
    - What do you think that type of retaliation would look like?
  - Are there any other side effects of a situation where retaliation may occur?
    - For example, do people take sides, either for or against the survivor? Can retaliation affect relationships within a squadron/company (or team)? How?
  - How do members of the faculty/staff deal with retaliation complaints? Do they know when it is happening? Do they actively address it?
  - DoD policies specifically prohibit retaliation. Retaliation, as defined by the Department, includes two distinct types of actions:
    - 1) taking or threatening to take an adverse personnel action, or withholding or threatening to withhold a favorable personnel action, with respect to a member of the Armed Forces because the member reported a criminal offense; [if asked for an example, for cadets/cadets, actions that affect a cadet/midshipman promotion; a disciplinary or other corrective action; a transfer or reassignment to another company/squadron; a military performance evaluation; a decision on training opportunities; referral for mental health

evaluations, or any other significant change in duties or responsibilities inconsistent with their current situation].
        - 2) ostracism and such acts of maltreatment, as defined by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, committed by peers of a member of the Armed Forces or by concerned other persons because the member reported a criminal offense.
        - Were you aware that these prohibitions exist? Would the type of retaliation we discussed a minute ago fit these criteria?
    - We have heard that in some instances people perceive actions by officials that they consider retaliation but the actions were not retaliation and were not intended to be retaliatory, but were taken in an attempt to support the survivor [example, expedited transfer]. In other words, the leader was trying to be helpful but the person who reported the sexual assault perceived the action to be negative.
        - Can you think of any examples where that might happen?
        - From a survivor's perspective, how would actions such as counseling or placement on limited duty be seen? Would survivors see that type of action as positive in helping them deal with a stressful situation or negative as action against them?
    - Do you or the students know what to do or who to report a complaint of retaliation?
    - Last question in this section. What could be done to reduce or eliminate any form of retaliation?

- **Social Media**
    - The Department has taken a hard look at social media across the force. How do Academy students view the use of social media in general? Is this a venue students use to communicate with each other? Please describe.
        - What are the most commonly used social media sites among students here at this Academy?
        - What are the positive aspects of the use of social media?
        - What are the negative aspects?
    - Going back to our discussion about retaliation or reactions to reports of sexual assault at the Academy, does social media ever play a role? If yes, how so?
    - How do you think the Department and the Academy can address the negative use of social media?
        - Are there any particularly negative uses the Academy should actively address?
        - Are there any "underground" web sites the Academy should be aware of?
        - Should students be held accountable for negative comments made on social media if the comments are made with the specific intent to discourage reporting relating to a criminal offense of sexual assault?

- Why do fellow students turn to social media to say negative things about each other? What is the motivation?
- Can the Academy use social media to address issues of sexual assault? Could the Academy develop additional media resources for sharing, for example, information about prevention or resources available to survivors?
  - Could the Academy develop an application like a helpline for prevention of a sexual assault? For example, if someone needed help getting out of a risky area or situation?

- **Leadership Perceptions**
  - Let's shift to a new topic now. Each year in the survey we ask if students think their leaders make honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment. Please see the section in the handout on leadership. [Share results of survey on confidence in leadership at the various levels: Academy leadership, Faculty/Staff, Cadet/Midshipman leadership, students]. Are those about right?
    - Do you think these ratings are accurate? Why?
    - How do these levels of leaders show they are serious? What do they do or say? Can you provide examples?
  - Do any of these levels demonstrate they are not that serious? Can you provide examples?

- **Athletic Teams**
  - Athletic staff consistently had the lowest ratings among the levels of leadership. [Emphasize this is athletic staff, not student athletes.]. Why do you think that is? For those students who do not have much contact with athletic staff, how do you think they form their opinions about this?
  - We also heard on the survey that there might be more problems with unwanted gender related behaviors such as sexual assault and harassment by athletes. Without naming specific teams or individuals, do you think this is something that happens more among athletes? Does leadership hold them to the same standards on these issues as other students? Do peers hold athletes to the same standards?
  - What is the general perception of athletic teams and sexual assault?
    - "Bad apples" and stricter admission policies were brought up in the survey comments in 2014. Do students believe that recruitment for athletic purposes is fair? Is there a need for a change in admission procedure?
  - What recommendations do you have for improvement?

- **Culture**
  - Now let's talk for a few minutes about the culture here at the Academy regarding sexual assault. What is the general attitude among students about the focus on sexual assault?
    - Is sexual assault an important issue at the Academy?

        - Is it taken seriously by students, faculty, and athletic staff?
        - Does sexual assault have the same emphasis as other areas, such as use of alcohol, safety, or suicide prevention?
        - Are there any aspects of other programs that grab your attention? Could they be used to increase emphasis on sexual assault?
    - Sexual assault has surfaced as a national issue. How does it reflect at the Academy? Are there similar issues? Are issues of sexual assault worse or better here? Is there anything the Academy could do better that is done at civilian universities?
    - Are there groups within the Academy where it is taken more or less seriously? [If asked, give examples of groups like sports teams, clubs, class years, squadrons, upperclassmen.]
        - Is there any general feeling that the genders should be separated? In the dormitories? In training sessions?
    - How can the culture be changed to improve the way sexual assault is addressed at the Academy?
        - Students indicated that training on respecting one another would be useful in changing culture. Do you agree? What would that look like?
        - Is there a need to address gender equality? How can the genders be made to feel more equal at the Academy?
    - Does the Academy solicit input from you when they develop policies and programs for preventing sexual assault? Should they? Can you give some examples where your input was considered?
    - What peer program is in place here? Please describe. Is it effective? Why or why not? How could it be improved?
        - Many students have indicated these programs were beneficial. Would students prefer to receive training, notices, small, open-group discussions led by members of these programs?

- **Preventing sexual assault**
    - The Department and your Academy have taken many steps to prevent sexual assault. I would like to ask you a few questions about the programs and resources the Academy has put in place for prevention.
    - First, what are some of the programs and resources here at your Academy that address sexual assault prevention? Please describe.
        - What makes these programs effective? What more could be done?
    - Are there other steps the Academy might take to prevent sexual assault?
        - Are there any barriers to implementing these steps? Are you aware of any prevention programs at other Academies or colleges that might work here?
    - Think for a minute about other prevention-related programs at the Academy such as smoking, drinking, suicide, etc. What about those programs do see as particularly successful? Could those features be adapted to sexual assault prevention?

- Do students feel like they can discuss situations where they see someone at risk either with the person directly or with Academy officials [if asked, clarify that if a student sees a fellow student in a risky situation that they can speak up and warn the fellow student or alert an official.]
- Does your Academy seek input from students when they design or implement a new prevention program? Do you have any examples? How could the Academy use student input better?
- Are you aware of any local community resources that help in preventing or responding to incidents of sexual assault? How are those resources publicized to the Academy?
- Are there any local "hangouts" that students frequent that should be addressed? Does the Academy have a program to seek business and community support in dealing with issues such as sale of alcohol or notifying the Academy when they see a student in trouble?
- What role could the alumni play in sexual assault prevention? Why?

- **Training**
  - We receive numerous comments in our surveys and focus groups on the training the Academies provide in sexual assault prevention and response. We will not go into detail today on these topics, but in general, what is your opinion about the training students received in the past year?
    - Do the students talk about their training with you? Is it effective in reducing sexual assault?
    - Has the training changed in any way from previous years? How?
  - What could be improved in terms of training?
    - Does your training have an adverse effect on reporting?
    - Should there be different trainings for sexual harassment and sexual assault? Is the Academy focusing on one over the other?
  - Are there opportunities to improve the training? How? What should be included? How should it be delivered?
    - Does the sexual assault curriculum prepare the students personally to combat sexual assault? [Clarify that training helps them avoid risky situations, intervene when they see a threat to fellow students, and/or deal with a situation where unwanted behaviors have happened to them.] Is this type of training included in classes and leadership training?
    - Does their training effectively prepare them to prevent sexual assault and response to sexual assault as a leader? Where do they receive that type of training?
    - "Preventative training" was mentioned as something that students wanted. What would this look like?
    - Many students indicated they wanted teachers, military personnel, etc., to share their experiences dealing with issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Might this be an opportunity to get more top-down training?

        - To make training more meaningful, students indicated that addressing the situation in a "professional" way would be beneficial. What would this look like?
    - Do you know if the Pre-Command Course for seniors includes any discussion on how to handle issues of sexual assault when they have leadership responsibilities?
        - Do you think students feel prepared to address issues that might arise with their subordinates? Please discuss.

- **Use of Alcohol**
    - Our surveys indicate that alcohol is frequently involved in incidents of sexual assault. Do you think that is the case here at your Academy?
    - Aside from what we might call normal social use of alcohol, do you think someone might use alcohol to facilitate having a sexual relationship with someone? How so?
        - What type of circumstances would that involve?
        - Would that be more likely to occur on or off campus?
        - Are there specific locations or activities that facilitate the use of alcohol?
        - Can you describe a typical situation where alcohol and sexual behaviors occur (no names)?
        - How do people typically obtain alcohol?
    - What would you recommend to reduce the use of alcohol in situations that lead to unwanted sexual behaviors?
        - Are current policies enforced?
        - Are there any policy changes you would recommend?

- **Additional recommendations for addressing unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment**
    - What else would you recommend to address sexual assault and sexual harassment?
    - What did we forget to ask you about?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. As I mentioned at the beginning, we will treat all of your comments anonymously. There is no attribution to any of you for the specific comments you made today. Please also respect that non-attribution when you leave here today. Our goal is to provide the best data possible and you have helped us greatly today with your comments and insights.

One last comment – on the last page of the handout you will see a list of resources available to you if you would like to follow up with us or have any questions. It also lists Academy resources if you know of a student who would like to talk to someone about any experiences they might have had with unwanted gender-related behaviors.

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix C.
USMA Cadet Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Military Academy

Handout for Cadet Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR CADET PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on at the Academies, members of Congress and your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced any of these behaviors, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues at your Academy. You're the experts on what it's like to go to the Academies and we want to hear your opinion about Academy life. It doesn't matter if you have or have not had gender-related experiences. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for you.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law, DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your roommate's name, or your company identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box below.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

2

Preserving the privacy and confidentiality of focus group participants is a fundamental principle for any successful data collection program, and the Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) strives to maintain and protect the identity of every individual who participates in any of our data collection efforts. To accomplish this goal, DMDC uses procedures and protocols that protect respondent confidentiality to the extent permitted by all federal laws and statutes.

Participation in this focus group is voluntary; however, maximum participation is encouraged so that data will be complete and representative. The data collection procedures maintain the anonymity of all participants; no one from DMDC will know who has been selected by their respective Academies and no record will be made of those who participate in any given session. Further, no comments will be kept in the written notes that could be linked to any individual participant. The risk to you is accidental or unintentional disclosure of any identifying data you provide during the session or other disclosures required by law. However, DMDC has a number of policies and procedures preserve the anonymity of survey data and all potentially identifying information has been removed.

There will be no collection or use of personally identifiable information (PII), and no one will be able to determine the responses of any given individual. Access to the unedited record of comments is limited to DMDC analysts and contractors under their direct supervision. In limited circumstances where an organization such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is performing an audit or analysis, the unedited record of comments can be shared to the extent disclosure is required by law. The organization must agree in writing to protect the data and subscribe to all provisions of the Privacy Act, including destroying the data when the specific audit or analysis is concluded. In addition, no data can be used to contact a focus group participant or link responses back to a participant. Access to the edited record of comments where potentially identifying information has been removed is limited to Academy senior leaders and staff working in sexual assault response and prevention activities, or as otherwise required by law. Selected comments that have had all identifiers removed will be included in the final report to illustrate findings. Finally, no audio or video recording will be done in order to further protect your anonymity.

3

Discussion Resources

On the next several pages are results from the 2014 survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. I will call your attention to the specific item as we reach that part of the discussion.

Please note that the results I will share with you come from the 2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey. This survey was conducted in the spring of 2014 with results reported to your Academy and Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in February 2015.

To assure statistically reliability of the survey results, we surveyed all of the cadets. The full report is available on the Defense Manpower Data Center web site at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp Select the 2014 SAGR Overview Report.

4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USMA Women and Men

Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USMA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	10%
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	23%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	29%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	10%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	20%

Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	9
Sexual Assault – Restricted	Less than 5
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	82%	68%
Same offenders were involved	53%	53%

Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault	Women	Men
Academy senior leaders	92%	92%
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	87%	90%
NCOs in charge of their unit	86%	89%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	81%	85%
Cadet leaders	79%	87%
Civilian academic faculty	69%	70%
Cadets not in leadership positions	66%	77%
Athletic staff	64%	60%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Military Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

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CLICK: Logging on to www.SafeHelpline.org allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault.

CALL: Calling the telephone hotline 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for access to resources and support. Safe Helpline staff can also transfer callers to installation or base Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/On-call SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), civilian rape crisis centers or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to Contact the Sexual Assault Response Team:

USCC Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
845-938-7479; 24/7 cell 910-322-2529

Center for Personal Development (CPD)
845-938-3022; 24/7 cell 845-591-7215

Military Police Desk
845-938-3333

West Point Duty Chaplain
845-401-8171

Garrison Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
845-938-5657; 24/7 cell: 914-382-8180

USMA Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
845-938-3532; 24/7 cell: 585-319-8936

Medical Attention
Keller Army Community Hospital
Emergency Room: 845-938-4004
Behavioral Health: 845-938-3441

7

Appendix D.
USMA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Military Academy

Handout for Faculty, Athletic Staff, Military Cadre Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR FACULTY, ATHLETIC STAFF, MILITARY CADRE PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you and students to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

- This is the second year we have invited members of the faculty, athletic and activity staffs, and military cadre to participate. Because you interact with the students, we believe you are in a position to share valuable insights with us on these important issues. We do not want to discuss any specific cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for the students.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law, DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your roommate's name, or your company identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box below.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

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There will be no collection or use of personally identifiable information (PII), and no one will be able to determine the responses of any given individual. Access to the unedited record of comments is limited to DMDC analysts and contractors under their direct supervision. In limited circumstances where an organization such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is performing an audit or analysis, the unedited record of comments can be shared to the extent disclosure is required by law. The organization must agree in writing to protect the data and subscribe to all provisions of the Privacy Act, including destroying the data when the specific audit or analysis is concluded. In addition, no data can be used to contact a focus group participant or link responses back to a participant. Access to the edited record of comments where potentially identifying information has been removed is limited to Academy senior leaders and staff working in sexual assault response and prevention activities, or as otherwise required by law. Selected comments that have had all identifiers removed will be included in the final report to illustrate findings Finally, no audio or video recording will be done in order to further protect your anonymity.

3

Discussion Resources

On the next several pages are results from the 2014 survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. I will call your attention to the specific item as we reach that part of the discussion.

Please note that the results I will share with you come from the 2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey. This survey was conducted in the spring of 2014 with results reported to your Academy and Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in February 2015.

To assure statistically reliability of the survey results, we surveyed all of the cadets. The full report is available on the Defense Manpower Data Center web site at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp Select the 2014 SAGR Overview Report.

4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USMA Women and Men

Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USMA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	10%
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	23%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	29%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	10%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	20%

Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	9
Sexual Assault – Restricted	Less than 5
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	82%	68%
Same offenders were involved	53%	53%

Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault	Women	Men
Academy senior leaders	92%	92%
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	87%	90%
NCOs in charge of their unit	86%	89%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	81%	85%
Cadet leaders	79%	87%
Civilian academic faculty	69%	70%
Cadets not in leadership positions	66%	77%
Athletic staff	64%	60%

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CLICK: Logging on to www.SafeHelpline.org allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault.

CALL: Calling the telephone hotline 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for access to resources and support. Safe Helpline staff can also transfer callers to installation or base Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/On-call SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), civilian rape crisis centers or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to Contact the Sexual Assault Response Team:

USCC Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
845-938-7479; 24/7 cell 910-322-2529

Center for Personal Development (CPD)
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Military Police Desk
845-938-3333

West Point Duty Chaplain
845-401-8171

Garrison Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
845-938-5657; 24/7 cell: 914-382-8180

USMA Sexual Assault Response Coordinator
845-938-3532; 24/7 cell: 585-319-8936

Medical Attention
Keller Army Community Hospital
Emergency Room: 845-938-4004
Behavioral Health: 845-938-3441

7

Appendix E.
USNA Midshipmen Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Naval Academy

Handout for Midshipman Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR MIDSHIPMAN PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on at the Academies, members of Congress and your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced any of these behaviors, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues at your Academy. You're the experts on what it's like to go to the Academies and we want to hear your opinion about Academy life. It doesn't matter if you have or have not had gender-related experiences. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for you.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
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- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

2

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Discussion Resources

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To assure statistically reliability of the survey results, we surveyed all of the midshipmen. The full report is available on the Defense Manpower Data Center web site at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp Select the 2014 SAGR Overview Report.

4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USNA Women and Men

2. Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USNA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	12%
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	53%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	16%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	9%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	16%

3. Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	14
Sexual Assault – Restricted	9
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

4. Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	USNA	
	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	59%	64%
Same offenders were involved	63%	41%

5. Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault		
	Women	Men
Academy senior leaders	89%	91%
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	86%	90%
SELs in charge of their unit	84%	89%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	75%	80%
Midshipman leaders	80%	87%
Civilian academic faculty	64%	69%
Midshipmen not in leadership positions	68%	79%
Athletic staff	56%	59%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Naval Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

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- **TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.**

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to contact the following resources that are available to you:

24-Hour USNA SAPR Hotline: (443) 336-2637
Sexual Assault Response Coordinators: (443) 336-5359 / (410) 320-4909
CMEO: 410-293-7707
Midshipmen Development Center: (410) 293-4897
Website: www.usna.edu/SAPRO
Chaplain's Office: (410) 293-1100 / Duty Chaplain: (443) 871-2339 (after duty hrs-Main Office)
Human Research Protection Program: (410) 293-2533 or HRPPoffice@usna.edu

7

Appendix F.
USNA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Naval Academy

Handout for Faculty, Athletic Staff, Military Cadre Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR FACULTY, ATHLETIC STAFF, MILITARY CADRE PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

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- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you and students to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

- This is the second year we have invited members of the faculty, athletic and activity staffs, and military cadre to participate. Because you interact with the students, we believe you are in a position to share valuable insights with us on these important issues. We do not want to discuss any specific cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for the students.

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2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

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1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USNA Women and Men

2. Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USNA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	12%
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	53%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	16%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	9%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	16%

3. Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	14
Sexual Assault – Restricted	9
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

4. Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	USNA	
	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	59%	64%
Same offenders were involved	63%	41%

5. Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault		
	Women	Men
Academy senior leaders	89%	91%
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	86%	90%
SELs in charge of their unit	84%	89%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	75%	80%
Midshipman leaders	80%	87%
Civilian academic faculty	64%	69%
Midshipmen not in leadership positions	68%	79%
Athletic staff	56%	59%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Naval Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

If you wish to provide feedback regarding the focus group process or the focus group content, please send us an e-mail at: SA-Survey@mail.mil. If you know of others who might like to contact a member of the DMDC team, please share this information with them.

In April 2011, the Department of Defense launched the DoD Safe Helpline to provide confidential, live, one-on-one expert advice to victims of sexual assault. Available 24/7, users can click, call or text to access Safe Helpline services:

◦CLICK: Logging on to www.SafeHelpline.org allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault.

◦CALL: Calling the telephone hotline 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for access to resources and support. Safe Helpline staff can also transfer callers to installation or base Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/On-call SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), civilian rape crisis centers or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

◦TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to contact the following resources that are available to you:

24-Hour USNA SAPR Hotline: (443) 336-2637
Sexual Assault Response Coordinators: (443) 336-5359 / (410) 320-4909
CMEO: 410-293-7707
Midshipmen Development Center: (410) 293-4897
Website: www.usna.edu/SAPRO
Chaplain's Office: (410) 293-1100 / Duty Chaplain: (443) 871-2339 (after duty hrs-Main Office)
Human Research Protection Program: (410) 293-2533 or HRPPoffice@usna.edu

7

Appendix G.
USAFA Cadet Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Air Force Academy

Handout for Cadet Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR CADET PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on at the Academies, members of Congress and your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced any of these behaviors, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues at your Academy. You're the experts on what it's like to go to the Academies and we want to hear your opinion about Academy life. It doesn't matter if you have or have not had gender-related experiences. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for you.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, your roommate's name, or your squadron identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box below.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

2

Preserving the privacy and confidentiality of focus group participants is a fundamental principle for any successful data collection program, and the Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) strives to maintain and protect the identity of every individual who participates in any of our data collection efforts. To accomplish this goal, DMDC uses procedures and protocols that protect respondent confidentiality to the extent permitted by all federal laws and statutes.

Participation in this focus group is voluntary; however, maximum participation is encouraged so that data will be complete and representative. The data collection procedures maintain the anonymity of all participants; no one from DMDC will know who has been selected by their respective Academies and no record will be made of those who participate in any given session. Further, no comments will be kept in the written notes that could be linked to any individual participant. The risk to you is accidental or unintentional disclosure of any identifying data you provide during the session or other disclosures required by law. However, DMDC has a number of policies and procedures preserve the anonymity of survey data and all potentially identifying information has been removed.

There will be no collection or use of personally identifiable information (PII), and no one will be able to determine the responses of any given individual. Access to the unedited record of comments is limited to DMDC analysts and contractors under their direct supervision. In limited circumstances where an organization such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is performing an audit or analysis, the unedited record of comments can be shared to the extent disclosure is required by law. The organization must agree in writing to protect the data and subscribe to all provisions of the Privacy Act, including destroying the data when the specific audit or analysis is concluded. In addition, no data can be used to contact a focus group participant or link responses back to a participant. Access to the edited record of comments where potentially identifying information has been removed is limited to Academy senior leaders and staff working in sexual assault response and prevention activities, or as otherwise required by law. Selected comments that have had all identifiers removed will be included in the final report to illustrate findings. Finally, no audio or video recording will be done in order to further protect your anonymity.

Discussion Resources

On the next several pages are results from the 2014 survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. I will call your attention to the specific item as we reach that part of the discussion.

Please note that the results I will share with you come from the 2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey. This survey was conducted in the spring of 2014 with results reported to your Academy and Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in February 2015.

To assure statistically reliability of the survey results, we surveyed all of the cadets. The full report is available on the Defense Manpower Data Center web site at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp Select the 2014 SAGR Overview Report.

4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USAFA Women and Men

2. Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USAFA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	25%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	17%
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	15%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	12%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	8%

3. Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	13
Sexual Assault – Restricted	14
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

5

4. Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	USAFA	
	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	78%	87%
Same offenders were involved	59%	54%

5. Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault		
	Women	Men
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	90%	92%
Academy senior leaders	88%	92%
NCOs in charge of their unit	88%	92%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	83%	86%
Cadet leaders	80%	89%
Civilian academic faculty	78%	78%
Cadets not in leadership positions	73%	80%
Athletic staff	64%	62%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

If you wish to provide feedback regarding the focus group process or the focus group content, please send us an e-mail at: SA-Survey@mail.mil. If you know of others who might like to contact a member of the DMDC team, please share this information with them.

In April 2011, the Department of Defense launched the DoD Safe Helpline to provide confidential, live, one-on-one expert advice to victims of sexual assault. Available 24/7, users can click, call or text to access Safe Helpline services:

◦CLICK: Logging on to www.SafeHelpline.org allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault.

◦CALL: Calling the telephone hotline 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for access to resources and support. Safe Helpline staff can also transfer callers to installation or base Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/On-call SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), civilian rape crisis centers or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

◦TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to contact the following resources that are available to you:

USAFA Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) Teresa Beasley
(24 Hrs) 333-SARC (7272)
USAFA Peak Performance Center 333-2107 (Duty Hrs) / (After Duty Hrs) Please contact your Squadron PEER and they will contact the on-call PPC Provider
USAFA Cadet Chaplain's Office 333-2636 (Duty Hrs) / (After Duty Hrs) Please contact the Command Post 333-2633 and they will contact the on-call Chaplain
10 ABW Equal Opportunity Office / MSgt Casey Muccio 333-6374
Human Relations Training & Education Office / MSgt Patrina Lassiter 333-6150
Military Family Life Counselors / (719) 651-4810 or (719) 246-1360

(USAFA SCN 15-14)

7

Appendix H.
USAFA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Air Force Academy

Handout for Faculty, Athletic Staff, Military Cadre Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR FACULTY, ATHLETIC STAFF, MILITARY CADRE PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you and students to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

- This is the second year we have invited members of the faculty, athletic and activity staffs, and military cadre to participate. Because you interact with the students, we believe you are in a position to share valuable insights with us on these important issues. We do not want to discuss any specific cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for the students.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, duty title, or your squadron identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box below.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

2

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3

Discussion Resources

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To assure statistically reliability of the survey results, we surveyed all of the cadets. The full report is available on the Defense Manpower Data Center web site at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp Select the 2014 SAGR Overview Report.

4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USAFA Women and Men

2. Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USAFA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	25%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	17%
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	15%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	12%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	8%

3. Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	13
Sexual Assault – Restricted	14
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

5

4. Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	USAFA	
	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	78%	87%
Same offenders were involved	59%	54%

5. Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault		
	Women	Men
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	90%	92%
Academy senior leaders	88%	92%
NCOs in charge of their unit	88%	92%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	83%	86%
Cadet leaders	80%	89%
Civilian academic faculty	78%	78%
Cadets not in leadership positions	73%	80%
Athletic staff	64%	62%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

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If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to contact the following resources that are available to you:

USAFA Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) Teresa Beasley
(24 Hrs) 333-SARC (7272)
USAFA Peak Performance Center 333-2107 (Duty Hrs) / (After Duty Hrs) Please contact your Squadron PEER and they will contact the on-call PPC Provider
USAFA Cadet Chaplain's Office 333-2636 (Duty Hrs) / (After Duty Hrs) Please contact the Command Post 333-2633 and they will contact the on-call Chaplain
10 ABW Equal Opportunity Office / MSgt Casey Muccio 333-6374
Human Relations Training & Education Office / MSgt Patrina Lassiter 333-6150
Military Family Life Counselors / (719) 651-4810 or (719) 246-1360

(USAFA SCN 15-14)

7

Appendix I.
USCGA Cadet Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Handout for Cadet Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR CADET PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. While the press and others may claim to know what is going on at the Academies, members of Congress and your senior leaders want to hear directly from you about the issues that affect you. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

Focus group participants sometimes say "I have not experienced any of these behaviors, so why should I stay for this session?" The purpose of this focus group is to understand these issues at your Academy. You're the experts on what it's like to go to the Academies and we want to hear your opinion about Academy life. It doesn't matter if you have or have not had gender-related experiences. We do not want to discuss your personal experiences with sexual assault and sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for you.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
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- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
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Discussion Resources

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4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USCGA Women and Men

2. Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USCGA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	<1%
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	17%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	17%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	17%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	17%

3. Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	8
Sexual Assault – Restricted	Less than 5
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

4. Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	USCGA	
	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	53%	NR
Same offenders were involved	67%	NR

Note: NR indicates Not Reportable due to small numbers responding or high margins of error

5. Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault		
	Women	Men
Academy senior leaders	85%	88%
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	89%	93%
CPOs in charge of their unit	86%	91%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	82%	83%
Cadet leaders	86%	89%
Civilian academic faculty	72%	76%
Cadets not in leadership positions	80%	87%
Athletic staff	79%	76%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

If you wish to provide feedback regarding the focus group process or the focus group content, please send us an e-mail at: SA-Survey@mail.mil. If you know of others who might like to contact a member of the DMDC team, please share this information with them.

In April 2011, the Department of Defense launched the DoD Safe Helpline to provide confidential, live, one-on-one expert advice to victims of sexual assault. Available 24/7, users can click, call or text to access Safe Helpline services:

- **CLICK: Logging on to www.SafeHelpline.org allows users to receive live, one-on-one confidential help with a trained professional through a secure instant-messaging format. The website also provides vital information about recovering from and reporting sexual assault.**
- **CALL: Calling the telephone hotline 877-995-5247 allows users to speak with trained Safe Helpline staff for access to resources and support. Safe Helpline staff can also transfer callers to installation or base Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs)/On-call SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs), civilian rape crisis centers or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.**
- **TEXT: Texting their location to 55-247 (inside the U.S.) or 202-470-5546 (outside the U.S.) allows users to receive automated contact information for the SARC at their installation or base.**

If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy after participating in the focus group, and/or if you are a survivor of sexual assault, or have experienced sexual harassment or stalking, we strongly encourage you to contact the following resources that are available to you:

Center for Counseling and Development: (860) 444-8520 (0800-1630, M-F)
Website:
http://eduportal1/Divisions/Superintendent/Center%20for%20Counseling%20%20Develop/Pages/default.aspx
SARC: Shannon Norenberg (860) 625-1002 (24 hours)
CASA Website: http://eduportal1/sites/CASA/default.aspx
Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut: (888) 999-5545 (24 hours)
Website: http://saccec.org/
Cadet Chaplain's Office: (860) 444-8480

7

Appendix J.
USCGA Faculty, Athletic Staff, and Military Cadre Handout

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups: U.S. Coast Guard Academy

Handout for Faculty, Athletic Staff, Military Cadre Participants

2015 SERVICE ACADEMY GENDER RELATIONS FOCUS GROUPS: U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY

HANDOUT FOR FACULTY, ATHLETIC STAFF, MILITARY CADRE PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

We have asked you to be here with us to help us understand issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response. You might recall that in the spring of last year students at your Academy were asked to participate in a paper and pencil survey on these topics. This year, focus groups are being conducted to provide additional information to DoD and Academy leadership. Similar focus groups are being conducted at all three DoD Service Academies as well as the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

This is a voluntary focus group. The Academy staff member who invited you to participate in this session should have informed you that we would be discussing gender-related issues, including sexual assault and harassment, and asked if you were willing to participate. If you prefer not to sit in on this focus group, you are free to leave or to sit quietly while others participate.

- Let's begin by talking about why we are doing the focus group. Congress directed the Secretary of Defense to conduct an annual assessment cycle of surveys and focus groups in alternating years on gender issues at each of the Academies. This is an opportunity for you and students to share your perceptions and recommendations directly with senior leaders.

- This is the second year we have invited members of the faculty, athletic and activity staffs, and military cadre to participate. Because you interact with the students, we believe you are in a position to share valuable insights with us on these important issues. We do not want to discuss any specific cases of sexual assault or sexual harassment. We do want to discuss issues in general so we can provide guidance to leadership to create the best environment possible for the students.

1

Ground Rules for Discussion

Thank you in advance for participating in this important focus group. We will follow a few ground rules for the focus group:

- Please respect each other's opinions. We know you will have different perspectives on issues covered in this focus group. We want to hear those views—that's why we are here today. So there are no right or wrong statements or opinions.
- If you don't feel you have anything to contribute, there's no pressure for you to do so, and if you need to leave during the session, please do so in a quiet manner, so as not to disrupt the group.
- I will lead the discussion and our recorder will be helping us to take notes. We will record comments but will not record names or other identifying information. Only an analysis and summary of the data will go in our report. If you would like to see how comments are being recorded, please examine what is being typed.
- My role as facilitator is to keep the session moving and to guide the discussion. This might mean that I will move on to another topic in the interest of time.
- This is a non-attribution session. Although we are taking notes on your comments and suggestions, to the extent allowed by law DMDC does not publish nor share anything outside this room that can be attributed to any one of you specifically. In some instances, DMDC may receive requests for the unedited comments collected at these sessions; this information will only be provided to the extent required by law. We ask your cooperation in protecting the privacy of the comments made within this session by not saying anything that would identify you or other participants. For example, do not state your name, duty title, or your company identification. In addition, we also ask that you do not discuss the focus group proceedings after you leave. Additional information about protecting your anonymity is shown in the box below.
- Please keep the crosstalk to a minimum. Let me be the focal point for questions and discussion.
- Does anyone have any questions?

2

Preserving the privacy and confidentiality of focus group participants is a fundamental principle for any successful data collection program, and the Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) strives to maintain and protect the identity of every individual who participates in any of our data collection efforts. To accomplish this goal, DMDC uses procedures and protocols that protect respondent confidentiality to the extent permitted by all federal laws and statutes.

Participation in this focus group is voluntary; however, maximum participation is encouraged so that data will be complete and representative. The data collection procedures maintain the anonymity of all participants; no one from DMDC will know who has been selected by their respective Academies and no record will be made of those who participate in any given session. Further, no comments will be kept in the written notes that could be linked to any individual participant. The risk to you is accidental or unintentional disclosure of any identifying data you provide during the session or other disclosures required by law. However, DMDC has a number of policies and procedures preserve the anonymity of survey data and all potentially identifying information has been removed.

There will be no collection or use of personally identifiable information (PII), and no one will be able to determine the responses of any given individual. Access to the unedited record of comments is limited to DMDC analysts and contractors under their direct supervision. In limited circumstances where an organization such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is performing an audit or analysis, the unedited record of comments can be shared to the extent disclosure is required by law. The organization must agree in writing to protect the data and subscribe to all provisions of the Privacy Act, including destroying the data when the specific audit or analysis is concluded. In addition, no data can be used to contact a focus group participant or link responses back to a participant. Access to the edited record of comments where potentially identifying information has been removed is limited to Academy senior leaders and staff working in sexual assault response and prevention activities, or as otherwise required by law. Selected comments that have had all identifiers removed will be included in the final report to illustrate findings Finally, no audio or video recording will be done in order to further protect your anonymity.

3

Discussion Resources

On the next several pages are results from the 2014 survey that we will use as part of the discussion today. I will call your attention to the specific item as we reach that part of the discussion.

Please note that the results I will share with you come from the 2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey. This survey was conducted in the spring of 2014 with results reported to your Academy and Service leadership as well as the House and Senate Armed Services Committees in February 2015.

To assure statistically reliability of the survey results, we surveyed all of the cadets. The full report is available on the Defense Manpower Data Center web site at: https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp Select the 2014 SAGR Overview Report.

4

2014 Survey Results: Unwanted Sexual Contact

Unwanted sexual contact consists of a range of unwanted behaviors including unwanted sexual touching, attempted sex, and completed sex.

1. Unwanted Sexual Contact Rates for USCGA Women and Men

2. Behaviors Associated with Unwanted Sexual Contact for USCGA Men

Other Behaviors Experienced with Unwanted Sexual Contact	
Incidents involved some form of hazing or initiation rites	<1%
Incidents involved some form of horseplay or locker room behavior	17%
Incidents involved placing genitalia on them	17%
Incidents involved someone getting even with them for something they did	17%
Incidents involved someone showing off or being dared to do it to them	17%

3. Number of Incidents Reported in 2013-2014

Type of Report	Number of Reports
Sexual Assault – Unrestricted	8
Sexual Assault – Restricted	Less than 5
Sexual Harassment – Formal Complaints	Less than 5

4. Multiple Offenses and Number of Offenders

Of those who experienced USC since June 2013:	USCGA	
	Women	Men
Experienced more than one incident	53%	NR
Same offenders were involved	67%	NR

Note: NR indicates Not Reportable due to small numbers responding or high margins of error

5. Confidence in Leadership

Leadership Makes Efforts to Stop Sexual Harassment and Assault		
	Women	Men
Academy senior leaders	85%	88%
Commissioned officers in charge of their unit	89%	93%
CPOs in charge of their unit	86%	91%
Military/uniformed academic faculty	82%	83%
Cadet leaders	86%	89%
Civilian academic faculty	72%	76%
Cadets not in leadership positions	80%	87%
Athletic staff	79%	76%

We appreciate your participation in this focus group. In the event you would like to discuss issues related to the focus group with someone from DMDC during (or after) our visit to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, please contact Dr. Paul Rosenfeld at 571-372-0987 or DSN 372-0987.

If you wish to provide feedback regarding the focus group process or the focus group content, please send us an e-mail at: SA-Survey@mail.mil. If you know of others who might like to contact a member of the DMDC team, please share this information with them.

In April 2011, the Department of Defense launched the DoD Safe Helpline to provide confidential, live, one-on-one expert advice to victims of sexual assault. Available 24/7, users can click, call or text to access Safe Helpline services:

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http://eduportal1/Divisions/Superintendent/Center%20for%20Counseling%20%20Develop/Pages/default.aspx
SARC: Shannon Norenberg (860) 625-1002 (24 hours)
CASA Website: http://eduportal1/sites/CASA/default.aspx
Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut: (888) 999-5545 (24 hours)
Website: http://saccec.org/
Cadet Chaplain's Office: (860) 444-8480

7

Appendix K.
Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups

Defense Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC)

Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)

The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Research, Surveys, and Statistics Center (RSSC) has been conducting surveys of gender-related issues at the Military Service Academies (MSAs) since 2005. RSSC uses scientific state of the art statistical techniques to draw conclusions from populations within the purview of the Department of Defense (DoD), such as active duty, Reserve components, and MSAs. For the *2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups (2015 SAGR)*, RSSC used industry standard methods to plan, execute, and report results. The following details some common questions about our methodology and results.

1. What was the population of interest for the 2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups (2015 SAGR)?

The population of interest for the *2015 SAGR* consisted of cadets and midshipmen at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), and U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) in class years 2015 through 2018. This work is authorized by Title 10 of the united Stated Code as amended by Section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 that codified an assessment cycle at the Academies that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups. Although not covered by the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2007 requirement, USCGA leadership requested to be included, beginning in 2008, in order to evaluate and improve their programs addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment.

2. How were the participants selected?

Participation in the *2015 SAGR* focus groups was voluntary. Participants were selected at random at each Service Academy and offered the opportunity to participate.

To select student participants, each Service Academy first supplied RSSC a roster of all cadets and midshipmen that RSSC randomized by gender and class year. Each Academy then used their randomized list to identify the first twelve students who were available (e.g., did not have a class scheduled during the focus group) and volunteered to attend the focus group appropriate for their gender and class year. The randomization process follows industry standards to assure a balance of opinions on the topics of interest based on unbiased feedback.

For the sessions of faculty, military staff, and athletic staff, Academy officials advertised the sessions through the most appropriate forum and solicited volunteers until they received eight to ten participants committed to each session.

3. Who participated in the focus groups?

Student focus groups were conducted by gender and class year with one mixed-gender session. RSSC conducted 28 focus groups of students across all three DoD Service Academies and USCGA: 7 groups at USMA including 62 cadets, 7 groups at USNA including 68 cadets, 7 groups at USAFA including 66 cadets, and 7 groups USCGA including 51 cadets. In total, RSSC collected attitudes and opinions from 247 Academy students.

Three focus groups were conducted at each Academy of faculty, military staff, and athletic staff. At the DoD Academies the majority of athletic staff are contractors so only active duty military, DoD civilian employees, and Officer Representatives/Officers in Charge (OR/OIC) were included. In total, comments from these groups represent the attitudes and opinions of 112 participants (31 at USMA, 23 at USNA, 40 at USAFA, and 18 at USCGA).

4. Who led the focus groups?

RSSC provided trained facilitators to lead sessions. In all cases a female facilitator led the all-female sessions. A male facilitator either led or co-led the all-male sessions. Either a male and female facilitator led or co-led the mixed gender sessions and the faculty and staff sessions. Other than the court reporter and participants, no one other than RSSC staff was present during the sessions.

5. How many sessions were conducted?

For the *2015 SAGR*, RSSC conducted 40 focus groups, 10 at each Academy, scheduled in 90-minute sessions. Seven sessions of students and three sessions consisting of faculty, military staff, and athletic staff were conducted. Focus groups were held in closed-door conference rooms or classrooms on each Academy campus.

6. What questions were asked?

Eleven broad areas, with probing questions, were addressed in the focus group sessions covering the following topics:

1. Perceptions About Unwanted Sexual Contact and Perceived Sexual Harassment—general discussion of the incidence rates for men and women from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey (2014 SAGR)* and specific discussion of the behaviors experienced by men (e.g., horseplay, locker room behaviors).

2. Reporting—general discussion of reporting, leadership emphasis on reporting, reasons why someone would or would not report, and multiple experiences of sexual assault and reporting.

3. Retaliation—familiarity with the DoD policies and regulations regarding retaliation for reporting sexual assault, how retaliation might look at the Academy, and ways to reduce retaliation.

4. Social Media—general discussion of the use of social media at the Academy and specific roles of social media in retaliation for reporting sexual assault.

5. Perceptions of Leadership—opinions about the degree to which leaders make honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and sexual harassment and whether leaders react appropriately and lead by example.

6. Athletic Teams—general discussion of perceptions about standards and conduct for some teams or individual athletes.

7. Academy Culture—general attitude among students about the focus on sexual assault at the Academy, ways to change the culture regarding attitudes toward sexual assault, and the role of the peer program in sexual assault.

8. Preventing Sexual Assault—general discussion of programs and resources the Academy has put in place for prevention of sexual assault.

9. Training and Education on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention—discussion of training received in the past year, perception of their training in reducing sexual assault, examples of most effective training, and recommendations for improvement.

10. Role of Alcohol in Sexual Assault—general discussion of alcohol involvement in sexual assault and specific use alcohol to facilitate having sex with someone.

11. Additional Recommendations—discussion of steps to address sexual assault and sexual harassment. The group ended with "What did we not ask that we should have?"

7. How were the questions developed?

RSSC analysts drafted potential questions by reviewing comments and findings from the *2014 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey (2014 SAGR)*, looking for follow-up topics that might clarify or expand upon findings from the previous year's survey. The DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), DoD Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO), and the Military Service Academies (MSAs) each reviewed the proposed questions and provided additional comments to refine the questions.

8. What if no one talks?

The trained facilitators know how to generate discussion, but RSSC's experience over the years has been that participants appreciate the opportunity to be heard and are seldom shy about offering opinions. It is true in some cases that

participants do not speak much and they are never directly called upon. But rarely do sessions end early, rather the facilitators typically have to keep a fast pace going to hear everyone's thoughts on all of the topics included in the protocol.

9. How are the results summarized?

Comments made during the focus groups were transcribed by a professional court reporter (approximately 60 hours of discussions) and were analyzed qualitatively by RSSC analysts for major themes and ideas conveyed across the sessions. No attempt was made to quantify the number of comments made on a specific theme.

RSSC analysts used NVivo by QSR International —a powerful grouping and validation tool which provides comprehensive coverage of topics for summaries of findings—to analyze and categorize topics. They then refined themes that were then consolidated into a report and peer reviewed.

10. Who receives the results?

The *2015 SAGR* report is provided to SAPRO for submission through the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD[P&R]) to the leadership of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. SAPRO includes the results of their on-site program evaluation in the *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2014-2015*.

11. Do these results represent the opinions of all cadets and midshipmen?

No, the *2015 SAGR* was not intended to produce results that represent all opinions. Findings should be viewed as illustrations of situations and themes for consideration by DoD and MSA officials as they review their programs.

Findings may be viewed as a general perspective on participants' views of sexual harassment and assault at their Academies, but they do not portray a statistical report on incidence rates or performance of response and prevention programs.

12. How do the results compare to previous years?

Results are not comparable across the years. While RSSC has conducted focus groups biennially at the MSAs since 2007 using similar procedures each time, each year the questions change to address new topics.

13. How is the identity of the participants protected?

While the focus group questions do not ask for any personal information about experiences participants might have had, we respect the privacy of each participant. To protect that privacy we do not take attendance nor do we record names. Obviously military personnel wear nametags, so identity is easy to see.

To account for this, RSSC refers to each participant by letter, such as "Participant A."

RSSC excludes all Academy staff from the sessions so no comments can be attributed to a specific individual. As added protection, RSSC uses professional court reporters to transcribe sessions rather than audio or video record. In the event people self-identify in their comments, RSSC analysts redact that information from the transcripts and report before approval/publication.

Focus group participants are also asked to respect each other's privacy and not discuss what they heard after they leave the session.

14. What if someone becomes distressed over discussion of sensitive topics?

The facilitator states clearly that there should be no discussion of personal experiences of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or other negative experiences during the focus group sessions. However, should someone become distressed as they reflect on the discussions, the facilitators are trained to address this. A certified victims' advocate is always available for the RSSC team to hand off a distressed participant. Additionally, each participant is provided a handout to keep that contains the resources available to them should they want to follow up on an issue.

15. How can I trust that the results are not biased for or against programs at the Academies?

Since qualitative research does not produce indices of accuracy and reliability, such as margins of error, RSSC relies on the selection methods to reduce the potential for bias among participants. For selecting student participants, the randomization process invites all potential participants equally, so no one of a particular bias is more or less likely to participate. Additionally, the nature of a focus group is to drive out diverse opinions on topics, so the randomization process helps select a wide diversity of opinions.

Nevertheless, RSSC abundantly cautions readers of the report to understand that the common themes and opinions expressed only represent the individuals who participated and no other members of the MSAs. Although the results cannot be generalized to the population of each MSA or across the MSAs, they provide many insights into issues and ideas for further consideration.

16. How will the results be distributed?

The *2015 SAGR* report will be available in December 2015 at:

https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_surveys.jsp

The *Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2014-2015* will be available at:

http://www.sapr.mil/index.php/annual-reports

17. Do the results of the focus groups make a difference?

Yes. DoD and MSA leaders have used the results of the focus groups over the years to change policies, add or change trainings/programs, dispel misinformation, and provide feedback to the cadets and midshipmen under their charge. The focus group efforts are not the only source of information for decision makers, but they add to the accumulated body of understanding on gender issues. The unique contributions of the focus group efforts are that they glean information from the perspective of the people affected by decisions. The anonymous, systematic nature of the effort provides a rich source of data on a set of topics asked to multiple groups of individuals, providing a broad set of ideas to consider.

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Elizabeth P. Van Winkle and Maia M. Hurley, Defense Manpower Data Center

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13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
The report provides the results for the 2015 Service Academy Gender Relations Focus Groups that the Defense Manpower Data Center conducted in response to Section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007. This study is part of an annual assessment cycle at the Service Academies that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups to assess the incidence of unwanted sexual contact and harassment and related issues at the Academies.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Demographics, gender-related experiences, gender relations, personnel policies, sexual harassment, sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact, retaliation, training, culture, Service Academies

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			Paul R. Rosenfeld
U	U	U	UU	566	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(Include area code)* 571-372-0987

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Defense Manpower Data Center