

DOD Evaluates Sexual Harassment & Violence Programs At Military Service Academies

The Department of Defense (DoD) today released key findings from "The DoD Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the United States Military Service Academies for Academic Program Year (APY) 2008-2009." The report integrates findings from evaluations of the academies' sexual assault prevention and response programs, prevention of sexual harassment programs, and cadet and midshipman focus groups.

The academies saw an overall decrease in the number of sexual assault reports made to authorities in APY 2008-2009. During the evaluation period, there were a total of 25 reports of sexual assault at the academies. All cadets and midshipmen who reported a sexual assault were able to access support services through their sexual assault response coordinators.

"One sexual assault is too many," said Gail H. McGinn, performing the duties of the under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness. "Our assessment shows the academies understand and have institutionalized some remarkable programs to prevent and respond to this crime."

As part of the comprehensive review, DoD officials met with personnel from the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy, reviewed academy policies and procedures, conducted an extensive data call for reports and investigative files, and held focus groups with cadets and midshipmen. Based on information obtained during these site visits, DoD officials found that the academies' programs fulfilled, and in some cases, surpassed the requirements of existing DoD policies and directives.

The assessment found that the military service academies have:

- Processes underway to continue refinement of their prevention and response programs for sexual assault and sexual harassment;
- Response structures that provide comprehensive and consistent support for victims of sexual assault;
- Education and training that ensure every cadet and midshipman receives sexual assault and harassment prevention and response information;
- Programs for sexual assault and harassment prevention and response

that are a permanent part of their curricula; and

- Initiatives underway to develop measures of program effectiveness.

Cadet and midshipmen focus group members provided frank observations, including the following:

- The majority of participants understood both restricted and unrestricted reporting for sexual assault and indicated there is value in having both options.
- All participants strongly agreed that academy senior leadership is serious about preventing sexual assault.

The DoD Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the United States Military Academies was mandated in the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act. The act directed DoD to evaluate the effectiveness of the sexual harassment and sexual violence related policies, trainings and programs at the military service academies on an annual basis.

The complete report is available at <http://www.sapr.mil>. For specific information, contact the individual military services at 703-697-2564 for Army, 703-695-0640 for Air Force, and 703-697-5342 for Navy.

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