



Military Service Academy Command Climate Assessment Process Evaluation

Office of People Analytics





Military Service Academy Command Climate Assessment Process Evaluation

Overview Report

**DATA
DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS
FOR
DECISION
MAKERS**



Additional copies of this report may be obtained from:

Defense Technical Information Center

ATTN: DTIC-BRR

8725 John J. Kingman Rd., Suite #0944

Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-6218

Or from:

<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/order.html>

Ask for report by **DTIC #**

Military Service Academy Command Climate Assessment Process Evaluation

Overview Report

Austin Lawhead,¹ PhD, Brian Adams,² PhD, Dwayne Beebe,² Alyssa McHoes,²
Willie Cosner,² Emilee Wakefield,² Brian Clark,² Becky Lane,² PhD, Amanda
Barry,² Lisa Davis,¹ Ashlea Klahr,¹ PhD

¹ Office of People Analytics (OPA)

² Fors Marsh

DATA
DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS
FOR
DECISION
MAKERS



Acknowledgments

The Office of People Analytics (OPA) is indebted to numerous people for their assistance with the 2023 Military Service Academy Command Climate Assessment Process Evaluation, which was conducted on behalf of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSDP&R]). This study was conducted under the leadership of Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Acting Director of OPA, and Ms. Lisa Davis, Acting Director of OPA's Health and Resilience (H&R) Division and Dr. Rachel Lipari OPA DEOCS Director. The project managers for this effort were Dr. Austin Lawhead and Dr. Rachel Lipari of OPA.

Dr. Brian Adams was the project manager for Fors Marsh. The Fors Marsh project directors for this effort were Ms. Amanda Barry and Dr. Becky Lane

We would like to thank all the individuals at each Service Academy who assisted us in coordinating data collection for this study: MSG Adam Sherwood (U.S. Military Academy); HMC Sharon Barker and LSSC (SS) Demetrius Dew (U.S. Naval Academy); and Maj Alicia Ojeda and MSgt Sarah Takaki (U.S. Air Force Academy). We would also like to thank all the individuals at each Service Academy who we interviewed; this study would not have been possible without you sharing your experiences.¹

Policy officials contributing to the development of this project included Dr. Andra Tharp, Dr. Rachel Clare, and Mr. Travis Bartholomew of the Office of Force Resiliency (OFR); and Dr. Nathan Galbreath, Dr. Rachel Breslin, Ms. Anita Boyd and Mr. David Griffith of the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO). Additional stakeholders providing insights and expertise regarding command climate include Dr. Lisa Arfaa and Dr. Rachel Castellon of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI); Dr. Daniel McDonald, Mr. Clarence Johnson, Mr. Christopher Brown, and Ms. Tiffany Gist-Johnson of the Diversity Management Operations Center (DMOC); and Dr. Liz Clark of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO).

This report would not have been possible without the hard work of the data collection team. Those who assisted in data collection at the U.S. Military Academy include Dr. Austin Lawhead, Mr. Dwayne D. Beebe, and Ms. Emilee Wakefield. Those who assisted in data collection at the U.S. Naval Academy include Dr. Rachel Clare, Mr. Mark Petusky, Dr. Marissa Oliver, Mr. Willie Cosner, Mr. Dwayne D. Beebe, and Dr. Anna Sheveland. Those who assisted in data collection at the U.S. Air Force Academy include Dr. Rachel Lipari, Dr. Kev Thompson, Ms. Alyssa McHoes, and Mr. Dwayne D. Beebe.

Dr. Brian Adams, Dr. Nick Mararac, Mr. Eddie Pierce, Ms. Divya Alukal, Mr. Rae Turner, and Mr. José Aguinaga of Fors Marsh, contributed to the qualitative analyses provided in this report.

Dr. Ashlea Klahr, Ms. Lisa Davis, Dr. Rachel Lipari, and Dr. Austin Lawhead of OPA, and Dr. Brian Adams, Dr. Becky Lane, Ms. Alyssa McHoes, Mr. Dwayne D. Beebe, and Mr. Willie Cosner contributed to the writing and quality control of this report. Ms. Sarah Mason provided technical editing support.

¹ All individuals named in the report have consented to release of their name.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Since 2005, the Health and Resilience (H&R) Research Division within the Office of People Analytics (OPA) has conducted congressionally mandated² gender relations assessments at the U.S. Military Service Academies (Academy), known as the *Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR)* Survey project. The cycle of the project alternates between qualitative data collection and a quantitative (survey) assessment. In even years, the assessment is used to monitor the past-year estimated prevalence of unwanted sexual contact (a proxy for sexual assault), sexual harassment and gender discrimination among cadets and midshipmen via scientific survey, and thereby to assess progress in preventing these unwanted behaviors from occurring. In odd-numbered years, these assessments involve qualitative data collection at the Academies to better understand their climates with respect to sexual harassment and sexual assault for cadets and midshipmen.

For the 2023 qualitative iteration of *SAGR* effort, OPA conducted a process evaluation of the Command Climate Assessment (CCA) cycle at the three Department of Defense (DoD) Academies. The primary objective of this process evaluation was to better understand how CCA is conducted at the Academies, to identify promising practices and areas for improvement, and to develop materials to bolster the Academies' CCA processes in the future.

The DoD has recognized the need for cross-cutting integrated prevention efforts across a range of self- and other-directed forms of violence and harm. Many forms of violence and harm have shared risk and protective factors, and thus prevention efforts that target these shared factors can help to prevent multiple harmful behavior outcomes. To this end, Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.11, "DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders," issued in December 2022, uses an integrated primary prevention lens to establish policy, responsibilities, procedures, and requirements for addressing harmful behaviors in the military community.

A cornerstone of DoDI 6400.11 and the DoD's strategy toward the prevention of harmful behaviors, is the Command Climate Assessment (CCA). Per policy, CCAs must be conducted annually by DoD units and organizations to assess organizational climate, and the Academies are subject to this requirement.³ CCA is a standardized process for collecting reliable data regarding

² Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), Sections 4361, 6980, and 9361, as amended by Section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2007, codified an assessment cycle at the Military Service Academies (Academies) that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups. This requirement applies to the DoD Service Academies (U.S. Military Academy [USMA], U.S. Naval Academy [USNA], and U.S. Air Force Academy [USAFA]).

³ Prior DoD policy was less clear on the requirement at the MSAs, but the Academies have been conducting CCAs for many years, with some variations in terms of timing and other aspects. Prior to 2021, the Academies relied upon an Academy-specific version of the *DEOCS* called the *Military Service Academy Organizational Climate Survey (MEOCS)*. Starting in 2021, the Academies began to use the same version of the *DEOCS* as the rest of the DoD, the *DEOCS 5.0*, which included the standard set of *DEOCS* content plus some Academy-specific content modeled after earlier forms of the Academy-specific climate survey.

the state of the climate within an organization and inform actions to address any climate challenges uncovered.

Of note, DoDI 6400.11 was published in the midst of the Academic Program Year (APY) 2022–2023 CCA that we observed for this study, and thus the requirements in the new policy were not yet reflected in the CCA process as we observed it. Nevertheless, our observations were foundational for understanding CCA at the Academies.

Methodology

The Academy CCA process evaluation used a hybrid qualitative approach, collecting data from a variety of information streams over the course of the 2022–2023 academic year at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) including observational research, document acquisition and review, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Utilizing the hybrid qualitative methodology employed by this study allowed us to gain crucial on-the-ground insight into the Academies' CCA process that would not have been possible with surveys or through focus-groups alone.

To gain a deeper understanding of how each Academy currently employs and applies the CCA process, OPA conducted both in-person and virtual site visits at the Academies during the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters to conduct semi-structured interviews and observe activities such as CCA meetings and trainings. A total of 52 interviews were conducted across Academies, with participants ranging from the Academy commandant and other senior Academy leaders to cadets and midshipmen enrolled at the Academy. Additional qualitative data were collected in Spring 2023 via Office of Force Resiliency (OFR) On Site Installation Evaluation (OSIE) visits to the DoD Academies, which included focus groups with cadets/midshipmen. These focus groups included three CCA-specific questions provided by OPA to OFR interviewers, who briefed OPA at the conclusion of the visits to discuss results.

The Academies also provided documentation related to the CCA process, such *DEOCS* results and action plans from APY 2021–2022, policies and procedures, and e-mail correspondence encouraging *DEOCS* participation. Academies provided a total of 125 documents, which were reviewed to gain a better understanding of the CCA process, including historical context and how the process is currently organized.

Content analysis was used to analyze interview and observational data to quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of certain words and phrases, themes, or concepts. Using a two-stage iterative process, the research team developed a coding scheme including content code and coding rules. Four team members conducted the interview coding process in NVivo, first by independently coding the same interview, then splitting the remaining interviews among themselves. The codes were used to explore the CCA process at each Academy, often providing insight into the steps that were taken to complete the process. Emerging themes were used to identify overall successes and challenges with the CCA process at the Academies.

Results

We found that all of the Academies placed importance on CCAs, and each Academy demonstrated some promising practices that the other Academies can leverage. We also observed shared challenges across the Academies, as well as some unique challenges by Academy. Our process evaluation also reflected the evolving nature of the CCA process at each of the Academies due to emerging requirements and additional guidance being issued.

Facilitate Knowledge Sharing About the CCA Process

Through observations and discussions with each of the Academies about their CCAs, a shared challenge emerged around the turnover in the personnel responsible for facilitating the process. Due to changes in duty stations and assignments, often personnel tasked with executing an Academy's CCA process cycle in and out of the position every two to three years. With each turnover the CCA process is at risk of losing institutional knowledge that produces a successful CCA cycle.

A common theme brought up in interviews was that experiencing the CCA process in action, either at the Academy or at previous posts, increased buy-in to the process. Prior experience with a productive CCA process can motivate those involved in those successful efforts to share their experiences, whether faculty and staff or cadets/midshipmen. Building a strong, productive, and repeatable CCA process may thus start a virtuous cycle that increases buy-in with each subsequent year, and provides cadets/midshipmen, as future leaders, with a strong foundation in the value and importance of CCA that they will bring with them into the broader force.

Engage the Academy at All Levels in the Full CCA Process

A successful CCA process relies on input and participation from a variety of stakeholders at the Academy. Engaging these individuals early and often in the process will strengthen many aspects of the process, including boosting response rates, developing realistic prevention activities, and executing prevention activities effectively. Broadly, the stakeholders to include in the process can be categorized as cadets/midshipmen, leadership, and the program specialist and prevention stakeholder offices (including integrated primary prevention workforce, who are intended to serve as the drivers of the process under the new policy).

Cadet/Midshipman involvement increased their ownership of the process while also demonstrating to their peers that the CCA process was a substantial and credible method for addressing climate issues at the Academy. Interview respondents in leadership who indicated involving cadets/midshipmen in the CCA process commented that the cadets/midshipmen involved provided valuable insight into the process and made significant contributions to the effort at multiple junctures.

Similarly, when leadership, especially senior leadership, was involved in the process, interview respondents shared that they felt more empowered to conduct the CCA process in a way that could produce meaningful improvements to the command climate at the Academy. Leadership at all levels within the Academy should be involved with the CCA process, including

encouraging cadets/midshipmen leadership to participate in the *DEOCS* workgroups tasked with interpreting *DEOCS* results and developing Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention (CIPP) plans, and briefing the Academy on changes being made in response to the CCA process.

Leveraging the knowledge and expertise of program specialists⁴ and prevention stakeholders⁵ in the CCA process, particularly in results interpretation and CIPP plan development, can bolster the effectiveness of the process and reduce the burden on leadership who traditionally develop prevention activities for companies/squadrons. Indeed, these stakeholders are important not only because they can help identify and implement actions, but also because they can use the data from the CCA process, particularly the *DEOCS*, to assess how things are going in their own mission space at the Academy.

Improve Communication Across the Academy At All Stages of the CCA Process

Lastly, communicating with cadets/midshipmen (particularly cadet/midshipmen leadership) throughout the CCA process to help them understand the inner workings of the process and the impact of taking the *DEOCS* can lead to increased response rates and more interest about the process. The CCA process has a number of built-in communication opportunities, including sending e-mails, having discussions with cadets/midshipmen during the *DEOCS* fielding window to encourage participation, as well as sensing sessions⁶ during results interpretation and briefing results. Academies should utilize these opportunities to facilitate two-way communication, not only relaying information to cadets/midshipmen about the process, but also gathering feedback from them about the command climate and ways to improve it. Involving cadets/midshipmen leaders in the CCA process in this way also helps familiarize these leaders with Academy resources and support specialists (e.g., MEO, SAPR, substance abuse, etc.) that are available to them so that they can effectively point other cadets/midshipmen to these services and specialists when needed.

Assessing Effectiveness and Tracking Progress

While all of the Academies had various strategies for addressing the findings of their climate assessments, there did not appear to be any consistent method for assessing the effectiveness of assessment inspired interventions, nor a consistent way to track progress toward goals at the institutional level. These evaluation steps are important to ensure that proposed solutions are effective, and that ineffective solutions are not re-implemented after subsequent assessments. Because we often saw actions from previous years assessments referenced in action plans (sometimes verbatim), it is not clear the extent to which company officers were evaluating the plans and actions from prior years.

⁴ Program specialists are defined in DoDI 6400.11 as positions “in which the primary duties of the Service member or DoD civilian employee involve a harmful behavior remediation program such as suicide prevention, Military Equal Opportunity (MEO), Family Advocacy Program (FAP), and substance misuse.”

⁵ Prevention stakeholders are defined in DoDI 6400.09 as “individuals or organizations with equity in prevention of self-directed harm and prohibited abusive or harmful acts.” This includes individuals and organizations at the Academies that may not be directly involved in primary prevention, such as chaplains, or centers focused on academic integrity or athletics.

⁶ Sensing sessions are informal opportunities for open discussion. During the CCA process, sensing sessions can be used to discuss and provide context to *DEOCS* results.

Evaluation of the actions undertaken based on climate assessments will likely be improved with the integration of the prevention workforce at the Academies and the development of Academy-wide CIPP plans. However, tracking progress towards climate goals can happen at a variety of organizational levels and should involve multiple layers of leadership to ensure that the response to climate issues is unified across the Academy.

Use of Additional Data Sources in Command Climate Assessment

Some Academies did do sensing sessions or utilize focus groups, although it is unclear the extent to which this was representative. In addition to more qualitative methodologies, the Academies have a wealth of data at their disposal that would be useful in assessing climate related issues. This includes data from the biannual *SAGR* survey that would well compliment many of the factors on the *DEOCS* and provides much more contextual and granular information.

Conclusion

Developing healthy and supportive command climates is the primary objective of the CCA process. CCA is a powerful tool for understanding and shaping climate and culture at the local level, including for the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment and other forms of violence and harm. Efforts to bolster the CCA process are therefore a critical piece of Academies' efforts to enhance climate and culture and prevent sexual violence. CCA can only serve its intended purpose if actions and policies, based on the data collected, are put into place and followed through with fidelity. While this is often the most difficult part, it is also the most critical for the Academies to get right. To this end, the 2023 *SAGR* effort illuminated opportunities for improved efficiency, increased institutional knowledge, enhanced buy-in, and increased effectiveness of the CCA process at the Academies. As the Academies continue to enhance and refine their CCA processes, particularly proactively identifying climate problems and putting in place solutions at the source (e.g., within the specific company/squadron of concern), we expect that improvements to CCA execution will translate into improvements in climate and culture at the Academies.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	iii
Assessing Effectiveness and Tracking Progress	vi
Use of Additional Data Sources in Command Climate Assessment	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Integrated Primary Prevention Policy DoDI 6400.11	1
Command Climate Assessment (CCA)	2
Methodology	3
Overarching Goal	3
Data Collection	4
Site Visits and Observations	4
Document Acquisition and Review	4
Interviews	5
Focus Groups	6
Strengths and Limits of the Methodology	6
Data Analysis	7
Document Review	7
Emerging Themes From Qualitative Data	7
Organization of the Report	8
Chapter 2: Command Climate Assessment Process at U.S. Military Academy	9
Phase 1: Collect	9
Phase 2: Synthesize	10
Phase 3: Act	12
Successes	13
DEOCS Participation	13
Cadet Involvement in the CCA Process	13
Challenges	13
Centralizing Prevention Planning	14
Information Sharing	14
Senior Leadership Involvement	15
Program Specialist and Prevention Stakeholder Knowledge and Expertise	15
Chapter 3: Command Climate Assessment Process at U.S. Naval Academy	17
Phase 1: Collect	17
Phase 2: Synthesize	18
Phase 3: Act	19
Successes	20
Diverse and Invested Members of the CRT driven by Commandant Engagement	20
Implementation of Initiatives	20
Challenges and Opportunities	21
Lack of Documentation at the Company Level	21
No Involvement by Battalion-Level Leadership	22

Table of Contents (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Lack of Visibility of CCA.....	22
Chapter 4: Command Climate Assessment Process at U.S. Air Force Academy	23
Phase 1: Collect	23
Phase 2: Synthesize	24
Phase 3: Act	26
Successes	26
Cadet Wing CCA Working Group.....	26
Collaboration Among Squadron Leaders.....	27
Senior Leadership Involvement	27
Challenges and Opportunities	28
Training on How to Interpret Results	28
Inclusion of Cadets, Program Specialists, and Prevention Stakeholders in the CCA Process	29
Chapter 5: Overall Observations and Conclusion.....	31
Overall Observations for the CCA Process	31
Knowledge Sharing About the CCA Process	31
Engagement of all Academy Stakeholders in the Full CCA Process	32
Cadets/Midshipmen	32
Leadership.....	33
Program Specialists and Prevention Stakeholders.....	33
Communication Across the Academy At All Stages of the CCA Process	34
Assessing Effectiveness and Tracking Progress	34
Use of Additional Data Sources in Command Climate Assessment	35
Impact of DoDI 6400.11	35
Building IPPW personnel into the CCA process	35
Documenting Actions	35
Conclusion	36
References	37

Appendices

Appendix A. Evaluation Questions	39
Appendix B. Qualitative Interview Guides.....	45
Appendix C. Qualitative Coding Scheme	59

List of Tables

Table 1. MSA Site Visit Schedule	4
Table 2. Interview Participants by Academy	6
Table 3. Document Inventory by Service Academy	7

Table of Contents (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Table 4. List of Support Offices and Programs at USMA	15
Table 5. Topical Codes	61
Table 6. Emerging Themes	63

List of Figures

Figure 1. CW CAP Menu of Options	25
--	----

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since 2005, the Health and Resilience (H&R) Research Division within the Office of People Analytics (OPA) has conducted congressionally mandated⁷ gender relations assessments at the U.S. Military Service Academies (Academy), known as the *Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR)* Survey project. In even years, the assessment is used to monitor the past-year prevalence of unwanted sexual contact (a proxy for sexual assault), sexual harassment and gender discrimination among cadets and midshipmen via scientific survey, and thereby to assess progress in preventing these unwanted behaviors from occurring. In odd-numbered years, these assessments use qualitative data collection techniques such as focus groups at the Academies to better understand the climates with respect to sexual harassment and sexual assault and inform improvements to both prevention and response efforts.

On the 2022 *SAGR* survey, rates of both unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment reached all-time highs at the Academies for both women and men. In light of these concerning findings, the DoD undertook a number of actions to address sexual assault and sexual harassment, and the broader culture and climate, at the Academies. Among these efforts, we designed a new approach to the 2023 *SAGR* in order to directly support prevention efforts at the Academies. Specifically, we used the 2023 *SAGR* as an opportunity to observe, inform, and strengthen each Academy's Command Climate Assessment (CCA) process. As described in more detail below, the CCA is a critical tool for the prevention of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful behaviors. It provides localized, real-time climate leading indicators that can guide prevention and intervention efforts toward the biggest problems and greatest needs. Through the 2023 *SAGR* effort, we aimed to understand CCA processes at the Academies and provide feedback and tools for the Academies to further bolster and leverage CCA as a tool for prevention.

At their core, the Academies are training many of the military's future leaders, making it critical for each Academy to maintain a healthy climate. Through their *DEOCS* administration and CCA process, the Academies are ensuring tomorrow's leaders learn by observation how to conduct an effective CCA and have their voices heard about the important issues affecting them at the Academies. If we can teach our future military leaders to utilize the tools of CCAs to better their own Academy climates, they will be more likely to utilize them in the operational military to improve the readiness and resilience of the future force.

Integrated Primary Prevention Policy DoDI 6400.11

DoD policy regarding CCA is outlined in the Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6400.11, "DoD Integrated Primary Prevention Policy for Prevention Workforce and Leaders"

⁷ Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.), Sections 4361, 6980, and 9361, as amended by Section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2007, codified an assessment cycle at the Military Service Academies (MSA) that consists of alternating surveys and focus groups. This requirement applies to the DoD Service Academies (U.S. Military Academy [USMA], U.S. Naval Academy [USNA], and U.S. Air Force Academy [USFA]).

(DoDI 6400.11). The DoD has recognized the need for cross cutting integrated prevention efforts across a range of self-directed harm and prohibited abuse and harm. Many forms of violence and harm have shared risk and protective factors, and thus prevention efforts that target these shared factors can help to prevent multiple harmful behavior outcomes. For optimal efficiency and, ultimately, impact in preventing harm, prevention efforts must be coordinated among the many existing prevention efforts and stakeholders across the force (Department of Defense, 2022).

To this end, the DoDI 6400.11, issued in December 2022, uses an integrated primary prevention lens to establish policy, responsibilities, procedures, and requirements for addressing harmful behaviors in the military population. This instruction created the roles, responsibilities, and training requirements for the integrated primary prevention workforce (IPPW) personnel, and it provides guidelines and objectives for leaders to supervise and support prevention activities. IPPW personnel are defined as “DoD civilian employees or Service members who engage in IPPW activities and whose positions require completion of specific IPPW training and other DoD IPPW program requirements” (DoDI 6400.11). IPPW personnel are required to attend trainings and participate in ongoing professional development depending on their specific roles and responsibilities. As part of the implementation of DoDI 6400.11, new trainings were established for IPPW personnel and released in Fall 2023.

Command Climate Assessment (CCA)

A cornerstone of the DoDI 6400.11 and the DoD’s broader strategy toward the prevention of harmful behaviors is the CCA. Per policy, CCAs must be conducted annually and after a change of command (though the characteristics of the CCA differs between the annual and the change of command CCA) by DoD units and organizations to assess organizational climate, and the Academies are subject to this requirement.⁸ Climate is defined by the DoD as “the collection of shared attitudes and perceptions of people within an organization or unit. In the military context, it often reflects the efforts of leaders to build cohesion or trust among their personnel” (DoDI 6400.11). The CCA is a standardized process for collecting reliable data regarding the state of the climate within an organization to inform actions to address any climate challenges uncovered.

The Academies conduct two separate CCA processes each year, one for faculty/staff and one for cadets/midshipmen. While the 2023 SAGR process evaluation focused on the CCA process for cadets/midshipmen, the faculty/staff CCA is a useful tool for understanding and shaping climate and culture among the faculty/staff at the Academies, which is likely to impact cadet/midshipmen climate and culture.

At a high level, the annual CCA process as outlined in DoDI 6400.11 begins with the administration of the *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)*, a web-based unit

⁸ The Academies have been conducting CCAs for many years, with some variations in terms of timing and other aspects. Prior to 2021, the Academies relied upon an Academy-specific version of the *DEOCS* called the *Military Service Academy Organizational Climate Survey (MEOCS)*. Starting in 2021, the Academies began to use the same version of the *DEOCS* as the rest of the DoD, the *DEOCS 5.0*, which is the standard set of *DEOCS* content plus some Academy-specific content modeled after earlier forms of the Academy-specific climate survey.

climate survey that is managed by OPA and administered between August-November annually (see Clare, et al., 2021 and Harcey, et al., 2023 for more information on the *DEOCS*). After the survey closes, results are automatically generated and available to the survey administrator and leader of the unit/organization within 2 weeks (typically less). Results are reported for the Academy overall, by demographic group (e.g., by gender, race/ethnicity, class year) and by “sub-groups” as defined by the organization (e.g., at the Academies, this is by squadron/company).

After reviewing the results from the survey, staff consider other potential data sources that can help to contextualize the survey findings. For example, staff may identify a squadron with particularly low morale and decide to conduct targeted interviews with members of the squadron to learn more. Data gathering can include records reviews, interviews, observations, reviewing other survey data (e.g., the prior year’s *SAGR* results) and/or focus groups. These additional data-gathering activities are not required per policy, but other existing data sources must be considered during the CCA process. The totality of the CCA data, including the *DEOCS* results and any additional data gathered, are then considered together. This information is used to identify climate strengths and weaknesses and create an action plan.

Historically at the Academies, action planning has largely involved companies/squadrons within the Academy each developing their own action plans. The DoDI 6400.11 establishes a new requirement for CIPP plans. CIPP plans are Academy-wide plans that will incorporate company/squadron level as well as broader battalion/wing and Academy-level CCA and other needs assessment findings and outline actions to address identified issues. Beginning in 2024, if additional survey data are needed prior to the next annual *DEOCS* administration, units and organizations can also leverage the *Defense Organizational Climate Pulse (DOCP)*.⁹ Created in response to approved recommendations from the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC, 2021), the *DOCP* is “a brief survey tool with flexible content that may be used between the Change of Command CCA and Annual CCA to provide timely feedback to unit commanders and unit leaders” (DoDI 6400.11). A *DOCP* can be administered no more than once per year, but not within 90 days before or after *DEOCS* administration.

The CCA process allows cadets to speak directly and confidentially to leadership about important issues and concerns affecting their Academy via the *DEOCS*. Results from the CCA empower the Academy to identify challenges and opportunities and to employ targeted, data-driven solutions. In prior years, results from the Academy CCA’s have been used to create positive change, such as changes to policy (e.g., closed door during night inspection [PMI]), living conditions (e.g., fixing air conditioners, changing dormitory buildings), and cafeteria improvements (e.g., including dietary needs).

Methodology

Overarching Goal

The 2023 *SAGR* process evaluation sought to understand and document the CCA process at each of the Academies to develop guidance to bring these processes into alignment with DoDI 6400.11, to identify promising practices to share across the Academies and potentially with the

⁹ The *DOCP* is scheduled to launch in February 2024.

broader force as applicable, and to identify challenges or opportunities to improve the CCA process at the Academies.

Data Collection

The 2023 SAGR process evaluation used a hybrid qualitative approach, collecting data from a variety of information streams over the course of the APY 2022–2023 at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), and U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA). This included observational research, document review, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The evaluation questions that guided this process are provided in Appendix A.

Site Visits and Observations

To gain an understanding of how each Academy currently employs and applies the CCA process, OPA conducted both in-person and virtual site visits at the Academies during the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters. Both the frequency and duration of in-person site visits were determined by multiple factors, including data needs, feasibility, and meetings or activities taking place at the Academies for which our team wished to be present. For example, with multiple local research team members who could perform day trips to USNA, the team was able to attend trainings and meetings as day trips rather than setting up a multi-day observation trip. Table 1 summarizes the dates of site visits by the research team.

Table 1.
Academy Site Visit Schedule

	Sep 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023
USMA				14-15			21-23
USNA	7			1, 13	17	23	
USAFA			14-16				

During on-site observations, we observed CCA planning meetings and CCA debriefs at multiple Academies as well as a number of meetings of the Command Resilience Team (CRT) at USNA.

Document Acquisition and Review

To understand the context of the CCA process at each Academy, Academies were asked to provide all available documentation related to their CCA process, including items such as previous year’s DEOCS results and action plans, policies and procedures, and e-mail correspondence encouraging DEOCS participation. Additionally, results were reviewed from each Academy’s Fall 2022 DEOCS for better context when observing the rest of the CCA process, including each Academy’s review of the DEOCS results and action plan development.

Interviews

During site visits and virtually, Academy personnel and cadets/midshipmen participated in semi-structured interviews. Interview guides focused on the CCA process, including the interview participant's role and perceived successes and challenges with their Academy's process. Interview guides can be found in Appendix B. Interview participants, including senior leadership, survey administrators, and company/squadron leadership, were recruited based on knowledge and involvement in the CCA process at their Academy. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and involved one to two researchers. All interviews were recorded for later transcription and analysis in NVivo.¹⁰ Table 2 highlights the interview participants from each Academy. CCA staff included administrators and staff who were directly involved with the CCA process, such as the Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) at USMA and members of the CRT at USNA. Senior leadership included Academy-wide roles such as the Integrated Prevention Chief. Regimental/Group Officers were individuals who oversaw Regiments at USMA and Groups at USAFA. Company/Squadron Officers were Tactical Officers (TACs) at USMA, Company Officers (CO) at USNA, and Air Officer Commanding (AOC) at USAFA. Company/Squadron Enlisted were TAC Non-Commissioned Officers (TACNCO) at USMA, Senior Enlisted Leaders (SEL) at USNA, and Academy Military Training (AMTs) at USAFA. Two midshipmen involved in the CRT at USNA were also interviewed.

¹⁰ NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software designed to help researchers organize, analyze and gain insights from unstructured qualitative data like interviews, focus groups and documents.

Table 2.
Interview Participants by Academy

	USMA	USNA	USAFA	Total
CCA Staff	1	4	1	6
Commandant	1	1	0	2
Senior Leadership	1	0	3	4
Regimental/Group Officers	1	0	4	5
Company/Squadron Officers	6	3	2	11
Company/Squadron Enlisted	5	2	2	9
Program Specialists ¹¹ and Prevention Stakeholders ¹²	9	1	3	13
Cadets/Midshipmen	0	2	0	2
Total	24	13	15	52

Focus Groups

In Spring 2023, the Office of Force Resiliency, Violence Prevention Cell (VPC) conducted On-Site Installation Evaluation (OSIE) visits to the DoD Academies. Part of these efforts included focus groups with cadets/midshipmen. OPA provided three questions for these focus groups, and then debriefed with VPC at the conclusion of the OSIE visits to discuss the results.

Strengths and Limits of the Methodology

Utilizing the hybrid qualitative methodology employed by this study allowed OPA to gain crucial on-the-ground insight into the Academies’ CCA process that would not have been possible with surveys or through focus-groups alone. Having researchers on-site allowed for a more dynamic research process that provided us with the ability to probe emerging themes and questions of interest in real time and to interact with faculty and staff in their own environment. However, this methodology does have some limitations. A necessary trade-off of this more dynamic research process is that the interviews were semi-structured and not every interviewee was asked all of the same questions. Moreover, we did not observe all aspects of the CCA process at all Academies. Despite these limitations, we contend that our hybrid qualitative approach is an excellent complement to past *SAGR* efforts and believe that the insights described in the subsequent chapters will benefit the Academies’ CCA processes and the DoD’s prevention mission.

¹¹ Program specialists are defined in DoDI 6400.11 as positions “in which the primary duties of the Service member or DoD civilian employee involve a harmful behavior remediation program such as suicide prevention, Military Equal Opportunity (MEO), Family Advocacy Program (FAP), and substance misuse.”

¹² Prevention stakeholders are defined in DoDI 6400.09 as “individuals or organizations with equity in prevention of self-directed harm and prohibited abusive or harmful acts.” This includes individuals and organizations at the Academies that may not be directly involved in primary prevention, such as chaplains, or centers focused on academic integrity or athletics.

Data Analysis

Document Review

The Academies provided a total of 125 documents, which were reviewed to gain a better understanding of the CCA process, including historical context and how the process is currently organized. A summary of the types and quantities of documents collected is located in Table 3. Documents were from current and past implementations of CCA processes and included the directives and policies that guide the process, past and present *DEOCS* results reports and briefing materials, as well as past and present action plans developed during the process.

Table 3.
Document Inventory by Service Academy

Document Type	USMA	USNA	USAFA	Total
DoD and Service Branch Directives and Policy	5	5	6	16
<i>DEOCS</i> Results Reports	4	6	21	31
<i>DEOCS</i> Results Briefing Materials	13	9	0	22
Action Plan Materials	42	2	12	56
Total Data Collection Materials	64	22	39	125

Emerging Themes From Qualitative Data

Content analysis was used to analyze both the structured and observation data (documents and field notes). Content analysis is a research tool for determining the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within given qualitative data (i.e., text). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of certain words and phrases, themes, or concepts (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). For this effort, we developed an initial coding scheme based on the project's research questions which included questions about specific elements in the Academies process as well as questions about how the Academies utilize CCA data to inform their policies and prevention efforts. Research team members reviewed all interview transcripts, and conducted an interview coding process. All analyses were conducted in NVivo. The coding scheme, including codes and coding rules can be found in Appendix C. The topical codes, based on the evaluation questions in Appendix A, were used to explore the CCA process at each Academy, often providing insight into the steps that were taken to complete the process. Where appropriate, de-identified quotes were included to provide richer details around the CCA process. Emerging themes were used to identify overall successes and challenges with the CCA process at the Academies. Where appropriate, de-identified quotes were included to enhance the details of the overall successes and challenges described in Chapter 5.

Organization of the Report

The subsequent chapters of this report will detail how the CCA process unfolded at the Academies as of Spring 2023. As of this writing, the APY 2023–2024 CCA process is underway at the Academies and has no doubt already evolved since last year due to emerging requirements and additional guidance being issued. Chapters 2-4 detail our observations and experiences with CCAs at each of the Academies, delving into how each Academy operationalized the CCA requirement through the three overarching phases (collect, synthesize, and act). Within each specific Academy chapter, we discuss some of the promising practices we encountered at that Academy, as well as identified areas for improvements. Chapter 5 summarizes our overall observations, including cross-Academy observations. We conclude the report by looking at how the CCA process has developed in the subsequent period since our visits. These anticipated changes were influential to our inquiry and shaped the questions we asked, how we looked at the Academies assessment process.

Chapter 2: Command Climate Assessment Process at U.S. Military Academy

In Academic Program Year (APY) 2022–2023 the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) conducted an annual Command Climate Assessment (CCA), as required by U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) policy (DoD Instruction [DoDI] 6400.11), for the United States Corps of Cadets (USCC). The USCC is led by the Commandant of Cadets and organized into four regiments of nine companies. There are approximately 100 cadets in each company, spanning all four class years. The cadet *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)* was conducted in the fall and was set up to provide subgroup reports to each company.¹³ The Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) from the USCC Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) office was assigned to lead the CCA and to serve as the *DEOCS* survey administrator. In this capacity, the EOA reported to the commandant directly. The upcoming sections will discuss the CCA process in more detail, followed by the successes and challenges of the CCA process at USMA.

Phase 1: Collect

In August 2022, the USMA USCC began planning and conducting its annual CCA, as required by DoD policy (Department of Defense, December 2022). The USCC Commandant appointed the USCC EOA as the CCA lead. In the role of the CCA lead, the EOA was responsible to the USCC Commandant as the sole coordinator and point of contact for the CCA process for the entire USCC. It is important to note that there are two separate CCA processes that take place at USMA annually, one for staff and faculty and the other for USCC. This 2023 *SAGR* CCA process evaluation focused on the process for the cadets only.

The EOA had been in this position for one and a half years before the 2022–2023 CCA process, and in that time had received guidance from the prior survey administrator and had overseen an entire CCA process cycle. The EOA used this experience to guide the 2022–2023 CCA process, including modifying fielding dates to take place earlier than the previous year based on challenges that had been reported by company officers, who requested more time to review *DEOCS* results with cadets.

As the CCA lead, the EOA coordinated the CCA timeline with the Commandant and communicated efforts to the entire USCC. The EOA also coordinated with the commandant to determine custom open- and close-ended questions¹⁴ and fielding dates. For the 2022 *DEOCS* survey, the Commandant and the EOA reviewed the custom questions from the previous *DEOCS* administration and chose to use those questions again to measure trends over time.

USMA fielded its *DEOCS* from 11 October to 10 November 2022 to ensure that results would be ready for distribution with sufficient time for company leadership to brief cadets before winter break. USMA registered the *DEOCS* into subgroups based on companies, leading to 37 *DEOCS*

¹³ This allows time for cadet briefings before the winter break.

¹⁴ The *DEOCS* allows for individual registrations to add up to 10 close-ended and 5 open-ended questions to the survey for enhanced customization.

subgroup reports within the USMA USCC.¹⁵ While the USCC *DEOCS* was fielding, cadets received e-mails and verbal reminders about participation from company military and cadet leadership at formations, as well as an e-mail message on behalf of the commandant encouraging cadets to participate. The strategy to encourage cadets' participation did not vary much beyond these formats.

Company military leadership expressed varying levels of enthusiasm for cadet *DEOCS* participation in their companies because the busy schedules and competing demands for time that limit cadets' ability to sit down to take the survey. Some TACs sought to eliminate this barrier by dedicating time with cadets to allow them to take the survey.

"At the beginning we only had 5% participation and trying to incentivize it in the right way, not incentivize it as in you get the day off. But using time we actually had, we had [Cadet Character Education Program] training and it was like, 'Hey, the first 15 minutes we're going to open this up for people to do the survey. You can continue doing it during the class and afterwards we're going to release everybody 15 minutes early.' So essentially, they got the time back and got 15 minutes of free time by doing it. And we got really good numbers at that point. But before that, the cadets' interest really just wasn't there."—USMA TAC Officer

Although company officers expressed interest in using other non-monetary incentives, such as offering performance passes, many were under the impression that incentives are not permitted to be offered to cadets to participate in the *DEOCS*.¹⁶

The EOA monitored *DEOCS* response rates via the *DEOCS* portal and sent out weekly reports to TACs, Regimental Tactical Officers (RTO) and the USCC senior enlisted leader to keep them apprised of the current response rates. The EOA also provided a biweekly update to the commandant on the response rates by company. The EOA indicated that it would have recommended extending the fielding period if response rates at the end of the designated fielding period had not been comparable to the previous year's rates. For the 2022 administration of the *DEOCS*, the USCC had a response rate of 47%, with company response rates ranging from 11% to 91% with all companies receiving enough participation to generate a report.

Phase 2: Synthesize

Once the *DEOCS* was complete, the USMA EOA reviewed the results over the next 10 days to prepare for a meeting with the USCC to review the results, including trends in the quantitative and qualitative data. Once complete, the commandant then briefed the superintendent on the

¹⁵ In addition to the 36 companies divided into four regiments, there is a 37th company that includes cadets called the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC). This company falls under the Brigade Tactical Officer (BTO).

¹⁶ OPA was unable to locate any USMA, Army or DoD policy or guidance that explicitly forbids non-monetary incentives.

results, as required by DoD policy.¹⁷ The commandant also authorized dissemination of the results to the companies at this time. The EOA e-mailed each company TAC and tactical non-commissioned officer (TAC NCO) with their *DEOCS* results, written comments, and sample plans of action that had been developed previously at the Academy with instructions on completing and returning their action plans to the EOA. Additionally, rolled up results for each of the four regiments were provided to USMA by the DoD *DEOCS* team for review and distribution to the regiments.¹⁸ The EOA summarized the report for the RTOs stating, “I prepare just a little slide to help out the RTOs broken down so they can see their entire first regiment, second regiment, third, just their regiment to see where their companies fall in line with the statistical data for them.”

At this point, company leadership was tasked with reviewing their *DEOCS* results, back briefing their company, and developing an action plan. The responsibility for this portion of the CCA now fell on the TAC/TACNCO. How they conducted this portion of the assessment varied greatly depending on experience level, previous operational commands, knowledge and buy-in to the command climate assessment process. In one company, the TAC officer analyzed the *DEOCS* results and the written comments and created an action plan independently. Other companies had brought in the TACNCO and cadets at different leadership levels within the company to participate in the process. Another company relied primarily on cadets to navigate the process.

“So for the cadets, once we do the focus groups and we sit down with the cadet chain of command, they develop their course of action, then the [TAC and I] will give the [Lead Cadet] some feedback... kind of trying to level as many issues as we can. Then the cadets back brief the results to the company, as a whole.”—USMA TACNCO

Per DoDI 1350.02 (now subsumed by DoDI 6400.11) action plans were required at the command level.¹⁹ USMA elected to delegate this action to TAC officers at the company level. In the correspondence from the EOA with their *DEOCS* results, the EOA provided company leadership with an action plan template and guidance for completing it, along with a request to return their completed action plans to the EOA. There was no follow-up step to ensure that company leadership had created their action plans and returned them to the EOA. As a result, 23 of 37 companies returned action plans to the EOA at USMA. Some RTOs required their TAC officers to meet with them to discuss their action plans and to receive guidance and feedback, although this practice was inconsistent across regiments.

¹⁷ Unit/organization leaders were required to brief their supervisor on the results of the *DEOCS* per DoDI 1350.02 however, this has now been subsumed under DoDI 6400.11 which requires leaders to brief after the completion of ALL CCA activities.

¹⁸ OPA recently released (August, 2022) a self-service roll up capability that allows Survey administrators to aggregate multiple registrations that they have access to into a single registration. This functionality was released shortly before USMA’s fielding window and the EOA was unaware of this functionality.

¹⁹ Command-level action plans are not required in DoDI 6400.11, but rather, actions addressing *DEOCS* findings are included in Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention (CIPP) plans.

Prevention activities that company leadership incorporated in their action plans included implementing discussions with the company during TAC time (time set aside for cadets to discuss issues with their TAC officer) to focus on impacts of corrosive behavior; highlighting important topics to cover during Cadet Character Education Program training; encouraging the use of USMA resources such as the Military Family and Life Counselors, chaplains, and other resources to combat depression; offering time for conversation about the company's climate or dealing with stress; and increasing transparency through better communication strategies. Some company leadership described having sensing sessions with their companies to gain a better understanding of their *DEOCS* results. Furthermore, some companies involved cadets when developing their action plan by using the cadet chain of command and information gleaned from sensing sessions.²⁰

Phase 3: Act

At the company level, most companies sat down for a discussion with their cadets, talking through the results of the *DEOCS* and the actions that they would take to address issues that emerged in the results. Company leadership also mentioned leveraging the ACT team cadets in their companies to implement strategies to address climate issues. While "ACT" is not an acronym in the traditional sense, cadets on the team Address sexual harassment and assault, Create healthy climates, and Tackle holistic health. The ACT team comprises cadets in an informal leadership role who act as liaisons and provide peers with recommendations to support services at the Academy in collaboration with the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) office and the Equal Opportunity (EO) office. Each company had three ACT team cadets, one for each topic area (sexual harassment and sexual assault, climate, and holistic health). Although ACT team cadets are primarily tasked with serving as liaisons to support services, many often take on additional roles to provide more active support. For example, company leadership mentioned having the ACT team cadets in their companies assisting during action plan execution. These ACT team cadets led conversations with cadets regarding stress and other climate issues.

Concurrently with this phase of the CCA process, USMA held a Creating Healthy Climates Week, planned by the ACT team cadets. Events took place in March 2023 and included a bystander intervention training presented by the SHARP office and discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Company action plans did not address any steps for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and were largely based on previous years' action plans. Company leadership was ultimately responsible for ensuring completion of their action plans; there was no indication that USMA leadership followed up to ensure that prevention activities from company action plans had been completed. Comparing action plans from the previous year to the current year revealed that many of the strategies were similar (often verbatim), indicating that alternative strategies may be needed to address the command climate issues because companies with climate

²⁰ Sensing sessions are candid, informal small group discussions used for the purpose of information gathering during a CCA.

challenges were noting the same strategies for addressing said challenges year after year, with limited sign of improvement.

Successes

There were several elements of the process at USMA worth commenting on and emulating. These include high levels of participation in the *DEOCS* and cadet involvement in the CCA process. We discuss these successful elements below and why we believe they are important characteristics of a successful CCA at the Academies.

DEOCS Participation

At USMA we found high levels of participation in the *DEOCS*. Their overall response rate of 47% was higher than the DoD average of 42% in 2022. Some companies truly stood out, with six companies with response rates over 70% and one company reaching 91%. Even with confusion around whether TAC officers could provide non-monetary incentives to cadets, many company leaders did what they could to encourage survey participation and to ensure that they had the data necessary to assess the command climate and to identify concerns.

Cadet Involvement in the CCA Process

Cadet involvement in the CCA process was a clear success at USMA. Cadet involvement varied by company; some company leadership asked their cadets to promote taking the *DEOCS* survey, others asked their ACT cadets to assist with action items based on their *DEOCS* results.

“They're coming from a place of absolute good intent. They want to make their experience more positive; they want to make themselves more successful in the long run. And so, by bringing them in, I think early on in the process, I think that's better.”—USMA Regimental TAC Officer

By consistently involving cadets throughout the CCA process, leadership improved cadets' buy-in into the process. This buy-in also serves a didactic purpose and can help cadet leadership appreciate and learn to implement the CCA process when they become officers in the field.

“[CCAs provide] assurance to cadets that their voices were heard through the survey with continued meaningful conversation and engagement.”—USMA Commandant

Challenges

While there were multiple successes during USMA's 2022 CCA cycle, there are also challenges. These include: a lack of centralized action plans, lack of information sharing and limited Senior leadership involvement. Additionally, we believe USMA has the opportunity to utilize program

specialist and prevention stakeholder knowledge and expertise in future administrations. Below we discuss these areas.

Centralizing Prevention Planning

At USMA, company-level action plans were not systematically collected or reviewed for consistency, with 23 of 37 companies eventually providing their action plans. This lack of a systematic process can lead to a perception that not all company leadership are actively involved in the process. This could be remedied by Academy leadership reinforcing the importance of the CCA process through requiring follow-through at this stage. Additionally, a consolidated approach to improving problem areas from the *DEOCS/CCA* process at the USCC level was not developed, implemented, or disseminated as far as OPA was made aware. A centralized USCC plan, which addresses both company-specific and cross-cutting issues through a variety of prevention activities, can guide promising practices for addressing issues at all levels. The newly required Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention (CIPP) plans, in response to DoDI 6400.11, aim to address this challenge. The CIPP requirement was not yet in place for the 2022–2023 CCA. The IPPW will be instrumental for the development and implementation of the CIPP plans at the Academies moving forward. Their role will be particularly critical for identifying prevention activities that are evidence-based, and for evaluating the effectiveness of activities that are put into place. The use of evidence-based actions in response to the *DEOCS* was another area of challenge that we observed, with the majority of personnel developing action plans untrained in how to select evidence-based actions and evaluate their impact.

Information Sharing

Another challenge involved stove-piping or lack of sharing of information culminating in a lack of collaboration across the Academy. As mentioned in the previous section, USMA has a wealth of offices and resources available who have both equity in Academy climate issues and expertise in areas of primary prevention. Individuals in those offices indicated their readiness to assist with the CCA process, but they also seemed unaware of whom to contact or when to participate. Increasing engagement by collaborating with program specialists, prevention stakeholders, and advisory groups can lead to a more efficient process, reducing burden on the EOA, TAC Officers and TAC NCOs by leveraging program specialist and prevention stakeholder experience. This collaboration is not limited to involving program specialists and prevention stakeholders with prevention activity identification and execution, but it could begin earlier, during results interpretation, when program specialists and prevention stakeholders could provide insight into the many issues that arise out of the data gathered during the CCA. The data from the CCA overall, and the *DEOCS* in particular, are also a rich source of information for these offices as they evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and make decisions about where to target their resources.

A key function of the IPPW is to integrate prevention activities across the Academy. There are multiple advisory groups that already exist at USMA that could facilitate these efforts, in support of the IPPW. The Community Ready and Resilient Council (CR2C) includes representatives across the Academy, developed at USMA as part of the United States Army's Ready and Resilient program. The CR2C is chaired by the USMA superintendent, features members from multiple program specialist and prevention stakeholder offices, and focuses on the five domains

of health: spiritual, psychological, family, social, and physical. The CR2C can be integrated into the CCA process to provide oversight and ongoing support for the development, implementation, and tracking of the USCC CIPP plan and prevention activities in collaboration with IPPW personnel. USMA also has the Character Integration Advisory Group (CIAG), a group that addresses climate issues proactively. The CIAG is a superintendent-level advisory group within the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic (SCPME) that, among other tasks, develops character programming and training for cadets. The CIAG has knowledge and expertise that can be leveraged when integrating CCA factors and knowledge of how to address climate challenges via the curricula. The CR2C and CIAG both provide important venues for collaboration with multiple program specialist and prevention stakeholder offices and programs and can be great starting points for addressing information stove-piping.

Senior Leadership Involvement

Senior leadership direction for program specialist and prevention stakeholder offices and advisory groups can reduce silos and improve the effectiveness of these groups in the CCA process. This increased engagement would demonstrate to the Academy an increased level of buy-in to the process, showing cadets that the Academy takes their feedback on the command climate seriously. This engagement could also be used as a mechanism to develop consistent messaging during the CCA process, producing cohesive prevention activities for companies and demonstrating effective leadership working on the CCA process to the Army’s future leaders.

Program Specialist and Prevention Stakeholder Knowledge and Expertise

USMA also has several offices and advisory groups within the Academy that have equities in prevention activities and can make a positive impact on command climate and cadet life on campus, making them well-poised to contribute to the CCA process in a meaningful way. A few of the key offices include the SHARP, the CPD, and the ODIEO, all of which have expertise that can be further leveraged during the CCA process, particularly in developing follow on actions at the USCC or company level. Table 4 lists the individuals, offices, and programs that were identified during the process evaluation at USMA.

Table 4.
List of Program Specialists, Prevention Stakeholders, and Programs at USMA

ACT Cadets	Legal Services
Army Community Service Resiliency Center	Mologne Cadet Health Clinic
Center for Enhanced Performance (CEP)	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)
Center for Personal Development (CPD)	Mounger Writing Center (MWC)
Center for the Advancement of Leader Development and Organizational Learning (CALDOL)	Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity (ODIEO)
Chaplain	Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic (SCPME)
Directorate of Cadet Activities (DCA)	Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Prevention (SHARP)

Utilizing this vast network can bolster the CCA process at USMA, especially when these offices are included at multiple touchpoints in the process, from results interpretation to action item development. When meeting with some of these offices (ODIEO, SHARP, CEP), it was clear that while they have historically not contributed to the CCA process, the staff were enthusiastic about the possibility of collaboration, learning more about command climate assessments and believed they had much to offer TAC officers and Academy leadership when it comes to developing follow on activities, whether at the company or USCC level.

Chapter 3: Command Climate Assessment Process at U.S. Naval Academy

In Academic Program Year (APY) 2022–2023 the United States Naval Academy (USNA) conducted an annual Command Climate Assessment (CCA). Midshipmen at USNA are arranged into 30 companies, and there are approximately 150 midshipmen in each company, spanning all four class years. The midshipman *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)* was conducted in the fall and was set up to provide subgroup reports to each company.²¹ The Command Managed Equal Opportunity (CMEO) program manager and a Command Climate Specialist (CCS) were assigned as the leads of the midshipman CCA, with the CMEO acting as the survey administrator. They assembled a Command Resilience Team (CRT)²² to oversee the CCA process at the Academy, in accordance with Navy policy.

The USNA CCA process in 2022 including a separate CCA process for midshipmen and one for faculty and staff, with both sets of surveys fielding in the fall semester. The upcoming sections will discuss the 2022–2023 CCA process in more detail, followed by the successes and challenges of the CCA process at USNA.

Phase 1: Collect

In August 2022, USNA began planning to conduct their annual CCA, as required by DoD policy (DODI 6400.11). It is important to note that, as with the other Academies, two separate, annual CCA processes were conducted at USNA annually: one for staff and faculty and one for midshipmen. At USNA, these separate CCAs were conducted by different teams.²³ The 2023 *Service Academy Gender Relation (SAGR)* Survey analysis was focused on the CCA process for midshipmen only.

Both the CCS and CMEO had received CCA training. The CMEO participated in a 40-hour training that detailed the process of administering the *DEOCS*. This was the CMEOs first time acting as the survey administrator for a *DEOCS*, but the CMEO had prior experience with CCAs in the fleet. The CCS completed a course offered by the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI),²⁴ which included in-person training on the *DEOCS*. The CCS arrived at USNA shortly before the current CCA process began.

²¹ This allows time for cadet briefings before the winter break.

²² At USNA, the CRT is a group of representatives from the command that assists with the administration and oversight of the CCA process. According to the Navy’s CRT Guide, “Establishment of a Command Resilience Team (CRT) allows commanders to better understand factors impacting command personnel. CRTs are designed to provide the commander with information and insight into concerns of command personnel in order to implement positive measures to promote well-being and resilience.”

²³ The faculty/staff CCA process is administered by the USNA CCS and overseen by the USNA superintendent.

²⁴ Starting in October 2023, CCA training is no longer provided by DEOMI and is now provided as a distributed learning course via the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Training and Education Center of Excellence (SAPRTEC), under the direction of the DoD Office of Force Resiliency’s Violence Prevention Cell (OFR-VPC).

The CMEO utilized the Navy CRT Guide²⁵ during the CCA and this instruction influenced the make-up of the USNA midshipman CRT and each step of the CCA process. The CRT included two battalion officers, one battalion Chief Petty Officer, the Dean of Academics, a personnel officer/legal officer, the director of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) program, the drug/alcohol prevention advisor, the suicide prevention coordinator, and 12 midshipmen in various positions of brigade²⁶ leadership including the midshipmen brigade commander, who then selected two midshipmen from each class, excluding the first-year class, to be included in the CRT.

The CMEO coordinated with the CRT via e-mail to select custom questions to include in the midshipman *DEOCS*. This allowed midshipmen on the CRT to give their feedback on the most relevant custom open-ended and closed-ended questions. Once feedback about the custom questions was received from the CRT members, the CMEO coordinated with the Commandant on the final selection of questions.

USNA fielded the midshipman *DEOCS* from 7 October to 7 November 2022 so results could be received and analyzed before the holiday break. USNA developed subgroups based on companies, leading to 30 *DEOCS* subgroup reports. This subgroup designation was established to better understand the climate within each company.

While the *DEOCS* was fielding, midshipmen received e-mail and verbal reminders about *DEOCS* participation from company leadership and e-mail reminders from the CMEO on behalf of the Commandant encouraging *DEOCS* participation. The CMEO monitored responses rates daily informing the CCS of any updates. For the 2022 administration of the midshipman *DEOCS*, the response rate was 31% with a company response rate range of 22% to 80%.

Phase 2: Synthesize

Once the *DEOCS* was complete, the CMEO and CCS reviewed the results and prepared to present the initial results impressions to the CRT. Key highlights included the best-performing and worst-performing factors based on their overall percentages or ratings and the fact that the overall *DEOCS* response rate was comparable to previous midshipman *DEOCS* administrations.

Once the results were presented to the CRT, the team reviewed the overall brigade comments report. The comments were divided up into equal parts to allow for more efficient analysis and members of the CRT (including midshipmen members) spent a week reviewing their section of the comments. These members were told to come prepared to the next CRT meeting with a one-page summary of their findings and potential follow-on focus group questions to further probe certain comment themes. In the next CRT meeting, members discussed their findings with the team. Each member provided their perspective on what they had read, and different CRT members interjected their opinions and thoughts as members discussed their findings and

²⁵ The Navy CRT guide is a document that guides members of the CRT in terms of roles & responsibilities and actions.

https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Support/Culture%20Resilience/Equal_Opportunity/CRT%20Guide.pdf?ver=hqz3d23YljinwB0cW3vMnXw%3D%3D

²⁶ “The brigade” refers to the student body of the USNA.

potential focus group questions. Using the provided questions, the survey administrator created a list of focus group questions.

Focus groups were led by midshipmen with Academy leadership serving as notetakers or sitting in on the focus group. Midshipmen were designated as leaders of the focus groups to make the midshipman focus group members feel more at ease discussing the questions. The midshipmen who were in charge of the focus groups were provided the questions ahead of time, but were not provided with any training on conducting focus groups. The primary purpose of the focus groups was to gain perspective and feedback from midshipmen. Those on the CRT believed that having the midshipmen lead the focus groups would result in more honest feedback that could best be understood by a fellow midshipman, rather than having an outsider or professional lead the groups.

The survey administrator (CMEO) also briefed Academy leadership on the *DEOCS* results and provided the company officers with subgroup results for their given company. Company officers were instructed to review their results, brief their midshipmen, and take action to address any identified issues. The Commandant also conducted town hall-style meetings with each battalion of midshipmen to brief the results of the *DEOCS* to keep them informed.

Phase 3: Act

At the Academy level, the first step of implementing actionable items to address climate challenges was to conduct an initial Plan of Actions and Milestones (POA&M) meeting with members of the CRT. During this meeting, members discussed the issues identified during CCA data collection, attempted to understand the root causes of these issues, and identified potential prevention activities to improve the climate at USNA. A variety of CRT members added their perspective and thoughts on prevention activities that could improve the command climate. The survey administrator noted the identified issues and challenges and potential prevention activities including trainings, potential policy changes, and other measures.

From this POA&M meeting, the survey administrator created a brief POA&M document recording the areas of concern, an overview of the issues, prevention activities, the lead(s) in charge of prevention activities, and milestones. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the previous CCA (2021), the midshipmen and faculty and staff were combined into one *DEOCS* and focus group questions were responded to on Google sheets. A POA&M document was not created during the previous CCA, because USNA did not finish the CCA process. For this CCA, identified prevention activities included various trainings, updating midshipman regulations, creating working groups, and establishing four-minute drills which will be discussed in the “Successes” section later in this document. The leads for each action item were responsible for ensuring these actions were completed.

At the company level, company officers addressed their company-specific *DEOCS* results in different ways. Some met with their SEL to go over the subgroup report to get a better understanding of the results and how to interpret them. After analyzing the results, some company officers met with their midshipman company leadership to discuss the results. Some met with all the midshipmen in their company to go over the findings from the results. From these meetings, some identified actionable steps they could take to address company-specific

climate challenges, whereas others laid out the expected behavior at USNA to their midshipmen without identifying specific prevention activities. When company prevention activities were identified, they were rarely recorded and were more informally documented compared to prevention activities identified at the Academy level. Overall, different company officers took various steps during their review of company *DEOCS* results and took varying levels of actions after reviewing the results.

Successes

The command climate assessment process at USNA contained multiple noteworthy decisions and achievements, this included: having diverse and invested members of the CRT, a high level of engagement by the Commandant, and successful implementation of initiatives based on CCA results. These achievements are discussed below.

Diverse and Invested Members of the CRT driven by Commandant Engagement

The composition of the CRT was an excellent way to begin the CCA process for USNA. The CRT included a diverse and invested set of stakeholders that we learned had not been included during previous CCAs at USNA. These stakeholders included the director of prevention education for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), the Drug/Alcohol prevention advisor, and the Suicide Prevention coordinator. Along with these individuals, midshipmen's involvement created a team with diverse and valuable viewpoints on the issues impacting command climate at USNA and this CRT composition allowed for multiple Academy voices to be heard during the CCA process.

Along with an excellent composition of the CRT, we observed that each member seemed invested in the process and improving the Academy's climate. During meetings, various members spoke up to voice their opinions and there was always productive conversation that allowed anyone present to speak their mind. This type of environment created productive conversations and allowed for the CRT to effectively identify climate challenges, brainstorm potential solutions, and plan the best way forward.

This investment was bolstered by the Commandant. His involvement in the CRT and his enthusiasm for trying to understand *DEOCS* results and to improve the climate at USNA was beneficial to both the process and generated even more enthusiasm on the team. This posture of participation and involvement in the CCA process from the Commandant generated interest and investment as the CRT saw the process prioritized by senior leadership.

Implementation of Initiatives

At USNA, the CMEO as the survey administrator effectively managed the CCA process in collaboration with the CCS. During each step of the process, the CMEO was successfully coordinating and leading meetings to review results, documenting focus group questions and planning focus groups, coordinating the POA&M, and keeping everyone on the CRT informed. This enthusiasm carried over to the implementation of initiatives directed in the POA&M.

One such action identified in the POA&M was four-minute drills. These drills were a bright spot for leadership and midshipmen at USNA. They involved midshipmen discussing a scenario for four minutes, as a group, before mealtime weekly on Thursdays with one midshipman acting as the moderator of the conversation. These scenarios were designed to get midshipmen to talk about potential issues and interactions they may have and the best ways handle them. These conversations would often carry on after mealtime to get midshipmen to think critically about command climate and culture related issues. Implementation of these drills was an action that made visible the Commandant and the CRT's commitment to addressing and discussing issues raised during the CCA.

“But I’ve seen a lot of really positive success in [the four-minute drills] as well where there have been a lot of squads who will continue to talk about it and even after lunch they’ll keep talking about these issues. So I have seen a lot of really positive changes. Again, I think the [Commandant] really cares and the Deputy really cares about the command climate and they have really shown it through the implementation of the four-minute drills talking about the DEOCS survey constantly and also the SAGR survey.”—USNA Midshipman

Challenges and Opportunities

Although the CCA process at USNA had many highlights, there were some challenges. There was no formal process and there was a lack of expectations for company officers to document prevention activities at the company level. The lack of company prevention activities and their tracking likely led to a lack of implementation of actionable items at the company level. There was also a lack of involvement in the CCA process of battalion level leadership, and little to no visibility or awareness of the overall CCA process outside the CRT.

Lack of Documentation at the Company Level

At the Academy level, there was little detail in the PO&AM, and it is not clear how consistently these initiatives were followed through at both the Academy and company levels. According to the Navy CRT guide, the POA&M should include specific goals and metrics that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of each action item, and the USNA 2022 CCA PO&AM did not include any goals or metrics.²⁷ The lack of specifics and limited progress tracking reduced the potential effectiveness of the POA&M. This oversight carried over to the company level where there was no consistent tracking of prevention activities or follow-up that we could discern. This absence of identified company level prevention activities and lack of adequate tracking means that there is no way for company officers to assess their effectiveness. The new CIPP Plan requirement should assist with ensuring that all CCA prevention activities are adequately tracked and completed.

²⁷ There was also no executive summary created as specified by the Navy CRT Guide, though we view this as less consequential.

No Involvement by Battalion-Level Leadership

With involvement from a variety of stakeholders within USNA, battalion leadership was notably missing from the CCA process. We observed a lack of communication between the company-level leadership and the Academy-level leadership during the CCA process at USNA that the battalion-level leadership could have filled. Increased involvement of battalion leadership would enhance consistency in CCA messaging and strengthen the development and execution of company prevention activities.

Lack of Visibility of CCA

Many in company level leadership as well as midshipmen seemed unaware of the CRT developed POA&M and the overall CCA process. Although midshipmen were briefed on the results of the brigade *DEOCS*, they were unaware of how the CCA process unfolds, what the POA&M contained and how those initiatives would translate at the company level. When a midshipman who was involved in the CRT was asked if they received any information from their company officer or if they were aware of any action planning at the company level, they responded, “Not that I’ve seen. I didn’t know that was a thing.”

While there appeared to be good communication between the CRT and the rest of the Academy while the *DEOCS* was fielding and when the results were briefed, there was a lack of communication about the follow up, which may have hindered the effectiveness of the POA&M. If this information was properly communicated, company officers could have coordinated their efforts at their level to align with the Academy POA&M and midshipmen would have been able to understand the prevention activities identified in the POA&M and how they impacted what happened at the most local level, the company. This would have allowed the midshipmen to understand the subsequent focus group conversations in context and know that, even at the company level, their *DEOCS* responses were being taken seriously and that real actions were being taken by all levels of leadership.

In addition, despite broad participation in the CRT, there appeared to be a lack of institutional knowledge of the CCA process due to turnover. Although the CMEO and CCS did an excellent job coordinating the CCA, they did not have much knowledge of previous CCAs and relied on the Navy CRT Guide to conduct this CCA. With this lack of institutional knowledge, there is the potential to lose track of previously completed prevention activities and reinstitute previously ineffective prevention activities that have already been attempted at the Academy.

Chapter 4: Command Climate Assessment Process at U.S. Air Force Academy

Command Climate Assessments (CCAs) are required by U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) policy (DoD Instruction [DoDI] 6400.11) for the Cadet Wing (CW). The CW is led by the Commandant of Cadets and is organized into four groups with ten squadrons in each group. There are approximately 100 cadets in each squadron, spanning all four class years. The cadet *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)* was conducted in the fall and was fielded as four separate surveys, one for each group. These surveys were also set up to provide results separately by squadron. The Equal Opportunity (EO) office led the CCA effort. The upcoming sections will discuss the CCA process followed by the successes and challenges of the CCA process at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA).

Phase 1: Collect

In August 2022, the USAFA CW began the process of conducting their annual CCA. USAFA's EO office led the CCA efforts, including the administration of the *DEOCS*. The Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) was assigned as the *DEOCS* survey administrator whose duties included creating the CCA timeline and preparing to field the survey. To prepare for the *DEOCS*, the survey administrator held a planning briefing with the CW commandant and the four group commanders to discuss the fielding period, cadet communication, and the additional command-selected questions from the Custom Question Bank (CQB). Group commanders were given the entire list of potential questions on the CQB and provided their suggestions to the survey administrator. The commandant made the final selection of the additional questions to be included on the survey.

Once all pertinent information was gathered, the survey administrator registered the cadet *DEOCS*. The survey administrator registered four separate *DEOCS* registrations, one for each group. The squadrons were designated as subgroups. During the fielding period, the survey administrator and some of the group commanders monitored the response rates. Initially, the cadet *DEOCS* was scheduled to field for one week, beginning 19 October 2022. However, the survey end date was extended to 1 November 2022 due to a low response rate.²⁸ By the conclusion of the fielding period the Cadet Wing *DEOCS* had an overall response rate of 50%. The response rates by squadron ranged from 33% to 95%.

To increase response rates while the survey was still fielding, some leaders chose to incentivize participation. Although there were no incentives at the CW level to increase response rates, some group commanders let their squadron commanders, called Air Officers Commanding (AOCs), choose whether to incentivize taking the survey. Other group commanders chose to incentivize cadets at the group level. Even smaller incentives, like being able to sit down during their inspection period, provided a small boost. However, without systematically collecting data

²⁸ In the *DEOCS* portal, the survey administrator can manually extend the survey fielding period if the response rate is low by extending the end date. The system will automatically extend the survey end date by one week if, if the response rate is less than 30% or there are less than 16 participants three days before the scheduled end date (though survey administrators can opt-out of this auto-extend feature if they prefer).

on whether incentives were used by each squadron, we are unable to ascertain whether there is a difference in response rates between squadrons who offered incentives and those who did not.

“I’m the champion of them completing their DEOCS. Whenever the survey is available, they get tired of me begging for them to complete the DEOCS. I try to give them as much time as I control so I can get a better big picture of what they are experiencing. Every time I have an audience with them, I tell them to take it. I do have some incentives. I do give them some time back, like letting them close their door during lunch.”—USAFA AOC

In addition to communicating with cadets about response rates, AOCs and group commanders stressed the importance of taking the *DEOCS* in communications.

Phase 2: Synthesize

After the *DEOCS* fielding closed and the results were ready, *DEOCS* data synthesizing began at several levels, including the CW, group-, and squadron levels. The survey administrator reviewed and interpreted the results at the group and CW levels. The survey administrator then briefed the group commanders in separate briefs. With each group commander and their staff, the survey administrator discussed an overview of the *DEOCS*, the previous year’s results, current year’s trends, top risk and protective factors, recommended areas for action plans, next steps and timeline, and resources. The survey administrator provided each group commander with their group’s *DEOCS* results and written comments.

After the group commanders were briefed, the survey administrator briefed the overall CW results to the CW commandant. This briefing included the same types of information as the group briefings. The overall *DEOCS* results showed 38 of 40 squadrons required a Command Action Plan (CAP) for Sexually Harassing Behaviors and 18 required a CAP for Racially Harassing Behaviors (two factors on the *DEOCS*).²⁹ Combined, 39 out of 40 squadrons required a CAP for at least one of those two factors. Because these behaviors were so widespread amongst the wings, the commandant decided that they should be addressed at the CW level. The commandant made the decision to create a CW CCA working group to develop and implement a CW CAP.

USAFA’s Climate and Culture division led the CW CCA working group efforts and oversaw both the CW CAP and squadron CAPs. The working group included personnel from other offices, commanders, and cadets, including representatives from the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) office, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, and the EO office. One AOC from each group was chosen: two were first-year AOCs and two were second-year AOCs. The CW CCA working group had three goals: (1) to analyze data and identify trends/themes, (2) to implement training, and 3) to shift the culture at USAFA. The CW CAP was the product of the second goal. The working group created a menu of training opportunities for AOCs to choose from to implement in their squadron. To do so, the working group reviewed all previous

²⁹ Air Force policy requires a command action plan for any factor that has a 49% or higher unfavorable rating.

CAPs and discussed with the EO office the most useful actions that could be assessed in six months. Other offices and departments, such as the athletic department, also provided their input.

Figure 1 shows the training options from which AOCs could choose. The menu of training options had three focus areas: (1) actions providing information about Sexually and Racially Harassing Behaviors, (2) actions to increase cadets’ skillsets to handle these situations, and (3) actions that deterred these problematic behaviors from occurring. AOCs and academy military trainers (AMT) worked with their cadet leadership to select and develop plans to implement a minimum of two of the training options. Each option had to be from a different focus area and had to be implemented by the end of the Spring semester.

Figure 1.
CW CAP Menu of Options

Focus Area	Goal	Actions/Implementation
Provide Information	The primary intent is to increase awareness/education through facts, discussion scenario based focus.	Take Back the Night (Squadron)- PP, Teal Ropes, or Volunteers to read developed anonymous testimonials from SAPR Victims with no larger than the squadron audience.
		Host Healthy Relationships Training/Education for at least one year group.
		Host Secure Bond Leadership Training.
		Host Relationship Attachment Training.
		Training class led by Equal Opportunity w/AOC and/or AMT presence.
		Require First and/or Second Class Cadets attend the Firstie Panel Discussion hosted by SAPR.
		Continuum of Harm education hosted by a SME from either SAPR, Legal, or CCLD or all.
Enhancing Skills	The primary intent is to increase someone’s skillsets	Host Bystander Training Class/Discussion led by Sq PP, CCD, SAPR, and/or trained ROPEs.
		Host Teal Rope led developed training/discussions with required Sq PP presence.
		Unite PEERS, Teal Ropes, D&I, Character & Honor cadets through monthly meetings to synchronize common functions and gain unity of effort.
Deter	The primary intent is to increase/decrease the probability of a specific behavior/reaction/belief by altering the consequence/outcome for performing that behavior.	Review/update unit policy regarding these harassing behaviors & emphasize at cadet discussions.
		Host a PP led discussion w/upperclassmen to emphasize the importance and expectation of setting the standard, upholding policy, and intervening during inappropriate behaviors.
		Host SF, Legal, and/or OSI to brief the cadets on implications of actions (UCMJ vs. civilian college offenses, federal records based on probable cause, consent, consequences).
		SAPR Trends - PP will share SAPR trends or numbers with their squadron 1x/quarter (or as information is made available).

This is a simplified version of the menu of options and does not show all the detail for the action, nor does it show the point of contact.

At the squadron level, the group commanders gave their AOCs a copy of their respective squadron’s results once the survey administrator had briefed the group commanders. The AOCs interpreted their own results and shared their interpretation with their Group commander. Some AOCs involved cadets in the result interpretation and action planning, whereas others did not. One AOC said “Having transparency with cadets with the DEOCS was very important to me. I’ve never had this kind of transparency for me.” Many AOCs noted they received very little training to interpret the results and relied on the Assessment to Solutions (A2S) website.^{30,31} After AOCs interpreted their results, they were tasked with creating their squadron action plan, which was required to be documented within 60 days from receiving results, as required by Air

³⁰ There are a couple guides related to result interpretation on A2S. They are “Guide to Interpreting Written Comments” and “Factor Interpretation Guide.”

³¹ As of January 2024, the resources previously available on A2S are now available at <https://www.prevention.mil/Climate-Portal/>

Force Instruction 36-2710. Squadron CAPs are required for any factors that received 49% or higher unfavorable ratings, except for the two risk factors that were covered in the CW CAP.

Phase 3: Act

Implementing the action plans occurred at both the CW and squadron levels. At the squadron level, AOCs briefed their cadets on the *DEOCS* results.³² Since the briefs were conducted by each squadron, there was variability in what was shared. In general, squadron-specific results were shared with graphs, statistics, and some comments results. Some AOCs shared quotes, with removed personally identifiable information, while others shared general themes from the comments.

Part of this squadron brief involved discussing steps to address the issues that emerged from the squadron results. The AOCs worked with their team, including AMTs, and some included cadets as well. One AOC involved their cadet leadership once approximately 80% of the planning had been completed. Many AOCs were in their first year at the Academy, so they were unsure of how to create a CAP. To do so, many relied on the CAPs from previous years or on their fellow AOCs, especially second-year AOCs who had gone through the process before.

In Spring 2023, after choosing from the menu of options for the CW CAP, AOCs and their teams implemented their two actions. A Microsoft Excel tracker was used to document the actions each squadron chose. Furthermore, AOCs, AMTs, and the new cadet leadership chose another two options from the menu to be implemented by the end of the new Fall semester. In total, four options were chosen from the menu. Apart from using next year's *DEOCS* results for comparison, there was no discussion of measuring the impact of these training items.

Successes

There were a number of useful strategies USAFA undertook during their 2022–2023 CCA. These include: the creation of the Cadet Wing CCA working group, collaboration among squadron leaders when creating CAPs, and involvement of senior leadership in CCA messaging.

Cadet Wing CCA Working Group

One major success of USAFA's CCA process was the CW CAP working group that created a list of actions to address the command risks discovered on the *DEOCS*. This effort was undertaken when the commandant recognized Cadet Wing-wide issues presented on the survey and brought many of the Academy stakeholders together to work through these concerns.

"It's really hard to see [high-level issues] when you're just breaking it down based on squadrons or groups or mission elements individually. Someone has to be able to look across the entire DEOCS for the institution on behalf of the commander and see if there are any common themes among those. So our office was brought in to look at that, and it gave us some insights and into not only the entire cadet wing, but also

³² The cadet briefs are required to be completed within 60 days of receiving results.

the entire installation on if there are common things that are happening across the institution.”—USAFA Senior Leadership

Many program specialists and prevention stakeholders were involved in the working group and provided their expertise, such as the EO and SAPR offices. Other offices that are involved with cadets, such as the athletic and academic departments, were also included in the working group. Cadets were involved and were able to provide their opinion regarding the actions to address issues that affected them. One meaningful change that came out of the CW CAP was instituting both an AOC and AMT panel which will allow cadets to have more input in their future AOCs and AMTs. This panel idea originated with the cadets in the Teal and Purple Ropes program but was revamped based on further input.³³ These panels will allow the cohort of leadership to interact with cadets, including those in the cadet chain of command and those involved in the Ropes programs. These panels give the cadets a space to share their opinions while also training incoming leaders.

“One strength I saw occur is that everything was focused on leadership development since we are creating leaders of character.” --USAFA Senior Leadership

Collaboration Among Squadron Leaders

Another success at USAFA was the collaborative nature of squadron leaders. Many AOCs relied on their peers to create their squadron CAP. This was especially true for first-year AOCs who had never experienced the *DEOCS* process as a leader. This collaboration was also helpful for interpreting the results of the CCA. Further, many second-year AOCs continued to have high participation rates when looking at their results from both 2021 and 2022. High participation may be attributed to the communication and collaboration regarding the CCA process at USAFA.

“I think it's the brief to the squad after the DEOCS and then showing action on some of the things that said that, ‘Hey, we are taking this seriously and moving out on things.’ If they see their comments being taken seriously, I think that will grow into the following year.”—USAFA AOC

Senior Leadership Involvement

Buy-in from senior leadership was conveyed via messaging to cadets about the CCA process. Many faculty and staff members recognized that senior leadership was highly invested in USAFA’s CCA process and that senior leadership was present at various events related to

³³ Teal Ropes cadets are trained in sexual violence prevention and response to provide peer-to-peer support. Purple Ropes cadets are trained in diversity to provide peer-to-peer support.

command climate. One AOC remarked they had seen the superintendent at several SAPR events, often staying late.

“When there's an e-mail that comes from higher leadership supporting any of these events, anything that has to do with support of something that's on the CAP, something that's going on externally, it's huge. And it's been happening regularly here at USAFA, and there is an increase in attendance to SAPR events. There's an increase of interest and there's an increase in chatter.”—USAFA Program Specialist

Challenges and Opportunities

Although the CCA process at USAFA had many successes, there were also some challenges, which included: lack of training around *DEOCS* results interpretation and lack of inclusion of cadets, program specialists, and prevention stakeholders throughout the CCA process. These challenges are discussed more below.

Training on How to Interpret Results³⁴

AOCs and group commanders received very little training for *DEOCS* results interpretation beyond the result briefing from the EO office. Many expressed how difficult it is to understand the data, including how the percentages are calculated. Some leaders also had a difficult time understanding the graphs provided in the *DEOCS* results reports. A few leaders used resources on the A2S website but still did not find the resources very helpful. More in-depth training would benefit AOCs and group commanders to interpret their *DEOCS* results, which would in turn aid them in the next step of the CCA process, which is creating actionable steps to target any issues highlighted on the *DEOCS*. AOCs also expressed difficulties in determining actionable steps. Although the CW CAP had a menu of options specific to sexually harassing behaviors and racially harassing behaviors, a similar list for other factors does not exist, which means that AOCs had to come up with actionable steps on their own, often relying on past CAPs, which may not have been useful.

Additionally, AOCs lack clear guidance on how to create a squadron CAP. The content on the CAP, including what is shared with the cadets, is not standardized. Many of the 2022 squadron CAPs differed significantly in content and breadth. Some AOCs created PDFs, whereas others created Microsoft PowerPoint presentations. One CAP included the purpose of the *DEOCS*, the list of protective and risk factors, data takeaways, comment examples, tables with data breakdowns, the objective, the responsible agency, planned steps, and the status. Another CAP included the problematic factor and rating, the objective, responsible agency, planned steps and status. Having a standardized set of information on the CAP could be useful for cadets so they can understand the problem, the data showing the problem, and the actions to be taken.

³⁴ Since the implementation of DoDI 6400.11 there has been a move to improve the training of Company Academy TACs, Company Officers and AOCs around command climate assessment. However, this had yet to take shape during our visits and process evaluation.

Expanding training and developing clear guidance on how to create a squadron CAP can lead to more effective CAPs.

Inclusion of Cadets, Program Specialists, and Prevention Stakeholders in the CCA Process

Some squadrons engaged their cadets throughout the CCA process, but this engagement was not widespread. Cadets in the chain of command and cadets involved in the Teal and Purple Ropes programs could be beneficial resources at multiple nodes in the process. Cadets can help raise awareness of the *DEOCS*, and cadets in the Ropes programs can offer support and context during the result interpretation and action planning phases. Furthermore, program specialist and prevention stakeholder involvement, such as SAPR and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, could be increased at multiple critical junctures to advise on custom question inclusion based on previous years' survey results as well as interpretation and follow on actions.

Chapter 5: Overall Observations and Conclusion

Overall Observations for the CCA Process

This chapter details overall observations for the Command Climate Assessment (CCA) process at the Military Service Academies (Academy). These are based on observations at all three Academies, but can also apply across the broader range of military units and DoD organizations as they conduct annual CCAs. Observations are categorized into three primary areas:

1. Knowledge sharing about the CCA process and its importance
2. Engagement of all Academy stakeholders in the full CCA process
3. Communication across the Academy at all stages of the CCA
4. Tracking effectiveness and assessing progress on climate goals
5. Use of additional data sources

Knowledge Sharing About the CCA Process

Through observations and discussions with each of the Academies, a shared challenge that the Academies face with their CCA process is the turnover in the personnel responsible for facilitating the process. Due to changes in duty stations and assignments, the personnel tasked with executing an Academy's CCA process typically cycle in and out of the position every two to three years. With each turnover the CCA process is at risk of losing institutional knowledge needed to produce a successful CCA cycle.

The amount of turnover in CCA expertise may lessen with the hiring of the new Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce at the Academies. These positions will provide critical stability and expertise to the CCA process. In addition, CCA and CIPP online courses are now available for audiences across the DoD, including the Academies, and will provide critical background and training for all individuals engaged in the CCA and CIPP process.

Additionally, a March 10, 2023 Secretary of Defense memo directed the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD [P&R]) to review and revise the training that tactical officers (TAC), company officers, and air officers commanding (AOC) receive to be sure they are fully prepared to address climate challenges within their cadets and midshipmen units. This new training with a specific climate focus will assist in generating a solid base of knowledge for incoming TACs/AOCs/Company Officers to conduct, and act on, CCAs.

Finally, strong documentation from the annual CCA is not maintained in a standardized way. Reviewing the Academy-specific documentation from the prior CCA can provide new CCA personnel with more context around the CCA process, including topics that have already been discussed and custom questions that should be considered.

Engagement of all Academy Stakeholders in the Full CCA Process

A common theme brought up in interviews was that experiencing the CCA process in action, either at the Academy or at previous posts, increases buy-in to the process.

“I don’t just see the DEOCS as a leadership tool, it’s also a leadership development tool because if you think about it, these cadets are going to be the future leaders. So if they get that positive exposure to it now, when they become leaders on the ground level or the operations level, they’ll know ‘I need to make this an important event or effort for my group, for my squadron, because I’m the leader of this fight.’”–USAFA AOC

Prior experience with a productive CCA process motivates those involved in those successful efforts to share their experiences, whether faculty and staff or cadets/midshipmen, such as extra emphasis on how the process allows those participating to have their voice heard and extolling the tangible and often transformative results of leadership taking action in response to the CCA findings.

A successful CCA process relies on input and participation from a variety of stakeholders at the Academy, such as cadets/midshipmen, leadership, and program specialist and prevention stakeholder offices. Engaging these individuals early and often in the process has been important to boost response rates, interpret the results, develop realistic and useful prevention activities, and execute prevention activities effectively.

Cadets/Midshipmen

Cadets/midshipmen were involved in varying capacities with the CCA process at the Academies. At USMA, cadets participated in the ACT team, which focuses on climate issues throughout the academic year, and company leadership asked ACT team cadets in their companies to assist with prevention activities developed during the CCA process (although “ACT” is not an acronym in the traditional sense, cadets on the team Address sexual harassment and assault, Create healthy climates, and Tackle holistic health). Additionally, USMA company leadership asked ACT cadets in their companies to assist with prevention activities developed during the CCA process. At USNA, midshipmen were involved with the CRT, responsible for interpreting *DEOCS* results and developing prevention activities. At the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), cadets participated in developing the Cadet Wing (CW) CAP. These examples of cadet/midshipman involvement increased cadet/midshipman ownership of the process while also demonstrating to their peers that the CCA process is a credible method for addressing climate issues at the Academy. Interview respondents who indicated involving cadets/midshipmen in the CCA process said the cadets/midshipmen provided valuable insight into the process and into how their fellow cadets/midshipmen were feeling.

“I'm honestly very impressed with the ones that have agreed to do it and are engaging. So that's good. It's good. Anytime we can get midshipman involvement in this stuff is really beneficial.”—USNA Support Office Staff

Leadership

As with cadets/midshipmen, leadership was involved to varying degrees in the CCA process. When leadership, especially senior leadership, was involved in the process, interview respondents shared that they felt empowered to conduct the CCA process in a way that could produce meaningful improvements to the command climate at the Academies. Leadership at all levels within the Academies should be involved with the CCA process, including encouraging cadets/midshipmen to participate in the *DEOCS*, participating in workgroups tasked with interpreting *DEOCS* results and developing CIPP plans, briefing the Academy on changes being made in response to the CCA process, and tracking implementation of actions. Even in cases when leadership is already involved, increasing visibility of this involvement across the Academies can have an impact on cadets'/midshipmen's perceptions of the CCA process within the Academy community. Increasing visibility can be accomplished through periodic e-mails or in-person updates from leadership on the CCA process.

Program Specialists and Prevention Stakeholders

Based on our discussions, program specialists and prevention stakeholders at the Academies are often ready and willing to participate and share their expertise in the CCA process and were included in varying capacities during the 2022–2023 CCA process.

“I really want to commend [the CW], another best practice of bringing in subject matter experts from across the institution... What does the research tell us about how to approach these issues? Understanding our particular population of 18- to 22-year-olds, then developing from best practices and research, developing interventions for that group specifically versus a larger population that might be more diverse in their age or their backgrounds and identities.”—USFA Senior Leadership

Leveraging the knowledge and expertise of program specialists and prevention stakeholders in the CCA process, particularly when interpreting results and developing and executing CIPP plans, bolstered the effectiveness of the process and reduced the burden on leadership who traditionally develop prevention activities for companies/squadrons. It was critical that prevention activities were evidence based; not all activities were effective and sufficient training and expertise was needed to identify the best evidence based activities for the particular need, within the context of the Academy. Program specialists are particularly well situated to work with the IPPW to identify high-quality, evidence-based prevention activities and to evaluate the impact of the activities upon implementation.

Communication Across the Academy At All Stages of the CCA Process

One area that all of the Academies could improve upon is to foster better and clearer communication across all stages of the CCA process at the Academies.

“I think midshipmen just want more insight into how [the DEOCS] gets used and then where does it go? I don’t think they realize how high up it goes. And the superintendent’s going to get briefed on this data and he’ll make decisions and pass on to the next superintendent based off of this survey... I think a lot more midshipmen would do it if they knew about that.”—USNA Midshipman

Communicating with cadets/midshipmen throughout the CCA process to help them understand the inner workings of the process and the impact taking the *DEOCS* lead to increased response rates and more interest from cadets/midshipmen about the process. The CCA process has many built-in communication opportunities, including sending e-mails, having discussions with cadets/midshipmen during the *DEOCS* fielding window to encourage participation, and holding sensing sessions during results interpretation and briefing results and CIPP plans. These opportunities facilitate two-way communication, not only to relay information to cadets/midshipmen about the process, but also to gather feedback from them about the command climate, an important tool in the overall CCA process. Sensing sessions with cadets/midshipmen allow leadership to discuss trends in results from any data collection they have completed, including the *DEOCS*, and can provide more context to the results. Results briefings and CIPP plan briefings demonstrate to cadets/midshipmen that the CCA process continues beyond *DEOCS* participation, that their feedback has been heard, and that the Academy is looking to address their feedback in a tangible way. Involving cadets/midshipmen in the CCA process in this way also provides connection to and familiarity with Academy resources available outside the CCA process.

Assessing Effectiveness and Tracking Progress

While all of the Academies had various strategies for addressing the findings of their climate assessments, there did not appear to be any consistent method for assessing the effectiveness of assessment inspired interventions, nor a consistent way to track progress toward goals at the institutional level. These evaluation steps are important to ensure that proposed solutions are effective, and that ineffective solutions are not re-implemented after subsequent assessments. Because we often saw actions from previous years assessments referenced in action plans (sometimes verbatim), it is not clear the extent to which company officers were evaluating the plans and actions from prior years.

Evaluation of the actions undertaken based on climate assessments will likely be improved with the integration of the prevention workforce at the Academies and the development of Academy-wide CIPP plans. However, tracking progress towards climate goals can happen at a variety of organizational levels and multiple layers of leadership ensure that the response to climate issues is unified across the Academy.

Use of Additional Data Sources in Command Climate Assessment

The final overall observation relates to the use of additional data sources (besides the *DEOCS*) when conducting CCAs. Some Academies did do sensing sessions or utilize focus groups, although it is unclear the extent to which this was representative. In addition to more qualitative mythologies, the Academies have a wealth of data at their disposal that would be useful in assessing climate related issues. This includes data from the biannual *Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR)* Survey that would well complement many of the factors on the *DEOCS* and provides much more contextual and granular information.

Impact of DoDI 6400.11

It is important to reiterate that DoDI 6400.11 was released during the 2022–2023 CCA process evaluation, and the Military Departments are phasing in implementation. Notably, this instruction established the CIPP plan requirement as well as set forth the responsibilities of the IPPW. Thus, the 2022–2023 CCA that we observed at the Academies did not include either of these two vital components of the updated CCA process.

Building IPPW personnel into the CCA process

At the Academies in APY 2022–2023, one person oversaw planning, administering, and interpreting the results of the *DEOCS*, typically an Equal Opportunity (EO) professional, consistent with prior DoD policy.³⁵ The EO professionals' subsequent involvement in the action planning portion varied by Academy, and centralized responsibility for action plan development and execution was limited at the Academies (some more than others).

The newly hired IPPW at the Academies will play a foundational role in CCA moving forward, in accordance with the DoDI 6400.11. The CCA, by definition, collects and integrates data and information across a wide range of climate and culture issues, and thus across a wide range of equities. In their role as integrators, IPPW will be well-positioned for guiding the CCA process and ensuring the process is well integrated across the many equities and stakeholders within the Academy. IPPW will also be responsible for the CIPP plan, which means they will need to be deeply involved in analyzing *DEOCS* data and collecting any follow-up data that the Academy deems necessary. The roles of the IPPW departs from the 2022–2023 CCA cycle that we observed (because the new policy was not yet in place).

Documenting Actions

During the 2022–2023 CCA process, the Academies had companies/squadrons developing action plans based on their *DEOCS* results. USNA and USAFA both included Academy-level action plans in their process that attempted to address flagged factors from the *DEOCS* that were prevalent across companies/squadrons. The DoDI 6400.11 establishes the CIPP plans as the

³⁵ Prior to the DoDI 6400.11, CCA policy was contained in the DoDI 1350.02 as part of Equal Opportunity policy and was enacted within units and organizations by equal opportunity professionals who were often trained at DEOMI. With the shift toward integrated primary prevention, policy oversight for CCA was transferred via the DoDI 6400.11 as CCA is intended as tool to address multiple forms of violence and harmful behavior, including but not limited to equal opportunity violations.

primary method of action planning. CIPP plans are required at the level of the “community,” as determined by the Service. For the Academies, the total Academy is the community of focus for the CIPP, and thus each Academy will complete one CIPP plan annually. There is no requirement for companies/squadrons to develop their own action plans independent of the CIPP plan, however, company/squadron-specific actions can and should be included within the CIPP plan when action is required at this level, in addition to actions at the battalion and Academy-wide levels, and leaders at all levels must have assigned responsibilities or actions in the CIPP plans.

Conclusion

To better understand the CCA process at the Academies, we conducted a process evaluation wherein we reviewed documentation, interviewed staff and stakeholders, and observed a full CCA cycle at each Academy. The CCA processes at the Academies are largely similar. Many of the identified challenges are also shared, with all Academies contending with communication silos, personnel turnover, and a need for broader involvement in the process. Each of the Academies also had strengths that could be leveraged across the Academies, such as assembling a multidisciplinary team to review *DEOCS* results and reviewing all *DEOCS* results to identify factors for Academy-level issues rather than company- or squadron-level issues, and involving cadets and midshipmen in various capacities in the CCA process.

Developing command climates that are strong and supportive is the primary objective of the CCA process and an important goal of the Academies. A healthy climate will allow all cadets and midshipmen to grow and thrive to their fullest abilities and be prepared as future leaders. It is critical for building a more resilient force for these future leaders to understand how to build and maintain healthy climates, with CCAs as an important tool for doing so. By observing the CCA process at the Academies and developing Guides for CCA implementation, our goal was to build efficiency and institutional knowledge of CCA at the Academies, to encourage further buy-in into the process, and ultimately to improve the efficacy of the CCA process at the Academies.

“I think one of the strengths of how this was approached in this way, it was always framed in the matter of leadership. This is about leadership development. We are an institution of leaders, developing leaders of character. It’s not only the right thing to do to not treat people disrespectfully, sexually harassing behaviors, racially harassing behaviors, whatever it is. It’s not just the right thing to do, it’s what makes us a better leader. So these are leadership skills that we’re teaching our students. And framing what they’re learning, whether it’s sexual assault, sexual harassment, whatever the climate and culture pieces tell us is a challenge, of framing that in a leadership way.”

–USAFA Senior Leadership

References

- Clare, R., Lawhead, A., Dahl, J., Klahr, A., Schreiner, J., Moore, A., Neria, A., McGrath, D., Murray, C., Peebles, H., Trump-Steele, R., Hylton, K., Harcey, S., Vega, R., Tuskeviciute, R., Tercha, J., Barry, A., Owen, B., & Mirani, K. (2021). Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) Redesign: Phase 1 overview report (Report No. 2021-158). Office of People Analytics. <https://www.opa.mil/research-analysis/quality-of-work-life/workplace-climate/defense-organizational-climate-survey-deocs-redesign-phase-1-overview-report/>
- Davis, L., Klauberg, W. X., Namrow, N., Petusky, M., Claros, Y., Hylton, K., Creel, A., & Klahr, A. (2019). 2018 Service Academy Gender Relations Survey: Overview Report. (Report No. 2018-073) Office of People Analytics
- Department of Defense. (2022, December 20). DOD integrated primary prevention policy for prevention workforce and leaders (DOD Instruction 6400.11). Retrieved from <https://www.Esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/640011p.PDF?ver=sakn0Vuw8fR>
- Department of Defense. (2022, May) Prevention Plan of Action 2.0 2022-2024: The Department's renewed strategic approach to prevent self-directed harm and prohibited abuse or harm. Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) Retrieved from <https://www.prevention.mil/>
- Harcey, S., McHoes, A., Lipari, R., Lonergan, C., Mararac, N., Cosner, W., Trump-Steele, R., Harlock, E., Klahr, A. (2023) Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) 5.1 Streamlining Report (Report No. 2023-134). Office of People Analytics
- Drisko, J., & Maschi, T. (2015). Content Analysis. Oxford University Press.
- Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (2021). Hard Truths and the Duty to Change: Recommendations from the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/Independent-Review-Commission-on-Sexual-Assault-in-the-Military/>

Appendix A. Evaluation Questions

DATA
DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS
FOR
DECISION
MAKERS



Note: The evaluation questions utilize an older phase structure, with the CCA process broken into five phases.

General/Overarching

1. What is the CCA “life cycle” timeline?
 - a. Where do “pain points” most often appear?
2. What personnel (including student leaders) are involved in the CCA, and during which phase(s)? For each:
 - a. Position/title/rank?
 - b. CCA role(s)/responsibilities?
 - c. Trained? Extent/type of training?

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation

3. When does planning begin vis-à-vis the anticipated survey launch date?
4. How are subgroups determined/planned?
5. Challenges in registration/rostering?
6. What planning activities take place prior to fielding?
 - a. What personnel are involved? What are their roles and responsibilities? What are their relevant areas of expertise/experience?
 - b. What is the structure/format of these activities?
7. What resources are available/used to guide planning activities? (e.g., SOPs, checklists)
 - a. Are these resources sufficient? If not,
 - i. Why not?
 - ii. What else is needed?
8. How are custom questions identified/selected?
 - a. Single person vs. group consensus?
 - b. Printing out vs. using online search functionality?

9. What, if any, experiences from the prior year's CCA were used to inform the current CCA cycle?
10. What's the degree of turnover/loss of institutional knowledge within the CCA team year-to-year?
11. What barriers/challenges currently exist?
 - a. How are these the same/different as in prior years?
 - b. Are there challenges encountered in recent years that have since been remedied/addressed?
 - i. If so, how?
 - ii. If not, why?
12. How is awareness raised among potential participants/participation encouraged (prior to survey launch)?
 - a. What strategies are most/least effective?

Phase 2: Survey Fielding/Administration

13. How are the length and timing of survey fielding determined? What factors are considered?
14. What activities take place during survey fielding?
 - a. What personnel are involved? What are their roles and responsibilities? What are their relevant areas of expertise/experience?
 - b. What is the structure/format of these activities?
15. Are response rates monitored? If so,
 - a. How frequently?
 - b. How is this information used?
16. How is awareness raised among potential participants/participation encouraged (during survey fielding)?
 - a. What strategies are most/least effective?
17. What barriers to participation exist?

Phase 3: Results Interpretation and Data Triangulation

18. What is the process for initially reviewing DEOCS results (i.e., by the survey administrator/CCA team)?
 - a. Who is involved? (i.e., a single person?, a team of people?)
19. What challenges are encountered when interpreting DEOCS results?
20. What resources are used to help interpret the DEOCS resources?
21. What, if any, additional data collection activities are conducted following the DEOCS survey (e.g., focus groups/listening sessions)?

Phase 4: Action Plan Development and Outbriefs

22. How soon after DEOCS results are made available are they briefed to the Commandant/Superintendent?
 - a. What does a briefing of results to the Commandant/Superintendent consist of? Who is involved?
23. How soon after DEOCS results are made available are they briefed to the entire academy?
 - a. How is this done? Who is involved?
24. When does action planning begin?
 - a. What does this process look like? Who is involved?
 - b. What parts of the action plan is shared academy-wide?

Phase 5: Action Plan Implementation

25. How are DEOCS action plans tracked once created? Are follow-on meetings held?
26. Who is responsible for ensuring action items are executed?
27. Are status updates on action plans provided to top leadership? If so, how?
28. Are cadets/midshipmen informed of completion of action items?

Appendix B.

Qualitative Interview Guides

DATA
DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS
FOR
DECISION
MAKERS



Fall Interview Guide

MSA CCA Interview Guide
10 Nov 2022

Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for finding the time to speak with me today. I'm talking to people who are involved in the command climate assessment process at West Point and I'm interested in your experiences. It's important to note that, since we are talking about your experiences and perspective, there are no wrong answers to my questions. The interview should last between 45 minutes and one hour.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary—you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to, and you are free to stop the interview at any time. We would like to record the interview to facilitate notetaking and later analysis. This recording would not be shared outside of the OPA research team. Would this be okay? Do you have any questions before we begin?

(Begin recording if given permission.)

Background Questions

1. First, can you tell me a little more about yourself? How long have you been at West Point? Where were you before?
2. Can you tell me more about any experience you've had working on the DEOCS or on CCA teams, more generally—either at West Point or elsewhere?
 - a. What is your current role? How long have you been in it?
 - b. How did you end up in this role?
3. How many surveys does your academy conduct each year?
 - a. What office or offices oversee them?
 - b. (If yes) What are the differences, if any, between these types of administrations?
4. Have you received any training or education about administering or interpreting the DEOCS or conducting CCAs?
 - a. [If yes] Can you tell me more about the training/education you received?
5. To the best of your knowledge, how long has West Point conducted the DEOCS (or MEOCS)?

- a. Can you tell me how the process has changed at the Academy to your knowledge over the years?

Phase-Specific Interview Questions

Based on prior knowledge of the interviewee, as well as responses to the first set of questions, choose the questions below that the interviewee will have the experience to answer. If an individual is involved in that phase of the CCA process, ask the **detailed questions** as well as the **high-level questions**. If the individual is tangentially involved in a phase, ask the **high-level questions only**. If the individual is not involved in a phase at all, skip all questions related to that phase.

Phase	Detailed	High Level
Prepare	P1. When does planning for West Point DEOCS begin? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does this differ for the cadets and faculty/staff versions of the survey? b. How is the length and timing of survey fielding determined? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What factors are considered? P2. Who is involved in the planning process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What, if any, documents from previous DEOCS/CCA cycles have you or others leveraged during the planning process? b. What, if any, documentation did you or others you work with feel would have been helpful in planning/executing the DEOCS/CCA? P3. How does West Point identify/select its roster subgroups? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What’s the rationale for this break-up? b. Who’s in charge of this decision? c. Has it been generally consistent in previous years (If no, why not) 	P4. What challenges has the Academy experienced this year during DEOCS planning? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years? b. How have you addressed, or are trying to address, these challenges? P5. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of DEOCS preparation?
Conduct	C1. How is survey participation encouraged? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who is involved in these activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. What are their roles and responsibilities? ii. How would you encourage a Cadet who thought that there’s no reason to take the survey? C2. Does your service academy monitor response rates during survey fielding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How frequently? b. How is this information used? c. Does the response rate affect your fielding window? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. (Facilitator’s note: if needed, you can clarify with the following) In other words, could you extend your fielding window if you found your response rate to be low? 	C3. What challenges has the Academy experienced this year during DEOCS fielding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years? b. How have you addressed, or are trying to address, these challenges? C4. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of DEOCS fielding?
Interpret	I1. What is the process for initially reviewing DEOCS/CCA results? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who is involved? (Single person, team?) I2. What challenges exist when interpreting DEOCS results? I3. What resources exist to assist in the interpretation of results? I4. What other data collection activities are conducted following a DEOCS survey (focus groups, record reviews, etc.)?	I6. What challenges has the Academy experienced this year during DEOCS analysis? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years? b. How have you addressed, or are you trying to address, these challenges? I7. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of DEOCS analysis?

	I5. How soon after the results are received is the commandant/super intendant briefed? a. Who does this briefing? b. Anyone else briefed?	
Develop	D1. When does action planning begin? a. What does this process look like? Who is involved? b. Who is briefed on the action plans? (Entire academy? Just leaders?) D2. Are there any status updates provided during the process? a. What is the cadence? b. Who does these and who is briefed?	D3. What challenges has the Academy experienced this year during action plan development? a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years? b. How have you addressed, or are trying to address, these challenges? D4. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of action plan development?
Execute	E1. How are action plans tracked once created? Who does this? E2. Who is responsible for following through on action plans? E3. Are cadets/midshipmen informed of completion of action items?	E4. What challenges has the Academy experienced during action plan execution? a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years? b. How have you addressed, or are trying to address, these challenges? E5. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of action plan execution?

Retrospective Questions about Prior Years

- 6. What feedback have you gotten from cadets either this year or in previous years?
 - a. How has this feedback been responded to?
- 7. Is there anything else you would like to share about the CCA process?

Closing

- 8. From your perspective, do you think the DEOCS overall, produces positive, meaningful change?
 - a. [If yes] Can you give me an example of a time in your experience (either in the military or at the Academy) that the survey produced change?
- 9. Is there anything else I haven't asked about that you think I should know?
- 10. Based on what I've told you about the goals of our projects and the questions that I've asked you today, are there other people that you think I should talk to?

Meet & Greet Interview Guide

Note: This interview guide was used in instances where a full interview was not feasible, such as with the Academy commandant.

MSA CCA Meet & Greet Guide

10 Nov 2022

Interviewer Introduction

Please take some time to introduce yourself and any colleagues with you.

Project Introduction

Thank you for finding the time to speak with me today. We are performing a process evaluation for command climate assessments at military service academies. We have interviews set up with [#] individuals at [Service Academy] to discuss their experiences and learn more about the successes and challenges around fielding a *DEOCS* and developing and executing an action plan. At the end of the evaluation, we will develop resources regarding best practices that MSAs can use when conducting future CCAs. Do you have any questions about our project before I ask you some questions about your views and experiences?

Meet & Greet Questions

1. Can you tell me about your philosophy with respect to command climate at [Service Academy]?
 - a. How does the *DEOCS* fit in with your philosophy?
 - b. [if applicable] How do you use *DEOCS* data at an executive level?
 - c. What parts of the data are most useful to you?
2. What challenges has [Service Academy] experienced during its command climate assessments?
 - a. How have you addressed, or tried to address, these challenges?
3. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of command climate assessments at [Service Academy]?
 - a. [if applicable] Can you provide any examples?
4. What resources do you feel would benefit [Service Academy] during the CCA process?

Closing

5. Is there anything else I haven't asked about that you think I should know?

Fall Support Staff Interview Guide

Note: This interview guide was used for interviews with support office staff.

MSA CCA Interview Guide
Support Staff
9 Dec 2022
Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for finding the time to speak with me today. I'm talking to people who are involved in the command climate assessment process at the [Service Academy] and I'm interested in your experiences. It's important to note that, since we are talking about your experiences and perspective, there are no wrong answers to my questions. The interview should last between 45 minutes and one hour.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary—you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to, and you are free to stop the interview at any time. We would like to record the interview to facilitate notetaking and later analysis. This recording would not be shared outside of the OPA research team. Would this be okay? Do you have any questions before we begin?

(Begin recording if given permission.)

Background Questions

1. First, can you tell me a little more about yourself? How long have you been at the [Service Academy]? Where were you before?
2. Can you tell me more about any experience you've had working with the DEOCS or on CCA teams, more generally—either at the [Service Academy] or elsewhere?
 - a. What is your current position? How long have you been in it?
 - i. What do you see as your role in the DEOCS or CCA process, specifically?
 - ii. How did you end up in this role?
 - iii. Is there anything you'd like to see change about it? (e.g., more/less involvement, overall, or regarding certain aspects?)
3. How many surveys does [Support Service] support at the [Service Academy] each year?
 - a. What office or offices oversee them?
 - b. What are the differences, if any, between these types of administrations?
4. Have you received any training or education about administering or interpreting the DEOCS or conducting CCAs?
 - a. [If yes] Can you tell me more about the training/education you received?

5. To the best of your knowledge, how long has the [Service Academy] conducted the DEOCS (or MEOCS)?
 - a. Can you tell me how the process has changed at the Academy to your knowledge over the years?

Phase-Specific Interview Questions

Phase 1: Prepare

6. Are you involved in planning the DEOCS at the Academy?
 - a. (If NO) How, if at all, do you feel your role should be involved in that process?
 - i. After probing, skip to question 9
 - b. (If YES) Can you tell me more about your involvement?
7. What challenges have you observed at the Academy this year during DEOCS planning?
 - a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years?
8. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of DEOCS preparation?

Phase 2: Conduct

9. Are you involved in conducting the DEOCS at the Academy?
 - a. (If NO) How, if at all, do you feel your role should be involved in that process?
 - i. After probing, skip to question 12
 - b. (If YES) Can you tell me more about your involvement?
10. What challenges have you observed at the Academy this year during DEOCS fielding?
 - a. How do these compare to challenges experienced in previous years?
11. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of DEOCS fielding?

Phase 3: Interpret

12. Tell me more about your involvement with helping the commands interpret the DEOCS results.

- a. How can your program/department/Service better help commands interpret their DEOCS results?
- 13. To what extent do you feel results are adequately communicated to Academy leadership? To students?
- 14. How seriously do you believe the results are taken by leadership? By students?
- 15. What challenges have you observed at the Academy this year during the interpretation of the DEOCS results?
 - a. How do these compare to challenges faced in previous years?
- 16. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improved DEOCS results interpretation?

Phase 4: Develop

- 17. What experience does your program/department/Service have with developing Action Plans for the benefit of improving overall command climate?
 - a. How might, or does, your program/department/service assist the commands with the development of action plans?
- 18. In your experience is your office consulted during the action plan development process in a meaningful way?
- 19. What challenges have you previously observed or do you anticipate occurring at the Academy this year during Action Plan development?
- 20. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of Action Plan development?

Phase 5: Execute

- 21. How have prior years' action plans attempted to create change at the Academy?
 - a. Do you believe they were successful?
- 22. What barriers do you believe exist that prevent the commands from soliciting for your program's/department's/Service's assistance?
- 23. What challenges have you observed or do you anticipate arising at the Academy this year during Action Plan execution?
- 24. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of Action Plan execution?

Retrospective Questions about Prior Years

25. What feedback have you or others received from [cadets/midshipmen] about the DEOCS or CCA process, either this year or in previous years?
 - a. How has this feedback been responded to?
26. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the CCA process?

Closing

27. From your perspective, do you think the DEOCS overall produces positive, meaningful change?
 - a. **(If YES)** Can you give me an example of a time that, in your experience (either in the military or at the Academy), the survey produced change?
28. Is there anything I haven't asked about that you think I should know?
29. Based on what I've told you about the goals of our projects and the questions that I've asked you today, are there other people that you think I should talk to?

Spring Interview Guide

MSA CCA Interview Guide
Spring Interviews
Primary Focus: Action Plan Design and Execution
Last Updated: 3 March 2023

Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for finding the time to speak with us today. We are talking to people who are involved in the command climate assessment process, and we are interested in your perspective on action planning at the Academy. (If the person has already be interviewed): We appreciate you talking to us during the Fall semester. Your input was very helpful. In the fall, I primarily asked questions about your current role at the {Service Academy] and any prior CCA roles and experiences. Today, I'd like to ask questions mainly focused on 1) how you feel the CCA process, as a whole, has been going this academic year; and 2) activities conducted or planned for the Spring semester.

It's important to note that, since we are talking about your experiences and perspective, there are no wrong answers to my questions. The interview may last up to one hour.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary—you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to, and you are free to stop the interview at any time. We would like to record the

interview to facilitate notetaking and later analysis. This recording would not be shared outside of the OPA research team. Do you consent to being recorded? Do you have any questions before we begin?

(Begin recording if given permission.)

Background Questions

****Qs 1-3 are duplicated from Fall Interview Guides.****

- *Ask as standard practice ask only if the interviewee has not been previously interviewed (e.g., might be new to the CCA team/Academy, or simply wasn't identified during the Fall).*
 - *If interviewee was interviewed in the Fall, review notes prior to this interview to make sure these questions were adequately covered, and no follow-ups seem warranted. If you feel some further digging into Qs 1, 2, and/or 3 would be helpful, please modify this guide accordingly in advance of the interview and save a version indicating the interviewee it's being used with.*
1. First, can you tell me more about yourself? How long have you been at the [Service Academy]? Where were you before?
 2. Can you tell me more about any experience you've had working on CCA teams, more generally—either at the [Service Academy] or elsewhere?
 - a. What is your current position? How long have you been in it?
 - i. What do you see as your role in the CCA process, specifically?
 - ii. How did you end up in this role?
 - iii. Is there anything you'd like to see change about it? (e.g., more/less involvement, overall, or regarding certain aspects)
 3. Have you received any training or education about conducting CCAs?
 - a. [If yes] Can you tell me more about the training/education you received?

****Q4 is new.****

- *Ask of everyone unless doing so simply does not make sense.*
4. How do you feel CCA activities conducted so far during this academic year have gone?

- a. *(If interviewee is new to the project)*: If you weren't directly involved in these earlier activities, please share any impressions you have that are based on your indirect experiences or comments made by other individuals.
- b. What has met or has not met your expectations? (Probe on both if interviewee only speaks to one.)

Dissemination of DEOCS Results

I'd like to learn a bit more about what the process of sharing *DEOCS* results with Academy students, faculty, and staff looks like.

5. How soon after *DEOCS* results are made available are those results typically briefed to the Commandant/Superintendent?
 - a. What does a briefing of results to the Commandant/Superintendent consist of?
 - b. Who all is involved?
 - c. Are all of the results briefed? If not, walk me through the process of deciding what information is shared and what is omitted.
 - d. When questions or comments come up, during the briefs:
 - i. Who is responsible for answering those questions?
 - ii. Are comments/questions taken into consideration when developing action plans?
6. How soon after *DEOCS* results are made available are they briefed to the entire Academy?
 - a. How is this done? (By e-mail, by company/squadron, etc.)
 - b. Who all is involved?
 - c. Are all of the results briefed? If not, walk me through the process of deciding what information is shared and what is omitted.

Action Plan Development

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about Action Planning at the [Service Academy].

7. What does this process consist of at the Academy?
 - a. When does it start?

- b. Who all is involved (whether through contributing to their development or being kept aware of/briefed on progress in this area)?
 - i. Which person or persons have the greatest responsibility for their development?
 - ii. How are individuals selected to be involved in the process? (e.g., mandatory, voluntary, etc.)
 - iii. Are students involved in the process?
 - 1. If so, how?
 - 2. If not, why is this the case?
- 8. How do you determine what main issues to focus on in your action plan (e.g., sensing sessions, *DEOCS* results, cadet feedback, etc.)?
 - a. (If they mention *DEOCS* results) How do you determine which *DEOCS* results to focus on and include in your plan?
- 9. In your experience (or based on what you've heard from others), to what extent do action plans differ notably from year to year?
 - a. Why do you think this is?
- 10. What challenges has the Academy experienced this year during action plan development?
 - a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years?
 - b. How have you addressed, or are you trying to address, these challenges?
- 11. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of action plan development at the Academy?

Action Plan Implementation

- 12. How are action plans tracked once created?
 - a. Who is responsible for tracking progress?
- 13. Who is responsible for implementing action plans?
- 14. Are cadets/midshipmen informed when action items are completed? If so, how? And when?
- 15. Is Academy leadership updated on action plan progress? If so, how? And when?

16. What challenges has the Academy experienced this year during action plan implementation?
 - a. Are these challenges similar to or different from challenges experienced in previous years?
 - b. How have you addressed, or are you trying to address, these challenges?
17. In your experience, is there anything that has helped improve the success of action plan implementation at the Academy?

Retrospective Questions

18. How, if at all, has this year's action planning process built upon success from previous years?
 - a. How, if at all, has this year's action planning process learned from challenges from previous years?

Closing

19. From your perspective, do you think the action planning process produces positive, meaningful change?
 - a. [If yes] Can you give me an example of a time at the Academy that the action planning process produced change?
20. What support or resources do you think would help you and the Academy in developing and implementing effective and robust Action Plans?
21. Is there anything else I haven't asked about that you think I should know?
22. Based on what I've told you about the goals of our project and the questions that I've asked you today, are there other people that you think I should talk to?

Appendix C. Qualitative Coding Scheme

DATA
DRIVEN
SOLUTIONS
FOR
DECISION
MAKERS



Table 5.
Topical Codes

Code/Subcode Name	Code ID	Decision Rules
Timeline	T.0	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses the timeline for the CCA process
CCA Phases	C.0	Apply this code to all responses about the CCA phases that do not fit into one of the following sub-codes
Planning and preparation	C.1	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes concepts around the planning and preparation phase of the CCA process
Survey fielding and administration	C.2	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes concepts around the survey fielding and administration phase of the CCA process
Results interpretation and data triangulation	C.3	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes concepts around the results interpretation and data triangulation phase of the CCA process
Action plan development	C.4	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes concepts around the action plan development phase of the CCA process
Action plan implementation	C.5	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes concepts around the action plan implementation phase of the CCA process
CCA Experiences	X.0	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses their experiences with the CCA process that do not fit into one of the following sub-codes
Challenges	X.1	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes challenges they have encountered in the CCA process
Needs	X.2	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant identifies items or support that they need for the CCA process
Successes	X.3	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes successes they have had with the CCA process
Lessons Learned	X.4	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant describes lessons learned they have experienced with the CCA process
Available Resources	R.0	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses resources available to them for the CCA process that do not fit within one of the following sub-codes
Documentation	R.1	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses documentation available to them for the CCA process. Documentation may include resources at the

Code/Subcode Name	Code ID	Decision Rules
		Academy or <i>DEOCS</i> resources available through the A2S website
Personnel - Staff	R.2	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses staff available as personnel resources during the CCA process
Personnel – Cadets/Midshipmen	R3	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses cadets/midshipmen available as personnel resources during the CCA process
Institutional Knowledge	R.4	Apply this code to all responses in which the participant discusses Academy experience with the CCA process
Surveys	D.0	Apply this code to all response where the participant discusses surveys that do not fit within one of the following sub-codes
<i>DEOCS</i>	D.1	Apply this code to all response where the participant discusses the <i>DEOCS</i>
DoD-required surveys	D.2	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses DoD-required surveys, not including <i>DEOCS</i>
Survey Participation	S.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant describes <i>DEOCS</i> survey participation
Outreach	O.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant mentions outreach efforts that do not fit within one of the following sub-codes
Leadership	O.1	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses information-sharing with Academy leadership
Cadet/Midshipmen	O.2	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses information-sharing with cadets/midshipmen

Note. Topical codes are codes developed from research questions.

Table 6.
Emerging Themes

Code Name	Code ID	Decision Rules
Leadership buy-in	L.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses either active participation by leadership or the need for leadership to participate in the CCA process. “Leadership” may include Academy or Company leadership.
Ways to Improve DEOCS	I.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses shortcomings of the <i>DEOCS</i> or recommendations for improving the <i>DEOCS</i> survey.
Prior Experience with the CCA Process	P.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses their prior experience with the CCA process. This code primarily refers to experiences before coming to the Academy, but include any instances where the participant refers to assisting with the process in prior years at the Academy.
Cadet/Midshipmen involvement	M.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses ways in which cadets/midshipmen are involved in the CCA process at the Academy.
Increasing transparency	Tr.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses knowledge sharing within the Academy, particularly around the CCA process, including <i>DEOCS</i> results and Action Plans.
Limited Cadet Time	Lt.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses the lack of time that cadets have to participate in the CCA process. This includes time to take the <i>DEOCS</i> , participate in focus groups, or assist in the creation of Action Plans.
Turnover Rate	Tn.0	Apply this code to all responses where the participant discusses turnover rates with 1) staff involved in the CCA process, or 2) students at the Academy.

Note. Emerging themes are codes based on an initial review of the data. They are constructs that were heard in multiple interviews as agreed upon by the research team.

This page is reserved for insertion of Standard Form 298, page 1 -- this is best accomplished by replacing this page after the document has been converted to PDF

This page is reserved for insertion of Standard Form 298, page 2 -- this is best accomplished by replacing this page after the document has been converted to PDF

