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To: [Donahue, Christopher T LTG USARMY XVIII ABN CORPS \(USA\)](#)
Subject: FW: Info: Founders Day Speaker Talking Points and FAQs
Date: Saturday, March 23, 2024 11:51:00 AM
Attachments: [20240321 Founders Day Speakers Talking Points on Mission Statement v2.pdf](#)
[2024 FOUNDERS DAY FAQs \(Final\).pdf](#)
[MISSION STATEMENT REVISION TALKING POINTS Final.pdf](#)
[Supe 61 Sends - USMA Mission Statement.pdf](#)

CD,

4 documents for your review. We removed the video link so no video, but if you read thru the Mission Statement TPs, you'll understand my approach for the Q&A.

- ??? 20240321 File: Revised mission statement talking points as of Thursday following your meeting with first time speakers.
- ??? Mission Statement Revision Talking points: This was distributed last Friday.
- ??? 2024 Founders Day FAQs (Final): This was prepared prior to any mission statement events.
- ??? Supe 61 Sends: Your letter (along with the useful chart on mission statement changes) for him to have on hand as a reference.

Great talking to you this morning. Let me know if you need any clarification.

Bricktop

MISSION STATEMENT TALKING POINTS FOR FOUNDERS DAY SPEAKERS

As of 21 1600 MAR 24

Note: this document is for the use of internal-Academy faculty and staff speaking at Founders Day events. It is not intended for public release nor external distribution.

- Our motto is who we are. Our mission statement is what we do.
 - Duty, Honor, Country is carved in granite across West Point, adorns our cadets' uniforms, and will always remain our motto.
 - The mission statement codifies our mission essential tasks: build, educate, train and inspire the Corps of Cadets to be commissioned leaders of character.
 - The revised mission statement was approved by—but not directed by—the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff.
 - **AVOID** saying “removed,” “replaced,” “deleted”—just refer to the “updated mission statement and reinforce that the motto remains unchanged.”
- The revised mission statement is the result of an 18-month deliberate assessment, which included Academy-selected graduates with differing experiences and backgrounds.
 - These organizational assessments typically occur every few years.
 - West Point's mission statement had changed nine times since 1925, when the first mission statement.
 - The motto was not added to the mission statement until 1998—check your Bugle Notes!
 - **AVOID** the perception that the External Review Team was political or made the decision. The Academy selected them. They advised. Academy leadership made decisions.
- When our graduates become Army leaders, they must live by Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage, just as the soldiers they lead.
 - The Army Values are the foundation of the Army profession.
 - Duty and honor are explicitly stated in the Army Values. Country is reflected in multiple values, notably “Loyalty,” which the Army defines as “*Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers.*”
 - Loyalty to the U.S. constitution is primary!

MISSION STATEMENT TALKING POINTS FOR FOUNDERS DAY SPEAKERS

As of 21 0830 MAR 24

- The Army values are neither aspirational nor undefined. Since their adoption in the 90's, generations of Soldiers have learned and lived by these seven values.
- The Army Values have been integrated into the Army Evaluation System for years—they are literally how we grade our people.
- Check AR 623-3 and DA PAM 623-3:
 - Army Values consist of the principles, standards, and qualities considered essential for successful Army leaders.
 - The Army recognizes seven values that all Army members must develop (loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage).
- **EMPHASIZE** the actual seven values as some in the audience don't realize Army Values is a defined term and to counter the social media narrative that the Army Values change for political reasons. **AVOID** comparing DHC to AV—it's not either/or.
- Competition for talent: the mission adds 'build,' to underscore the importance of recruiting talented young men and women. It also reinforces that our graduates will continue to serve the nation, in and out of uniform.
- West Point and the US Army are apolitical. Period.
 - The decision to update the mission statement was made at West Point with no political pressure.
 - Yes, we are aware of the political environment. To do or not to do something because of political considerations IS POLITICS.
- West Point intended to announce this change in conjunction with R-Day. We recognize the current publicity caught some Old Grads by surprise.
 - The Superintendent's letter was distributed by AOG to all Old Grads and both reached out and responded to numerous grads and groups on the issue.
 - **EMPHASIZE** West Point social media and AOG magazine and updates as trustworthy information sources they should routinely consult.
 - **AVOID** creating the perception that we need Old Grad approval and awareness prior to making decisions. While it's fair to mention outreach done by the Supe, AOG, and the Academy staff, AVOID creating the expectation that we will do Zoom calls for every issue.



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

ADMISSIONS/SCOTUS CASE

- At their request, the Academy is referring all queries about the case to the DOJ, who is representing the government in the matter.
- No matter your stance on the issue, it is the administration's role, not the military's, to determine policy. Just as we teach our cadets about civilian control of the military, we as Army leaders must adhere to the same principle.

DEI

DEI in Curriculum

- USMA's curriculum exposes Cadets to difficult and challenging ideas and conversations. We do not intellectually coddle cadets. The modern battlefield is not going to coddle them – they must be exposed to every idea, theory, or concept. It requires them to be flexible, adaptive in their thinking, with a demand for rigor and evidence in arguments.
- USMA does not have a core curriculum dedicated to Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is explicitly covered in one upper-level elective - The Politics of Race, Gender, and Sexuality. Out of 30 lessons, there is one lesson introducing CRT and another focusing on critiques of CRT.
- USMA has a Diversity and Inclusion Studies Minor (DISM); created in 2017. Five to eight students each year complete the minor.
- Concepts and Topics about Race are Integrated into the Curriculum
 - The history of race and gender integration and the Civil Rights Movement are taught in the core history curriculum
 - The Constitution, to include the Equal Protection Clause, is taught in the core course LW403, Constitutional and Military Law
- Character development underlies everything we do at USMA and is integrated throughout the curriculum. Additionally, everything we do is founded upon the U.S. Constitution – it is specifically taught in five courses (HI101 – The Army of the Republic – Leading Citizen Soldiers; HI103 – History of the United States; SS202 – American Politics; LW403 – Constitution and Military Law; and MX400 – Officership). Cadets also take an oath to the Constitution three times during their USMA experience (R-Day, Affirmation Day and Graduation/Commissioning).

Diversity Conference

- USMA's Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Conference, as with all USMA conferences, encourages participants to present alternative viewpoints and challenge assumptions. This aligns with our mission to develop leaders of character who are mentally agile, perspective-laden critical thinkers.



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

- In other words, our goal is to teach Cadets HOW to think, not WHAT to think.
- This approach informs and strengthens each Cadet's allegiance to the Constitution, which underpins our curriculum, as well as adherence to Army Values.
- USMA deliberately invites a wide range of guest speakers and contributors within academic forums, to challenge Cadets to evaluate competing perspectives in service of their intellectual growth. USMA is non-partisan and guest speakers' statements do not represent Academy positions.

NDA

- We are working in coordination with HQDA to comply with the DEI-related provisions of the FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act that relate to USMA.

RENAMING COMMISSION ACTIONS

At the direction of the Department of Defense, we have removed or renamed West Point assets that memorialized the Confederacy or those who voluntarily served with the Confederacy.

The Department of the Army will determine the disposition of removed items.

These include:

- Lee Road renamed to Grant Road, honoring President and General of the Armies Ulysses S. Grant (USMA 1843).
- Beauregard Place renamed to Davidson Place, honoring LTG Garrison Davidson (USMA '27), combat engineer during World War II and the Korean War and USMA's 44th Superintendent
- Hardee Place renamed to Rogers Place, honoring GEN Bernard Rogers (USMA '40), 28th Chief of Staff of the Army and NATO Supreme Allied Commander
- Lee Housing Area renamed Grant Housing Area
- In collaboration with the USMA Class of 1957, a quote at Honor Plaza attributed to Robert E. Lee was changed to a quote from Dwight D. Eisenhower
- Removed a portrait of Robert E. Lee in Confederate uniform from Jefferson Hall (the USMA Library) Concurrently, we moved an accompanying portrait of Ulysses S. Grant from the library to Grant Hall.
- Removed the stone bust of Lee at Reconciliation Plaza while moving the accompanying bust of Grant to the front of Grant Hall.
- Removed the bronze triptych at the main entrance of Bartlett Hall.



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

- Additionally, we are modifying select stone markers at Reconciliation Plaza with new text, developed in collaboration with the Class of 1961, that complies with the Commission's recommendations while still conveying the Plaza's central message of reconciliation.

PRO SPORTS PATHWAY/POLICY

- The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act bars service academy athletes from playing professional sports until completing their military service obligation, rescinding the 2019 rule allowing athletes to defer their service obligation until after their professional sports career.
- However, the NDAA also includes a "legacy exception" that grandfathers Cadets who joined before June 2021 allowing them to defer their service under the 2019 rule.

CADET ATHLETES (NIL/TRANSFER PORTAL/5th YEAR SENIORS)

- The resignation process is the same for all cadets, regardless of athletic status. We do not expedite (nor delay) resignation requests from cadet athletes entering the transfer portal.
- Per Army Regulation (AR) 150-1, a Cadet must resign from USMA before he or she is eligible to enroll or participate in intercollegiate athletics at another institution.
- The approval authority for affirmed cadet resignations is the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs [ASA(M&RA)]. When a resignation is approved, ASA(M&RA) may also order the former cadet to enlisted active-duty service for two to four years to reimburse the Government for their educational costs.
- In lieu of active-duty service, ASA(M&RA) may instead require the former cadet to repay their educational expenses.

NIL

- Per federal ethics statutes, cadet-athletes may not participate in Name-Image-Likeness opportunities.

5th YEAR SENIORS

- West Point does not allow cadets to voluntarily delay graduation and commissioning for any reason.
- In cases where a cadet has not completed graduation requirements, such as academic, medical, or disciplinary reasons, academy leadership may delay the cadet's graduation or turn them back to another class.



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR ATHLETES

- All cadets complete the same requirements to graduate.
- In some cases, West Point modifies cadets' schedules based on athletic or other requirements. For example, football players generally take boxing during their second-class year, but all football players take boxing.
- We also modify cadet's schedule for academic reasons: cadets in certain majors will complete summer training on a different schedule to accommodate individual academic development.
- The time commitment for Corps Squad athletes, especially football players, far exceeds mandatory time commitments for most cadets.
- All Corps Squad athletes, plus numerous other clubs and teams, voluntarily give up some of their time on a daily basis to compete for Army West Point. Additionally, numerous athletic and competitive team and clubs give up some of their winter, spring, and summer breaks to fulfill cadet and team obligations.

COVID DISCHARGES/REINSTATEMENTS

- In accordance with the FY23 NDAA, DoD policy no longer requires service members, including cadets, to be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Former Cadets who resigned because of the mandate and who still meet admissions requirements may reapply for admission to USMA. They would be treated like any former Cadet and given a fair and comprehensive assessment.
- To date, USMA Admissions is not tracking any former Cadets having reapplied.

HARMFUL BEHAVIOR (SA/SH) PREVENTION

- The United States Military Academy is fully committed to preventing sexual harassment and sexual assault and providing a safe and secure environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- Over the past two years, we have instituted or expanded several important programs focusing on prevention skills and healthy behaviors. Of note, we created the ACT Program, a peer-led prevention initiative of Cadets specially trained in prevention techniques to help their fellow Cadets.
 - **ACT = Addressing Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment, Creating Healthy Climates, Tackling Holistic Health**
- Additionally, we recently stood up an Integrated Prevention Advisory Group (I-PAG), the Army's new prevention workforce that will support leader-led efforts to improve prevention activities (policies, programs, and practices) intended to increase protective factors, build positive organizational environments, and prevent harmful behaviors from occurring.
- These and other initiatives are part of USMA's collective effort to cultivate a safe and professional organizational climate, based on dignity and respect, that is necessary to develop leaders of character prepared to support and defend the Constitution,



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

serve and protect the American people, and honorably lead our Nation's Army and its Soldiers.

- Sexual assault and sexual harassment are incompatible with Army Values and not what the American people should expect from these future leaders.

SPRING BREAK/FENTANYL INCIDENT

- The six cadets involved in a March 2022 drug incident are no longer at the Academy.

PARENTAL RIGHTS

- USMA is complying with the law and we will protect Cadets' parental rights as stated in law.

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS/POLICY

- USMA follows all applicable Army and DOD policies – USMA has no specific or additional policy concerning participation by transgender cadets in academy-administered intramural athletics.
- For physical education curriculum and fitness testing with distinctly separate grading policies/standards based on biological sex, we continue to use the DEERS gender marker, per Army and DOD policy.
- If a cadet has an approved transition plan, he/she may receive a temporary medical profile for all or some components of the fitness test.
- Once a cadet completes transition, he/she will be required to meet the standards associated with the updated gender marker in DEERS, unless a waiver or medical profile is approved.

TALENT BASED BRANCHING

- Beginning with the Class of 2020, Firsties receive branch assignments through a talent-based branching process that incorporates talent assessments, Cadet preferences, and input from branch proponents.
 - *Under this model, branches assignments are made in coordination with branch commandants (who get a "vote") to ensure selected officers are a good fit.*
 - *Talent based branching best aligns Cadet talents and preferences with Army demands*



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

- Talent-based branching replaces the traditional “Order of Merit List” approach to branch selection with which many grads are familiar.
- USMA has seen continued success with the talent-based branching process
 - Two-thirds (67%) of the Class of 2024 were a “perfect match” (where Cadets received their top branch preference AND were given a “Most Preferred” rating from the branch proponent (up from 62% with the Class of 2023)
 - Branches are receiving more “Most Preferred” Cadets (88%, up from 84% with Class of 2023)
 - 72% of the Class of 2024 received their top branch preference; 93% of the class received one of their top three preferences; 97% of the class received a top five preference
- This branching process is the same for both men and women
- While there are a small number of Cadets who may not get their top choice, no one is forced into a particular branch to meet a quota
- To learn more about talent based branching, read the Spring 2023 issue of “West Point Magazine”

TRANSPARENCY/ALUMNI COMMUNICATIONS

- We are committed to being as open and transparent with our alumni as possible. However, federal privacy laws as well as DOD and Army policies restrict our ability to release information, especially regarding ongoing investigations, court cases, or personnel actions. We appreciate your understanding in those instances where we simply do not have discretion to discuss.
- Official USMA releases can be found at www.westpoint.edu

MA104 HONOR SCANDAL/HONOR PROGRAM CHANGES

- In the wake of the MA104 cheating incident in May 2020, the Superintendent directed a full review of USMA's honor program to determine the effectiveness of the honor system in the modern environment and ensure it still contributed to our character development goals.
- As a result of that review, USMA ended the willful admission program, as it was determined that the process was not meeting the desired intent of increasing self-reporting and decreasing toleration. Ending the program means that separation will be a potential punishment for any honor violation.
- USMA's leader development model focuses on development, vice attrition (the “one strike and out” approach from the past).



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

- Character development is THE most important thing we do at USMA. It is not only the foundation of every Cadet's USMA experience, but is also integrated throughout every aspect of that experience.
- The Cadet Honor Code has not changed and still serves as one of the building blocks of character development.
- Through this model, we develop leaders of character who maintain the high standards of the Army Profession and meet the expectations of the Nation they serve as trusted Army professionals.

BACKGROUND ON MA104: *In May 2020, 73 Cadets were accused of cheating during their Calculus final examination (taken in a remote learning environment due to COVID restrictions at the time). Of the 73 cases investigated by the Cadet Honor Committee, six Cadets resigned during the investigation, an additional four Cadets were acquitted by a board of their peers, and two cases were dropped due to insufficient evidence. Of the resulting 61 cases that were fully adjudicated, eight were separated, 51 were turned back one full year, and two were turned back six months.*

This cheating incident reinforced how crucial our integrated approach to character development is, where a culture of character growth must be cultivated throughout a cadet's 47-month experience. Character development is the most important thing we do at West Point, as it is critical to building leaders for our Army. West Point must be the gold standard for developing Army officers. We demand nothing less than impeccable character from our graduates.

FOOTBALL – AAC

- Army West Point Football is joining the American Athletic Conference (AAC) beginning in the 2024 season.
- Conference membership - critical to future success - allows us to address the challenges of scheduling, increases bowl game opportunities, and provides access to the expanding College Football Playoff (CFP) as well as the revenues that accompany the expansion.
- AAC membership increases both USMA's and the Army's exposure in key priority recruiting markets.
- This move is exclusive to the football team and does not impact our other intercollegiate athletics teams. It also does not impact the traditional Commander-in-Chief rivalries in any way. In keeping with our time-honored traditions, we will continue to battle our sister academies in early November and mid-December, while also competing for AAC Championships, bowl games, and the CFP.



FOUNDERS DAY FAQs

IMPACTS OF ARMY RECRUITING ISSUES ON USMA

- USMA admissions is not experiencing the recruiting challenges faced by the rest of the Army. In fact, Applications were up 7 percent for the Class of 2028
- USMA Admissions understands the challenges in today's higher education landscape and continues to look for the best ways to attract and matriculate the most talented candidates for across the country.

ANTI RACIST WEST POINT LETTER (2020 "LTs Letter")

BACKGROUND: In June 2020, nine graduates from the Classes of 2018 and 2019 (to include two First Captains, a class president, two brigade respect captains, and several graduate scholars) submitted a letter to West Point leadership stating that systemic racism continues to exist at USMA, along with a series of recommendations to combat racism and promote anti-racism.

- West Point regularly receives unsolicited feedback from our alumni about different topics, which helps the Academy improve on executing its mission to train and educate cadets and we appreciate their feedback.
- West Point Inspector General conducted a comprehensive review of all matters involving race at the Academy. The results of the inspection were used to to refine our enduring campaign plan to address any findings regarding bias or lack of inclusion.
- USMA leadership is committed to fostering an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

MICHIE STADIUM RENOVATION ("Why Are We Spending Money on This?")

- Michie Stadium is a critical portal through which the Academy engages and connects with America. For many Americans, this venue is the only lens through which they see and learn about West Point, the Academy, and its contributions to the Army and Nation.
- This project is not just about Army Athletics: it also benefits the Academy, West Point, and the Army. A revitalized Michie Stadium, seen and visited by millions each year, enhances our ability to tell the West Point and Army story to the Nation, highlight USMA as the preeminent leader development institution, attract talent, and showcase our Nation's next generation of leaders of character to America.
- This project is privately funded. AOG fundraising efforts for Michie were not done at the expense of other Academy projects and initiatives.

MISSION STATEMENT REVISION

The revised mission statement (approved by Army Senior Leaders):

To build, educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets to be commissioned leaders of character committed to the Army Values and ready for a lifetime of service to the Army and Nation

TOP LINE MESSAGE: USMA's updated mission statement continues to emphasize our enduring mission essential tasks to educate, train and inspire the Corps of Cadets to be commissioned leaders of character. Our graduates will be committed to the values of the Army in which they will serve – values which encapsulate the West Point ideals of Duty, Honor, Country. Those “three hallowed words,” foundational to our culture, will always remain our motto and the hallmark of the Cadet experience.

TALKING POINTS:

- USMA began a process in June 2022 to deliberately review our Mission, Vision, and Strategy lines of effort
- Our intention was to roll out the revised mission statement in conjunction with the publication of our revised strategy this summer
- The revision of the mission statement occurred through a deliberate and collaborative process that involved more than **20 engagements with internal and external stakeholders**.
 - Every vibrant organization, including institutions of higher learning, are expected to review the mission periodically.
 - The discussion on the mission statement began over a year and a half ago as we reviewed the vision, mission, and strategy of the Academy.
 - External stakeholders included the Army Senior Leadership (specifically, the Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army), USMA's Board of Visitors, and members of the Superintendent's external review team, most of whom were USMA alumni.
- USMA implementing a revised mission statement this spring, that better aligns the Academy's mission with Army expectations
- Revised mission statement
 - Still focuses on our mission essential tasks (educate, train and inspire), and adds “build” to emphasize importance of recruiting talent as part of our mission.
 - Emphasizes the expectation for graduates to continue to serve the Nation after leaving Army service
 - Emphasizes expectations for graduates to be leaders of character, committed to Army Values (Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage).
 - Binds us to the Army in which our graduates will serve

Where did “Duty, Honor, Country” Go?

- **Duty, Honor, Country - foundational to USMA’s culture – remains our motto, and always will.**
 - These three hallowed words define who we are both as an institution and as USMA graduates
 - They are the hallmark of the Cadet experience and bind the Long Gray Line together across our great history.
- While Duty, Honor, Country will always be constant, our mission statement, which contains our mission essential task, must maintain currency with what the Army and Nation requires from us.
- USMA’s mission statement has been revised several times in the last century. Notably, the words “Duty, Honor, Country” did not appear in the mission statement in 1998 – most USMA classes did not learn a mission statement that included the motto
- Army Values include “Duty” and “Honor”, with “Country” reflected throughout the Values (especially Loyalty, bearing true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and your Soldiers).
- Our absolute focus on developing leaders of character ready to lead our Army Soldiers on increasingly lethal battlefields remains unchanged.

EVOLUTION OF THE MISSION STATEMENT

- From 1802 until after World War I, USMA did not have a formal mission statement. Various mission statements were developed over the years but primarily for internal use.
- In 1925, the War Department published USMA’s first formalized (and externally directed) mission statement, promulgated Army Regulation 350-1 “Military Education.” It read: “to provide a four-year course of instruction and training for the Corps of Cadets which will prepare its graduates in the Regular Army.”
- This marked the first time since USMA’s founding that the Army officially recognized West Point as the first stage in its professional school system.
- Since 1925, mission statement has changed eight additional times to reflect either a change in the Academy’s essential task, its purpose, or both.
- While many previous mission statements emphasized instilling the character and attributes necessary for progressive and continued development, the words “character” and “educate” did not appear until 1977, in the wake of the Academy’s 1976 Honor scandal.
- **Additionally, the USMA motto “Duty, Honor, Country” did not appear in the mission statement until 1998.**
- Since then, mission statement “lifespans” averaged about seven years until the current statement was implemented in 2005. (The exception to this is the 1977 mission statement, which was revised the following year).



A Message to The Long Gray Line

11 March 2024

To the Long Gray Line and all USMA Supporters:

Duty, Honor, Country is foundational to the United States Military Academy's culture and will always remain our motto. It defines who we are as an institution and as graduates of West Point. These three hallowed words are the hallmark of the cadet experience and bind the Long Gray Line together across our great history.

Our responsibility to produce leaders to fight and win our nation's wars requires us to assess ourselves regularly. Thus, over the past year and a half, working with leaders from across West Point and external stakeholders, we reviewed our vision, mission, and strategy to serve this purpose. We believe our mission binds the Academy to the Army - the Army in which our cadets will serve. As a result of this assessment, we recommended the following mission statement to our senior Army leadership:

To build, educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets to be commissioned leaders of character committed to the Army Values and ready for a lifetime of service to the Army and Nation.

Both the Secretary of the Army and Army Chief of Staff approved this recommendation.

Our updated mission statement focuses on the mission essential tasks of Build, Educate, Train, and Inspire the Corps of Cadets to be commissioned leaders of character, with the explicit purpose of being committed to the Army Values and Ready for a lifetime of service. [The Army Values](#) include Duty and Honor, and Country is reflected in Loyalty, bearing truth faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other Soldiers. In the past century, West Point's mission has changed nine times. Many graduates will recall the mission statement they learned as new cadets did not include the motto, as Duty, Honor, Country was first added to the mission statement in 1998.

Our absolute focus on developing leaders of character ready to lead our Army's Soldiers on increasingly lethal battlefields remains unchanged.

Go Army!
Duty Honor Country!

(b) (6)

LTC Steve Gilman
61st Superintendent