



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
**SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION
AND RESPONSE OFFICE**



**ANNUAL REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT THE
MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES,
ACADEMIC PROGRAM YEAR 2016-2017**
12 FEBRUARY 2018

Background

- The Department of Defense's *Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2016-2017* assesses the effectiveness of policies, training, and procedures to address sexual harassment and sexual violence at the United States Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy, and the United States Air Force Academy.
- This year's report contains observations from the Department's on-site assessment of the Military Service Academies (MSAs) and results from the *2017 Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) Focus Groups*.

Summary

Overall, DoD's assessment found that the Academies complied with policies addressing sexual assault prevention and response. However, the Air Force Academy's victim assistance efforts during the past academic program year did not comply with policy. Air Force Academy leadership has since taken action to rectify the problems it detected within its sexual assault prevention and response office.

Key Observations

- **Leadership Commitment to Preventing Sexual Assault:** The Department found Academy leadership fully engaged in efforts to reduce the occurrence of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Focus group results indicated that the Superintendents set a credible and persuasive example for cadets and midshipmen in efforts to promote dignity and respect at the Academies.
- **Continued Oversight of Victim Assistance Required:** Problems at the Air Force Academy's sexual assault prevention and response office underscore the need for greater program oversight. All three academies have well-established sexual assault response systems. Improved program oversight is the required next step in ensuring high quality victim assistance and advocacy.
- **Increased Sexual Assault Reporting:** The three Academies received a total of 112 reports of sexual assault involving cadets or midshipmen in APY 16-17, an increase from 86 reports received the previous year. Most of the reporting increase occurred at the U.S. Military Academy, following a change in reporting policy and the relocation of its victim assistance office.
- **Need for an Improved Approach to Curtailing Sexual Harassment:** The *2017 SAGR Focus Group* participants expressed confusion on what constitutes sexual harassment. They also stated that the training definition is unclear and the reporting process is confusing. The Department recommended the Academies identify new ways to better

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explain and provide support to cadets and midshipmen seeking assistance with sexual harassment.

Way Forward

- Over the past six months, the Academies have been working on plans directed by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to:
 - Promote responsible alcohol choices
 - Reinvigorate prevention
 - Enhance a culture of respect
 - Improve sexual assault and sexual harassment reporting.
- In addition, during the on-site assessment the Department identified a number of items for the Academies' action, to include:
 - Providing cadets and midshipmen with prevention skills that are both relevant to their current circumstances and their future roles as officers.
 - Enhancing preparation of military officers and senior enlisted leaders so they may more effectively promote and teach about climates of dignity and respect.
 - Enacting an oversight process for the assistance rendered by Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates.
 - Operationalizing the Department's sexual harassment definition for the academy environment and expanding services and support for cadets and midshipmen who desire assistance with addressing sexual harassment.
- Future Department assessments will review academy efforts to address the action items identified in this report, as well as their progress in executing the plans directed by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.