



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

AUG 16 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Department Actions to Transform the Climate and Help Prevent Harmful Behaviors at the U.S. Military Service Academies

The military service academies produce leaders of character who will advance the U.S. military into the future. These outstanding institutions educate and train many of our most talented rising officers. They must exemplify the highest standards of military training, from leadership development and academic excellence, to the healthy campus climates necessary to keep our future force ready and formidable.

While the service academies are dominant in many domains, they have far more work to do to halt sexual assault and harassment. Data continue to suggest that the occurrence of these crimes is trending upward. That is disturbing and unacceptable. It endangers our teammates and degrades our readiness.

On March 10, 2023, I directed the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) to conduct On-Site Installation Evaluations (OSIE) at each of the service academies to better understand these troubling trends. I have reviewed the findings of the 2023 Military Service Academy OSIE Report, which make clear that the Department must move swiftly to adjust our approach at the service academies to prevent sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful behaviors. The data suggest that the training environment and the overall climate across the service academies are undermining the academies' ability to prevent these harmful behaviors.

Reversing these trends demands transformational actions, urgently and thoughtfully implemented, with clear metrics to track progress, learn lessons, and course correct, as needed.

Accordingly, I direct the following actions:

- **Plans of Action from the Secretaries of the Military Departments.** Each Secretary of a Military Department will provide me with a plan of action to counter the trends in harmful behaviors at their respective service academies by October 31, 2023. At a minimum, those plans must incorporate the immediate implementation of the 2023 Military Service Academy OSIE Report near-term recommendations and the path to incorporate the intermediate and long-term recommendations by August 1, 2025. By January 31, 2024, and every six months thereafter, each Secretary of a Military Department will provide me a progress report, with a summary of the actions taken on their plan.

- **Establish the Service Academy Climate Transformation Task Force.** By August 25, 2023, the USD(P&R) will establish the Service Academy Climate Transformation Task Force (CTTF), composed of senior military and civilian personnel from each Military Department and additional DoD leadership members, to enhance cooperation on improving climate and integrated prevention efforts at the service academies. The CTTF will convene regular meetings to provide feedback to the Military Departments on developing plans of action to ensure best practices are adopted across the service academies and provide oversight to achieve key milestones in a timely manner. In order to drive progress, I expect the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Service Chiefs to personally meet with the CTTF to preview the Military Departments' plans of action, seek and incorporate CTTF feedback, and address barriers to change, as appropriate. Additionally, the Task Force will advise the USD(P&R) in his oversight of the actions directed in my March 10, 2023 memo on preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment at the service academies.
- **Rigorously measure and evaluate programs at the service academies to halt sexual abuse.** I direct the service academies to conduct prevention self-assessments using the Military Service Academy Self-Assessment Guide in Academic Program Year 2023-24 and every other year thereafter. I also direct the service academies to use the recently overhauled command climate assessment process to assess the impact of the implementation of Department actions on improving the climate risk factors and increasing protective factors for all cadets and midshipmen. The Defense Organizational Climate Survey benchmarks, developed by the USD(P&R), will guide their progress. Finally, beginning in Fiscal Year 2024, each service academy should leverage the Defense Organization Climate Pulse Survey to assess its interim progress and swiftly make course corrections, as needed.

Progress in combatting harmful behaviors requires constant vigilance and committed leadership. To that end, I will convene a meeting of Military Department leadership, the USD(P&R), and the service academy superintendents no later than February 15, 2024, to review each Military Department's progress toward its plans and receive an update on the work of the CTTF.

This is a difficult moment, and it must serve as a turning point for the service academies. I feel this especially strongly as a proud graduate of a service academy. We owe it to all of our cadets and midshipmen, to the troops whom they will lead, and to the American people to make determined progress toward eradicating harmful behaviors and enabling every Service member to contribute their very best each day.

We defend America as one team, and the brave Service members who volunteer to keep our country safe should themselves be safe from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other harmful behaviors. It is time to make lasting changes at our service academies, for the sake of all of our teammates and the mission that we share.

