

096079



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

~~4.17.72~~

74-0216

REFERENCE COPY

B-159219

Do not remove from the Report
Distribution Section, unless
charged out. Return promptly.

SEP 10 1973

The Honorable Birch Bayh
United States Senate



Cl
L

Dear Senator Bayh:

Your letter of March 19, 1973, requested that we investigate certain military and educational problems at the Air Force Academy. The areas of your interest were cadet attrition, policies on drug abuse, administrative punishment, and faculty tenure. We have informally provided your staff with information on each of these areas and on attrition rates at the other military academies. This information is summarized below.

CADET ATTRITION

During the past 5 years, Air Force Academy cadet attrition has ranged from a low of 28 percent to a high of 40 percent. Academy officials said that the attrition rate for the class of 1974 may reach 46 percent.

<u>Graduating class</u>	<u>Attrition rate</u> (note a)
1969	35%
1970	28
1971	33
1972	40
1973	40

^aPercent of entering cadets leaving sometime during the 4 years the class was at the Academy.

We are reviewing this area further to identify more specifically the causes for attrition and to determine what changes might be made to minimize the number of cadets dropping out. We have broadened the scope of our review to include all service academies and to obtain data on attrition experienced by civilian institutions. We plan to use a questionnaire that was developed with the assistance of your staff. The questionnaire will first be tested by sending it to a small group of cadets at the various academies. After the test results have been received and analyzed and any necessary changes have been made, the questionnaire will be sent to several thousand

~~701668~~ 096079

B-159219

current and former cadets of the academies. We believe the responses will identify the major causes of attrition and will provide the basis for an objective report to the Congress.

POLICIES TOWARD DRUG ABUSE

The Air Force Academy policy stipulates that the sale, transfer, use, or possession of drugs by a cadet will result in his disenrollment. Since 1967, 44 cadets have been disenrolled for some form of drug involvement.

Rumors or accusations of drug involvement are reviewed by the commandant of cadets. If the charges are substantiated, he asks the Air Force Office of Special Investigation to investigate. A cadet identified by that Office as being involved with drugs has two options: (1) he may resign or (2) he may have his case heard by a board of officers (this option has never been taken). At the time of our review, the Academy's procedures did not provide for a psychiatric evaluation and possible rehabilitation of these cadets before discharge from the Air Force.

ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENT

Any failure to meet cadet wing standards of conduct, whether through design, ignorance, neglect, carelessness, or failure to perform duty, is an offense which results in administrative punishment. Major breaches of conduct are referred to the commandant's disciplinary board for action.

In April 1971 certain authorities and responsibilities in the administration of cadet discipline and conduct were shifted from officers to cadets, on the basis that the qualities of leadership could be developed most meaningfully by giving the cadets actual experience in leadership roles. Cadets became members of the commandant's disciplinary board and of most other boards and committees advising the commandant. Also in 1971 the regulations concerning administrative punishment were revised to provide recommended standard punishments by type of offense and to place restrictions on the disciplinary board. These regulations were again revised in December 1972 to make the punishments, especially for major offenses, more explicit and generally more severe.

FACULTY TENURE

Faculty members are usually assigned to the Academy for 4-year tours. The Academy is authorized to appoint 10 percent of the total authorized faculty to tenure status. A tour of

B-159219

duty for a faculty tenure appointment before 1968 terminates after 20 years of active commissioned duty. Tenure appointments after January 1, 1968, are 4-year tours with possible 4-year renewals. A faculty member generally serves a 4-year tour at the Academy before a tenure appointment.

Tour extensions are recommended by department heads and approved by the dean of faculty and the Academy Superintendent. Extensions beyond 1 year are approved by Air Force headquarters.

In a letter to faculty and staff dated June 8, 1972, the Academy Superintendent made the following comments regarding tour extension requests:

"Commanders and supervisors should view extensions of tours on an exception basis rather than a normal course of action and must consider the whole man in formulating an appropriate recommendation."

* * * * *

"As a minimum, factors to be considered should include job performance, bearing and behavior, loyalty to organization, support of community activities and support of Academy activities encompassing but not limited to youth groups, clubs, Cadet Wing, etc."

We interviewed the heads of four academic departments to determine what criteria, besides teaching performance, they considered in tour extension requests. All four said the Academy's need for the individual's academic discipline is the major factor considered.

The dean of faculty said that, normally, faculty members interested in tour extensions submit written requests after discussion of their desires and the needs of the Academy with their department heads. He said also that policies relating to tours are applied differently to faculty members who are Air Force Academy graduates, because Academy graduates are in a position to instill cadets with motivation for an Air Force career and, therefore, must set an example. Requests for tour extensions by Academy graduates, as well as their actions while they are faculty members, receive greater review.

We trust this information satisfies your request.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States