



# MILITARY EDUCATION

## Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Life at the Military Academies

Highlights of [GAO-03-1001](#), a report to the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

### Why GAO Did This Study

The Army, Navy, and Air Force each operate an academy to educate and train young men and women to become leaders and effective junior officers in the military services. The approximately 4,000 students who attend each academy undergo a challenging 4-year program of academic, physical, and military education that culminates in a bachelor's degree and a commission as a military officer. In addition to completing academic course work, students must participate in rigorous military training and in mandatory athletic activities. In return for their free education, these students must serve on active duty for 5 years after graduation. In two reports, GAO reviewed all three service academies and their preparatory schools. In this report, GAO surveyed students and faculty to obtain their perceptions of various aspects of student life at the academies.

GAO conducted a Web-based survey of 12,264 students and 2,065 faculty members at the three service academies on questions related to such student life issues as academic and military programs; gender- and race-/ethnicity-based discrimination and harassment; and preferential treatment. GAO's survey did not query students and faculty on specific incidents of alleged sexual assault at the academies. We are making no recommendations in this report. DOD reviewed a draft of this report and had no comments.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1001](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1001).

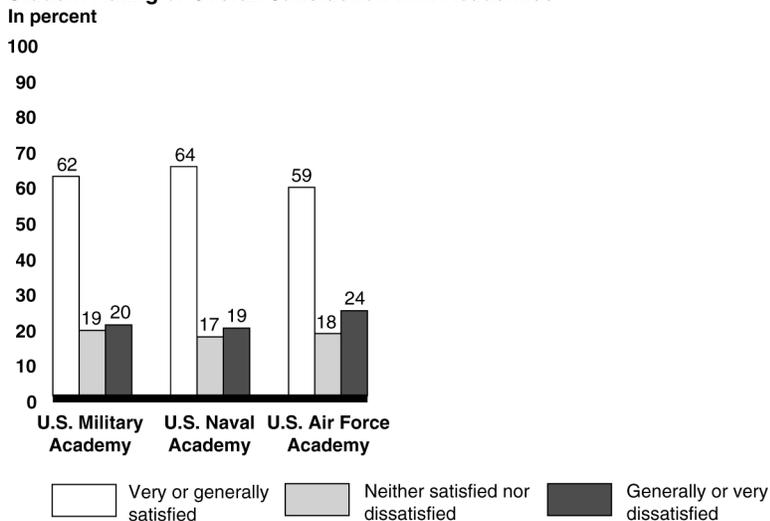
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Derek Stewart at (202) 512-5559 or [stewartd@gao.gov](mailto:stewartd@gao.gov).

### What GAO Found

The majority of students who responded to GAO's survey expressed overall satisfaction with their academy, although students gave wide-ranging responses to a variety of quality-of-life questions. About 59 percent of students at the Military and Naval Academies and 71 percent at the Air Force Academy reported that quality-of-life problems are openly confronted and/or solved to some, little, or no extent. Over 90 percent of students rated their academic programs as good or excellent. About a quarter to a third of students rated their academy's performance standards for developing military officers as too low. Most differences in student responses on academy emphasis on prevention of gender- and race-/ethnicity-based discrimination and harassment were generally between male and female students and minorities and nonminority students. Over 80 percent of students who were not recruited as athletes responded that recruited athletes receive preferential treatment during the admissions process.

The faculty members who responded to the survey generally agreed with the students' perceptions of student life at the academies, but they were less likely than students to say that quality-of-life problems are seldom openly confronted and/or solved. About a quarter to a third of faculty agreed with student perceptions that performance standards for developing military officers were too low. Faculty perceptions varied on issues associated with gender- and race-/ethnicity-based discrimination and harassment and preferential treatment. More than 90 percent of faculty who participated in the admissions process in the past 4 years at the Military and Naval Academies and 72 percent at the Air Force Academy responded that recruited athletes receive preferential treatment during the admissions process.

**Student Rating of Overall Satisfaction with Academies**



Source: GAO.