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Washington, DC 20548

February 27, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives

Subject: Military Education: Additional DOD Guidance Is Needed to Enhance Oversight of the Service Academies and Their Preparatory Schools

The Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force each have their own service academies that produce a portion of the officer corps for the nation's armed forces. Each academy also operates its own preparatory school, which exists to prepare select students for admission to the academies. The Department of Defense (DOD) invests a significant amount of taxpayer dollars in these institutions. According to the most recently available DOD information, the academies and preparatory schools cost more than \$1.6 billion to operate during fiscal year 2010. To ensure the best value for the taxpayers' investment in the academies and preparatory schools, effective management principles are critical. These principles include establishing a complete oversight framework, which includes performance goals and quantifiable measures that are linked to clear statements of the organization's mission.

Over the past two decades, we have issued many products to help inform congressional oversight of the academies and preparatory schools in response to congressional inquiries regarding these institutions.¹ In 2002, the House of Representatives report on defense appropriations for fiscal year 2003² directed us to review DOD's oversight of the academies and the preparatory schools, and in September 2003 we issued two reports,³ containing four

¹See the Related GAO Products section at the end of this report for a list of these products.

²H.R. Rep. No. 107-532, at 14-15 (2002).

³See GAO, *Military Education: DOD Needs to Enhance Performance Goals and Measures to Improve Oversight of Military Academies*, GAO-03-1000 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2003), and *Military Education: DOD Needs to Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements with Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals*, GAO-03-1017 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2003). The House report also directed GAO to survey students and faculty to obtain their perceptions of various aspects of student life at the academies, and in September 2003 GAO also reported on the results of its student and faculty surveys. See GAO, *Military Education: Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Life at the Military Academies*, GAO-03-1001 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 12, 2003).

recommendations. In our report on the academies, we recommended that DOD enhance its performance goals and measures to improve oversight of the academies' operations and performance. In our report on the preparatory schools, we recommended that DOD (1) clarify the mission statements for the preparatory schools, (2) establish performance goals and quantifiable measures for the schools, and (3) use performance goals and quantifiable measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the schools. DOD concurred with each of the recommendations we made in these two reports. See enclosures I and II for the Highlights pages of those reports. In 2011, the Senate Armed Services Committee directed us to assess the extent to which DOD has implemented the recommendations contained in our September 2003 reports.⁴

To determine the extent to which DOD has implemented our September 2003 recommendations, we assessed whether each recommendation was implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented. To arrive at these assessments we used the following criteria:

- *Implemented:* All actions necessary to implement the recommendation were completed.
- *Partially implemented:* Some, but not all, actions necessary to implement the recommendation were completed.
- *Not implemented:* Minimal or no actions necessary to implement the recommendation were completed.

To collect information on which we based our assessments, we submitted written questions to and received written responses from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD (P&R)) and the Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. We also interviewed knowledgeable officials from OUSD (P&R) and from each of these services, as well as from DOD's Office of General Counsel; reviewed DOD's and each of the service's policies and guidance on the academies and preparatory schools; and reviewed various pertinent documents, such as the results of the services' assessments of the academies and preparatory schools for fiscal years 2009 and 2010, the most recent available. In addition, we reviewed our previous findings and recommendations. We evaluated whether DOD had taken action to establish performance goals and quantifiable measures. However, we did not evaluate the quality or appropriateness of any such goals or measures. We conducted this performance audit from September 2011 through February 2012 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

Background

The Service Academies and Preparatory Schools

The U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, and U.S. Air Force Academy each operate 4-year programs that provide successful candidates with bachelor's degrees and commissions as military officers. In addition to completing their academic courses, the officer candidates who attend the academies each year participate in rigorous military training activities and mandatory athletic activities. In return for their free education, the graduates must serve on active duty for 5 years after graduation. Each academy also

⁴Sen. Rep. No. 112-26, at 119 (2011).

operates its own preparatory school.⁵ The U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School, U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School, and U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School serve as an alternative means for entrance into the academies. Academy officials screen all applicants and identify those who they believe could succeed at the academies but who would benefit from more preparation. The preparatory schools offer a 10-month course of instruction that combines academic instruction, physical conditioning, and an orientation to military life. Emphasis is placed on giving each candidate as much tutorial assistance as is necessary to maximize the individual's potential for success. The student body at each school is organized into a military unit with a student chain of command that is advised by commissioned and noncommissioned officers. This structure is intended to provide students with exposure to military discipline and order.

A Complete Oversight Framework

Our prior work on the academies and preparatory schools has noted that a complete oversight framework includes multiple elements such as performance goals and quantifiable measures that are linked to clear statements of the organization's mission. To carry out effective oversight, organizations track achievements; compare those achievements with plans, goals, and objectives; and analyze the differences between planned results and actual performance. The interrelationship of these elements is essential for accountability and proper stewardship of government resources, and for achieving effective and efficient program results. Without stated performance goals and quantifiable measures that are linked to mission statements, oversight bodies do not have sufficient focus for their activities and cannot systematically assess an organization's strengths and weaknesses or identify appropriate remedies to achieve the best value for the investment in the organization.

Oversight of the Academies and Preparatory Schools

Oversight of the academies is the responsibility of three principal organizations: OUSD (P&R), the service headquarters, and the board of visitors of each academy. DOD's policies and guidance for the academies are contained in DOD Directive 1322.22,⁶ and under DOD's policy, OUSD (P&R) serves as the DOD focal point for matters affecting the academies and has responsibility for assessing academy operations and establishing the department's policy and guidance for uniform oversight and management of the academies. Within OUSD (P&R), the Accession Policy Directorate performs these oversight responsibilities. Each service's headquarters also oversees its respective academy. The superintendents of the academies report directly to the uniformed heads of their respective services (the Chiefs of Staff for the Army and the Air Force and the Chief of Naval Operations for the Navy), in accordance with the chain of command for each service. Each academy also has a board of visitors, established by law,⁷ which consists of congressional members and presidential appointees. These boards focus attention and action on a wide range of operational and quality of life issues at the academies. The academies perform the primary DOD oversight function for their respective preparatory schools.

⁵The U.S. Military Academy and U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School are co-located at West Point, New York. The U.S. Naval Academy is located in Annapolis, Maryland, and the U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School is located in Newport, Rhode Island. The U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School are co-located in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

⁶Department of Defense Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies* (Aug. 24, 1994).

⁷10 U.S.C. §§ 4355, 6968, and 9355.

DOD Has Partially Implemented Our September 2003 Recommendations regarding Oversight of the Service Academies and Their Preparatory Schools

While DOD, collectively, has partially implemented each of our four recommendations regarding the service academies and their preparatory schools, the actions taken by the services vary significantly. In addition, OUSD (P&R) has not yet updated its guidance for the academies and preparatory schools to address our 2003 recommendations. Table 1 summarizes the four recommendations we made in September 2003 regarding the academies and their preparatory schools and the status of DOD's implementation.

Table 1: GAO's September 2003 Recommendations, the Status of Implementation, and Actions Taken

Recommendations	Status of implementation and actions taken
Recommendation regarding the service academies	
Further enhance performance goals and measures whereby the information required in annual assessment reports can be better evaluated.	<i>Partially implemented:</i> The Air Force and the Navy have established performance goals and measures for their respective academies, but the Army has not.
Recommendations regarding the preparatory schools	
Clarify the preparatory schools' mission statements by aligning these statements with the department's guidance and the academies' expectations.	<i>Partially implemented:</i> The Air Force has clarified the mission statement of its preparatory school, but the Army and Navy have not.
Establish performance goals and quantifiable measures, linked with the schools' mission statements.	<i>Partially implemented:</i> OUSD (P&R) has not established performance goals and quantifiable measures across the services; the Air Force, however, has taken independent action that is consistent with the intent our recommendation.
Enhance the existing oversight framework by using performance goals and quantifiable measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools.	<i>Partially implemented:</i> The Air Force is using performance goals and quantifiable measures to evaluate the performance of its preparatory school, but the Army and Navy are not.

Source: GAO analysis.

The Air Force and the Navy Have Established Performance Goals and Measures for Their Academies, but the Army Has Not

Performance goals and quantifiable measures are key components of a complete oversight framework; they allow an agency to track its progress in achieving intended results. Assessing performance against stated goals and quantifiable measures can help inform management decisions about such issues as the need to redirect resources or shift priorities. In our 2003 report on the academies,⁸ we noted that although OUSD (P&R) and the services used the number and type of commissioned officers as the primary means of measuring the military academies' performance, there were few stated goals against which to assess that performance. We noted that OUSD (P&R) required the services to provide it with information on current and past performance for academy operations, but we also observed that apart from officer accession goals—that is, the number and types of commissioned officers—neither OUSD (P&R) nor the services had specific, stated performance goals against which to judge the adequacy of the academies' performance. Consequently, we recommended that DOD improve its oversight of the operations and performance of the academies through the enhancement of performance goals and measures.

Since we issued our report in 2003, the Air Force and the Navy have established performance goals and measures for their academies, while the Army has not done so. In its concurrence with our recommendation in 2003, OUSD (P&R) stated that it would monitor the development of improved goals and measures by the academies. In its written response to

⁸GAO-03-1000.

our questions for the present review, OUSD (P&R) stated that following issuance of our reports in 2003, it had convened a working group that included representatives from the services to begin addressing our recommendations, and that the services had agreed to develop ideas to implement our recommendation regarding the academies. In 2005, the Air Force issued guidance⁹ establishing a performance measurement program for the Air Force Academy designed to provide insight into the academy's admissions and general governance. As part of its program the Air Force identified numerous performance measurement indicators, such as those for attrition and disenrollments, and the Air Force has collected, analyzed, and reported data on these performance measures each subsequent academic year. In 2007, the Navy established as a goal for midshipmen entering the Naval Academy as members of the class of 2013 that a minimum of 65 percent of midshipmen choosing a Navy commission would complete a technical degree program—that is, major in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics—before receiving their commission (graduating).¹⁰ However, apart from officer accession goals on which we reported in 2003, the Army has not established performance goals for the U.S. Military Academy that meet the intent of our recommendation.

In its concurrence with our recommendation in 2003, OUSD (P&R) also stated that it would update its policy for the academies as required. DOD's policies and guidance for the academies are contained in DOD Directive 1322.22,¹¹ and it assigns OUSD (P&R) responsibility for establishing policy and guidance for the uniform oversight and management of the academies. However, OUSD (P&R) has not yet updated this guidance to direct the department's actions with respect to addressing the intent of our recommendation. During our review, OUSD (P&R) officials told us they hoped to issue a revision to the department's guidance for the academies in 2012. Further, our review of a draft of that guidance found that it does not establish performance goals and measures for the academies, nor does it specify how OUSD (P&R) and the services will evaluate the academies using such goals and measures. Without such guidance, the services will continue to lack clear direction regarding actions that could improve their oversight of the academies through the enhancement of performance goals and measures. As we reported in 2003, without stated goals and measures, OUSD (P&R) and the services will not be able to systematically assess the academies' strengths and weaknesses or to identify appropriate remedies that would facilitate their achieving the best value for the investment in these institutions.

The Air Force Has Clarified the Mission Statement for Its Preparatory School, but the Army and Navy Have Not

Mission statements should define an organization's purpose in language that states desired outcomes. In our 2003 report on the preparatory schools,¹² we noted that the preparatory schools' mission statements did not clearly articulate the purpose for which the schools were being used by the academies. As we observed in that report, the academies expected that the preparatory schools would enhance diversity at the academies and that the preparatory schools existed to help the academies meet their diversity needs. The preparatory schools' mission statements, however, did not explicitly state this purpose and referred instead to preparing "selected personnel who meet special needs," "selected candidates," or "candidates" for admission to and success at the academies. This omission represents a

⁹Air Force Instruction 36-3502, *Performance Measurement Program for United States Air Force Academy* (Mar. 10, 2005).

¹⁰Graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy receive a commission in either the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps.

¹¹DOD Directive 1322.22 (Aug. 24, 1994).

¹²GAO-03-1017.

continuing issue, which we first reported in 1992.¹³ Without transparency in their mission statements, the academies and their respective preparatory schools were unable to establish goals that fully reflected the preparatory schools' intended purpose. Therefore, we recommended that OUSD (P&R) clarify the preparatory schools' mission statements by aligning these statements with the department's guidance and the academies' expectations. DOD concurred with this recommendation in its response to our report.

However, only the Air Force has clarified the mission statement for its preparatory school. In 2006, the Air Force revised its statement to indicate that one of the school's missions was to enhance diversity at the Air Force Academy. Although both the Army and the Navy revised the mission statements for their preparatory schools since our 2003 review, these revisions simply capture what students who attend them can expect of the schools. The Army and the Navy have not clarified the mission statements of their preparatory schools, as our recommendation intended, in a manner that articulates the purpose for which these two schools are being used by their respective academies. Table 2 shows a comparison of each preparatory school's mission statement at the time of our 2003 review and that of our present review. We have bolded key words and phrases for emphasis.

Table 2: Comparison of 2003 and Current Service Academy Preparatory School Mission Statements

Service academy preparatory school	2003 mission statement	Current mission statement
Air Force	To prepare, motivate, and evaluate for admission to and success at the Air Force Academy selected personnel who meet the special needs of the Air Force.	To motivate, prepare, and evaluate selected candidates in an educational, military, moral, and physical environment, to perform successfully and enhance diversity at the U.S. Air Force Academy.
Army	To provide academic, military, and physical instruction in a moral-ethical military environment to prepare and motivate candidates for success at the U.S. Military Academy.	To provide focused academic, military, and physical instruction in a moral-ethical environment to prepare, motivate, and inspire candidates for success at the U.S. Military Academy.
Navy	To prepare selected candidates morally, mentally, and physically, with emphasis on strengthening the academic foundation of individual candidates for officer accession through the U.S. Naval, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine Academies.	To enhance midshipman candidates' moral, mental, and physical foundations to prepare them for success at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Sources: GAO and DOD.

Note: Key words and phrases are bolded for emphasis.

OUSD (P&R) has not updated its guidance clarifying the mission of the preparatory schools. DOD Directive 1322.22 states that the mission of the academy preparatory schools is to prepare "selected candidates" for admission who are judged to need additional academic preparation, so that they will be able to perform successfully as cadets or midshipmen. In our review of DOD's draft guidance, we found that it continues to state that the mission of the preparatory schools is to provide enhanced opportunities for "selected candidates" to be admitted to the academies. Without guidance that clarifies the mission of the preparatory schools, the services will continue to lack clear direction toward facilitating transparency in the preparatory schools' mission statements, and thus will be hampered in establishing goals that fully reflect the schools' intended purpose.

¹³GAO, *DOD Service Academies: Academy Preparatory Schools Need a Clearer Mission and Better Oversight*, GAO/NSIAD-92-57 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 13, 1992).

OUSD (P&R) Has Not Institutionalized Performance Goals and Quantifiable Measures for the Preparatory Schools

A complete oversight framework includes tracking achievements in comparison with plans, goals, and objectives and analyzing the differences between planned results and actual performance. In our 2003 report on the preparatory schools, we noted that OUSD (P&R) and the services received annual reports from the academies on preparatory school performance, but that without performance goals and measures, the reports were limited in the information they were able to provide OUSD (P&R), the services, or the academies on the preparatory schools' performance. Without specific performance goals, there was no objective yardstick against which to gauge preparatory school effectiveness. We consequently recommended that DOD establish performance goals and quantifiable measures linked with the schools' mission statements. DOD concurred with this recommendation in its response to our report.

However, OUSD (P&R) has not established performance goals and quantifiable measures across the services, though we note that the Air Force has taken independent action that is consistent with the intent of our recommendation. In 2004, the DOD working group we discussed earlier met and developed two performance goals and quantifiable measures for the preparatory schools. These measures and goals are as follows:

- *Preparatory school-to-academy entrance ratio*: The ratio of the number of preparatory school students entering an academy to the number that entered the preparatory school for that academy should be greater than 70 percent.
- *Preparatory student versus direct appointee graduation rate*: Preparatory school students' academy graduation rate will not lag behind the graduation rate for those students who were directly appointed to the academy by more than 5 percent.

The group identified these measures by stating and defining them in e-mail correspondence. However, OUSD (P&R) has not issued guidance that would institutionalize the goals and measures across the services, such as by providing clear direction regarding the performance goals and measures or making documentation other than e-mail correspondence about them available to the services. We note that the Air Force did issue guidance in 2005 specifying its expectations and requirements for the performance goals and measures that DOD's working group established, but Army and Navy officials told us they had not done so. Without institutionalizing the goals and measures and formally communicating them to the services, the department cannot provide reasonable assurance that each of the services can track or calculate the measures successfully.

The Air Force Is Using Performance Goals and Quantifiable Measures to Evaluate the Performance of Its Preparatory School, but the Army and Navy Are Not

As discussed earlier, performance goals and quantifiable measures constitute key components of a complete oversight framework. In our 2003 report on the preparatory schools, we noted that the academies exercised direct oversight of their respective preparatory schools and monitored the schools' performance. We also observed, however, that it was difficult to evaluate how effective the preparatory schools had been in accomplishing their missions because the academies were not using performance goals and quantifiable measures to evaluate the performance of the schools. Without using goals that were linked to clear mission statements, OUSD (P&R), the service headquarters, and the academies did not have an objective basis by which to judge the effectiveness of the preparatory schools' performance. We consequently recommended that OUSD (P&R) enhance the existing oversight framework by using performance goals and quantifiable measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools. DOD

concluded with this recommendation in its response to our report and stated that it would revise DOD Directive 1322.22.

However, only the Air Force has used the performance goals and quantifiable measures that the DOD working group developed to evaluate the performance of its preparatory school—the Army and Navy have not. In 2004, DOD’s working group agreed that each of the services would evaluate the performance of its respective preparatory school using the two performance measures that the group developed. The Air Force has collected, analyzed, and reported information on these goals and measures as part of its performance measurement program since 2005. The Air Force has also issued semiannual reports to Air Force leadership that includes information for these quantified measures, as well as evaluations of the performance of its preparatory school against the performance goals. In contrast, while the Army and the Navy monitor data for the quantifiable measures—for example, the Army and the Navy have provided information regarding these measures in their reports to OUSD (P&R)—neither evaluates the performance of its preparatory school against the performance goals that the working group established. OUSD (P&R) stated in its response to our 2003 report that it would revise DOD guidance to address this recommendation. However, OUSD (P&R)’s current draft guidance does not require the services to use performance goals and quantifiable measures to objectively evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools. Without specifying its expectations and requirements for using performance goals and quantifiable measures to assess the performance of the preparatory schools, the department will continue to lack an objective basis with which to judge the effectiveness of the preparatory schools in accomplishing their mission.

Conclusions

After we issued our 2003 reports, OUSD (P&R) and the services took steps to address our recommendations and, by mid-2004, had made some progress in implementing them. However, more than 7 years later, DOD has not fully implemented any of the recommendations. We maintain, as we noted in 2003, that clear mission statements, along with performance goals and quantifiable measures, are critical to providing the department with an objective yardstick against which to assess the performance of the academies and preparatory schools. In the current environment of increasing budgetary pressures, where programs and initiatives must compete for resources, it is critical that the department take steps to ensure that it is achieving the best value for the nation’s investment in the academies and preparatory schools. However, excepting the actions taken by the Air Force, the department has not demonstrated a sustained commitment to establishing goals and measuring performance against them. Until OUSD (P&R) issues updated guidance that provides the services with clear direction regarding the actions they should take to address the intent of our prior recommendations, DOD will continue to lack the tools necessary to determine the effectiveness of these institutions.

Recommendations for Executive Action

Because DOD has not fully implemented the recommendations contained in our 2003 reports, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to issue updated guidance to take the following four actions:

- establish performance goals and quantifiable measures for the service academies, and specify the department’s expectations and requirements regarding how OUSD (P&R) and the services will use the performance goals and quantifiable measures to evaluate the performance of the academies;

- clarify the preparatory schools' mission and direct the service academies to align their expectations of and mission statements for their preparatory schools with that mission;
- institutionalize performance goals and quantifiable measures that are linked with the preparatory school's mission, to include making documentation about them available to the services; and
- specify the department's expectations and requirements regarding how OUSD (P&R) and the services will use the performance goals and quantifiable measures to evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools.

Agency Comments

In written comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with our conclusion and with each of our four recommendations. In its comments, DOD stated that it intended to address our recommendations in an update to DOD Directive 1322.22 and estimated that it would complete this update by December 2012. DOD's comments are reprinted in enclosure III.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees; the Secretaries of Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; and the (Acting) Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions on this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov. Key contributors to this report are listed in enclosure IV. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report.



Brenda S. Farrell
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

Enclosures - 4



Highlights of GAO-03-1000, a report to the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Graduates of the service academies operated by the Army, Navy, and Air Force currently make up approximately 18 percent of the officer corps for the nation's armed services. The academies represent the military's most expensive source of new officers. The Department of Defense (DOD) pays the full cost of a student's 4-year education at the academies; and the related cost has increased over the past 4 years. Admission to the academies is highly competitive. The academies use a "whole person" method to make admission decisions. Recent studies by the Air Force raised questions about possible adverse effects of whole person admissions policies on student quality. GAO was asked to review all three service academies and specifically address the extent to which (1) DOD oversees the service academies, (2) applicants are granted waivers of academic standards, and (3) various groups of students differ in admissions scores and academy performance.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD/P&R), in concert with the services, to further enhance performance goals and measures to improve oversight of the operations and performance of the service academies. In comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with GAO's recommendation.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1000.

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.

September 2003

MILITARY EDUCATION

DOD Needs to Enhance Performance Goals and Measures to Improve Oversight of Military Academies

What GAO Found

The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD/P&R), the services, and the academies' boards of visitors conduct considerable oversight of the academies' operations and performance, but they lack a complete oversight framework. A complete oversight framework includes performance goals and measures against which the academies' performance could be better assessed. OUSD/P&R and the services use the number and type of commissioned officers as the primary measure of academy performance. OUSD/P&R requires and receives reports on academy performance from the services. While data submitted in these reports provide perspective on current performance compared with past performance, without stated performance goals and measures, these reports do not offer OUSD/P&R or the services as good an insight into the academies performance as they could. Additionally, though the academy boards of visitors serve as an external oversight mechanism to focus attention on a wide range of issues, they also do not assess the academies' performance against established performance goals and measures.

The academies do not grant waivers from academic criteria or have absolute minimum scores for admission. However, under the whole person approach, the academies can admit some applicants whose academic scores are lower than might normally be competitive for admission, but who in their totality (academics, physical aptitude, and leadership) are evaluated by academy officials as being capable of succeeding at the academy.

In our review of the academy classes that started in 1998 (class of 2002), we found that despite differences among various groups of students in their admissions scores and similar differences in their performance while at the academies, the differences in performance were not sizable. Some groups, such as females, performed better in some categories than the class as a whole and worse in others. Some groups (minorities, preparatory school graduates, recruited athletes, and students in the lower 30 percent of their class in terms of academic admissions scores) performed at lower levels on average in all categories than the class as a whole.

Academy Operating Costs and Cost Per Graduate, Fiscal Years 1999-2002					
Academy	Cost category	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002
Military Academy	Total operating costs	\$301,058,452	\$330,603,820	\$336,416,716	\$364,971,975
	Cost per graduate	312,150	320,120	339,318	349,327
Naval Academy	Total operating costs	245,749,679	253,817,467	273,809,865	292,696,358
	Cost per graduate	254,983	256,931	266,033	275,001
Air Force Academy	Total operating costs	277,639,005	314,972,559	321,335,152	333,056,023
	Cost per graduate	305,945	305,133	313,456	322,750

Source: DOD.

United States General Accounting Office



Highlights of GAO-03-1017, a report to the Subcommittee on Defense, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Each year, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Military Academy, and the U.S. Naval Academy combined spend tens of millions of dollars to operate preparatory schools that provide an alternative avenue for about 700 students annually to gain admission to the service academies. Service academy officials screen all applicants to identify those who they believe could succeed at the academies but who would benefit from more preparation. The Department of Defense (DOD) pays the full cost of providing this preparation. GAO was asked to review the three service academy preparatory schools, and this report specifically assesses (1) the adequacy of their current mission statements, (2) the effectiveness of these schools in accomplishing their missions, and (3) the effectiveness of DOD oversight of these schools.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct DOD, in concert with the services and the service academies, to align the preparatory schools' mission statements with DOD guidance and the academies' expectations; establish quantified performance goals and measures for the schools; and enhance the existing oversight framework for assessing the schools' performance. In commenting on a draft of this report, DOD agreed with the recommendations.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-1017.

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

September 2003

MILITARY EDUCATION

DOD Needs to Align Academy Preparatory Schools' Mission Statements with Overall Guidance and Establish Performance Goals

What GAO Found

The three service academy preparatory schools' current mission statements do not clearly articulate the purpose for which the schools are being used by their respective service academies. In accordance with DOD guidance and the service academies' expectations, the preparatory schools give primary consideration for enrollment to enlisted personnel, minorities, women, and recruited athletes. However, the preparatory school mission statements are not clearly aligned with DOD guidance and the academies' expectations. This is a continuing problem, which GAO first reported in 1992. Without clear mission statements, the service academies and their respective preparatory schools cannot establish goals that fully reflect the preparatory schools' intended purpose.

It is difficult to evaluate how effective the preparatory schools have been in accomplishing their missions because the service academies have not established performance goals for the preparatory schools. Without specific performance goals, there is no objective yardstick against which to gauge preparatory school effectiveness, as would be consistent with the principle of best practices for ensuring optimal return on investment.

The effectiveness of DOD, military service, and service academy oversight is limited because the existing oversight framework for assessing preparatory school performance does not include performance goals and measures against which to objectively assess performance. DOD and the services receive annual reports from the academies on preparatory school performance. Without stated performance goals and measures, however, the reports do not offer DOD, the services, or the service academies as good an insight into the preparatory schools' performance and their return on investment as they could.

Academy Preparatory School Operating Costs and Cost Per Graduate, Fiscal Years 1999-2002

Academy preparatory school	Cost category	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002
U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	\$6,381,169	\$5,385,619	\$5,628,625	\$5,459,059
	Cost per graduate	36,673	32,057	30,425	30,842
U.S. Military Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	6,544,277	6,993,648	7,087,020	7,325,311
	Cost per graduate	34,263	35,144	38,727	41,859
U.S. Naval Academy Preparatory School	Total operating costs	7,212,997	8,136,649	8,549,809	9,395,421
	Cost per graduate	35,015	43,982	42,117	40,850

Source: DOD.

United States General Accounting Office

Enclosure III: Comments from the Department of Defense



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

FEB 16 2012

Ms. Brenda S. Farrell
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U. S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Farrell:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report, GAO-12-327R, "Military Education: Additional Defense Department Guidance Is Needed to Enhance Oversight of the Service Academies and their Preparatory Schools," dated January 31, 2012 (GAO Code 351663).

The Department concurs with the draft report's conclusion that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in concert with the Services, should further implement enhance performance goals and measures for the Service academies and the corresponding preparatory schools.

The lack of specific published performance goals in precise areas such as graduation or attrition rates prevents full analysis of these institutions' performance. Therefore, performance goals should be developed and published for each academy and, where appropriate, in common for all academies to address these issues.

The enclosure addresses the specific recommendation made by the GAO. The Department appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curtis L. Gilroy".

Curtis L. Gilroy
Director Accession Policy

Enclosure:
As stated

GAO DRAFT REPORT DATED JANUARY 31, 2012
GAO-12-3327R (GAO CODE 351663)

**“MILITARY EDUCATION: ADDITIONAL DEFENSE DEPARTMENT
GUIDANCE IS NEEDED TO ENHANCE OVERSIGHT OF THE SERVICE
ACADEMIES AND THEIR PREPARATORY SCHOOLS”**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
TO THE GAO RECOMMENDATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION 1: Because DOD has not fully implemented the recommendations contained in GAO’s 2003 reports, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to issue updated guidance to establish performance goals and quantifiable measures for the service academies, and specify the department’s expectations and requirements regarding how OUSD (P&R) and the services will use the performance goals and quantifiable measures to evaluate the performance of the academies.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The issuance of better measures by OUSD(P&R) in conjunction with the Military Departments will assist in assessing the Service Academies performance. OUSD(P&R) will work with the Military Departments to incorporate goals and measures for the Service academies in the updated Department of Defense Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies*. Estimated Completions Date: December 2012

RECOMMENDATION 2: Because DOD has not fully implemented the recommendations contained in GAO’s 2003 reports, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to issue updated guidance to clarify the preparatory schools’ mission and direct the service academies to align their expectations of and mission statements for their preparatory schools with that mission.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The issuance of better measures by OUSD(P&R) in conjunction with the Military Departments will assist in assessing the Service Academies’ preparatory schools performance. OUSD(P&R) will work with the Military Departments to incorporate preparatory school mission statement guidance in the updated Department of Defense Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies*. Estimated Completions Date: December 2012

RECOMMENDATION 3: Because DOD has not fully implemented the recommendations contained in GAO's 2003 reports, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to issue updated guidance to institutionalize performance goals and quantifiable measures that are linked with the preparatory school's mission, to include making documentation about them available to the services.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The issuance of better measures by OUSD(P&R) in conjunction with the Military Departments will assist in assessing the Service Academies' preparatory schools performance. OUSD(P&R) will work with the Military Departments to revise the agreed upon performance goals and quantifiable measures established in the 2004-2005 working group. Further, the goals will be linked with the preparatory school's mission and included in the updated Department of Defense Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies*. Estimated Completions Date: December 2012

RECOMMENDATION 4: Because DOD has not fully implemented the recommendations contained in GAO's 2003 reports, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to issue updated guidance to specify the department's expectations and requirements regarding how OUSD (P&R) and the services will use the performance goals and quantifiable measures to evaluate the performance of the preparatory schools.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The issuance of better measures by OUSD(P&R) in conjunction with the Military Departments will assist in assessing the Service Academies' preparatory school performance. OUSD(P&R) will update and publish Department of Defense Directive 1322.22, *Service Academies*, as required. Estimated Completions Date: December 2012

Enclosure IV: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Brenda S. Farrell, at (202) 512-3604 or farrellb@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, key contributors to this report include David E. Moser, Assistant Director; Wesley A. Johnson; James P. Klein; Michael Silver; Cheryl A. Weissman; and K. Nicole Willems.

Related GAO Products

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