August 14, 2020

Dear Parents of the United States Military Academy Corps of Cadets,

Your sons and daughters have been busy with summer training, both in the field and in the classroom, and now the academic year is upon us! You should be very proud of all they accomplished these past few months. Health, safety, and wellness remain our number one priority as we head into this academic year. The staff and faculty have been hard at work all summer to ensure we are providing a safe and world-class educational experience for everyone. COVID-19 has forced us to identify creative pedagogical practices to achieve these goals, and I believe that we are an improved academic institution, and we, as faculty, are better teachers because of these challenges.

For the Academic Year 2021, the West Point academic program will be conducted through a mix of in-person, hybrid, and fully remote courses. These modalities will allow for about one half of classes to be held in-person, over a third as some form of hybrid incorporating both synchronous and asynchronous activities as well as in person and remote engagements, and the remainder of classes will be mostly remote. Regardless of these changes in classroom locations, cadets will be assigned to small section sizes, and they will continue to have one-on-one access to their instructors. There is intentional flexibility built into the system for the academic year to accommodate any changes that might need to be made with classroom set-up and instruction.

Classroom health standards will be strictly followed and enforced. Each department has set up the classrooms so that there will be social distancing (6-feet between cadets). To ensure there is a minimum of 6 feet of distance between cadets, all classroom capacities have been adjusted. Cadets and faculty will be required to wear face coverings in class, in the hallways, and in transit to and from class. Faculty will ensure that horizontal and frequently touched surfaces are disinfected in between each class. Your sons and daughters have been instructed to place health and safety first, and I would appreciate your assistance in reminding them of this when they want to try and “push through” not feeling well to attend class.

Our theme for this academic year is, “Ethical Leadership in a Diverse World,” led by our Department of English and Philosophy. We will deliberately explore the nature of ethical leadership through a multidisciplinary effort across the Academy. We will reaffirm that our values commit us to lead an examined life of integrity and character. The Academy’s main effort remains developing leaders of character and developing a culture of character growth. We will continue to emphasize inclusion and prevent trust breaking behaviors like sexual harassment/assault and racism.

While there are many challenges we must face this semester, our focus for academics remains unchanged: to educate and inspire leaders of character who think critically, internalize their professional identity, and employ their education to help build the Army and the Nation’s future. We will continue to be bold, be kind, and be good teammates as we all lean in, both in person and virtually, to ensure our academic courses, threads, and programs support cadet
attainment of the academic overarching goal. Our graduates are able to integrate knowledge and skills from a variety of disciplines to anticipate and respond appropriately to opportunities and challenges in a changing world.

The staff and faculty are excited to begin academic year 2020-2021, and it is our great privilege and duty to provide your children the high-quality education of West Point in safe conditions. Thank you for entrusting your sons and daughters to us. We will stay diligent in keeping them healthy and challenged in the academic environment.

CINDY R. JEBB, Ph.D.
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Dean of the Academic Board