

MINUTES
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY BOARD OF VISITORS
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING – February 23, 2026
Washington, DC (In Person)

1. DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER'S REMARKS. Mr. David Nagle is the Designated Federal Officer for the United States Military Academy (USMA) Board of Visitors (BoV or Board). Colonel (COL) Khanh Diep, USMA Chief of Staff, opened the meeting at 9:04 a.m., stating for the record that the BoV operates under the authority of US Code Title 10, Section 7455. The Board is an Advisory Board subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. She further stated the meeting was open to the public, however, members of the public attending the meeting may not present questions from the floor or speak to any issue under discussion. Members of the public can file a written statement with the BoV.

2. OPENING REMARKS.

- **CHAIR'S REMARKS:** BoV Chairman, Representative (REP) Steve Womack called the meeting to order and welcomed the members. He stated the BoV is officially tasked to report to the President of the United States on all matters pertaining to USMA, not in USMA's chain of command, but serving in an advisory capacity. He acknowledged the statements and questions for the Board from members of the public and thanked the members of the public for their input.
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REMARKS:** Lieutenant General (LTG) Steven Gilland welcomed Chairman Womack, Vice Chair Ryan, and members of the Board of Visitors and thanked them for their continued service and support of the United States Military Academy. He welcomed Mr. David Fitzgerald, Deputy Undersecretary of the Army, and expressed appreciation for his attendance. He emphasized that Board members are key stakeholders and advocates in West Point's mission to develop leaders of character for the Army and the nation. He noted that the briefing would highlight Cadet development programs and initiatives supporting Army transformation and modernization and concluded by thanking the Board for its ongoing support of the Academy and the Corps of Cadets.
- **SECRETARY OF THE ARMY REPRESENTATIVE'S REMARKS:** Mr. David Fitzgerald, Deputy Undersecretary of the Army thanked the Board for its continued support of the Army and the United States Military Academy. He noted that the Army is undergoing a significant period of transformation across operational, tactical, and institutional systems to improve agility and readiness for future conflicts and emphasized that these efforts are enabled in part by the Board's support. He reaffirmed the importance of the Academy's mission to develop leaders of character prepared to serve as officers in Army formations and stated that initiatives and decisions that strengthen the officer corps will receive the full support of Army senior leadership.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS. COL Diep stated the last BoV meeting was July 11, 2025 at West Point with a quorum present. For today's meeting, she stated that BoV members were provided with the agenda and slides for the meeting (Appendix A); minutes from the July 2025 meeting; draft rules for the Board of Visitors for 2026; and statements and comments from the public received since the July 2025 meeting (Appendix B).

4. ROLL CALL. For the record, a quorum of the Board was present.

Members in Attendance: Senators Joni Ernst, Elissa Slotkin and Tim Kaine; REPs Steve Womack, Pat Ryan, Stephanie Bice, and Pat Harrigan; Presidential Appointees LTG(R) Michael Flynn, MG(R) Dan Walrath, Mr. David Bellavia, Dr. Meaghan Mobbs, and Ms. Maureen Bannon.

Members Absent: Senator Jerry Moran; REPs Sanford Bishop, Jr. and Wesley Hunt.

NOTE: REP Bishop arrived for the meeting at 9:56 a.m.

For the record, Mr. Fitzgerald was noted as present, as the Secretary of the Army's representative.

The USMA command and staff members, and members of the public in attendance were reminded to sign in, and the sign-in sheet would become a matter of record. (List of attendees included in Appendix C).

5. BOARD BUSINESS:

With a quorum present, Chair Womack presented the following as orders of business:

- **ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR:** Chair Womack opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair for 2026, noting that any Board member was eligible for the position of either Board Chair or Vice Chair. Mr. Bellavia nominated REP Womack for Chair; Dr. Mobbs and Senator (SEN) Slotkin seconded the nomination. No other nominations were presented. A voice vote was conducted, with the "ayes" in the majority and no opposing votes heard. The motion was approved, with REP Womack being reelected as Board Chair for 2026.
- **ELECTION OF BOARD VICE CHAIR:** Chair Womack opened the floor for nomination for 2026 Vice Chair. SEN Ernst nominated REP Ryan for Vice Chair; SEN Kaine seconded the nomination. No other nominations were presented. A voice vote was conducted, with the "ayes" in the majority and no opposing votes heard. The motion carried and REP Ryan was elected as Board Vice Chair for 2026.

- **APPROVAL OF 2026 BOARD RULES:** With no discussion raised, Chair Womack entertained a motion to approve the Rules for the BoV for 2026. Dr. Mobbs made a motion to approve the Rules, with REP Ryan seconding the motion. A voice vote was conducted with the “ayes” in the majority and no opposing votes heard. The motion carried and the 2026 Rules were approved.
- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 2025 MEETING:** With no discussion raised, Chair Womack entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the July 2025 meeting. SEN Ernst made a motion, with SEN Kaine seconding. A voice vote was conducted with the “ayes” in the majority and no opposing votes heard. The motion was approved.

With no old or new business presented, Board business was completed and Chair Womack recognized LTG Gilland to provide the Academy update.

6. ACADEMY UPDATE:

Accompanying slides for the Academy Update are included in Appendix A.

The Physical Program and Sandhurst videos presented at the meeting are available at <https://www.youtube.com/@westpoint>).

LTG Gilland opened by emphasizing that the United States Military Academy continues to perform strongly and remains distinct from civilian institutions, grounded in Army-wide values and standards and guided by the ethos of Duty, Honor, Country. He underscored that West Point’s mission is to develop leaders of character who live and lead honorably in service to the nation.

He highlighted Cadet summer training and development, noting that more than 3,400 Cadets participated in major training events and nearly 1,000 completed advanced military courses, including Airborne, Air Assault, Sapper, and international training opportunities. More than 1,000 Cadets participated in Cadet Troop Leader Training, continuing the Academy’s long-standing emphasis on early exposure to operational Army units and noncommissioned officer leadership. He also described key Cadet basic training milestones, including the annual march back from Lake Frederick, supported by extensive alumni participation.

The Superintendent reviewed academic-year milestones, including Acceptance Day for the Class of 2029 and the Affirmation Ceremony for the Class of 2027, during which Cadets reaffirmed their commitment to complete their education and serve on active duty. He noted that nearly one-third of the graduating class has voluntarily incurred additional active-duty service obligations, reflecting a strong culture of commitment to service.

He emphasized engagement with senior military, diplomatic, and international leaders

throughout the year, supporting the Academy's academic focus on future conflict, innovation, and multidomain operations. The Superintendent also highlighted frequent congressional engagement and reiterated the Academy's openness to continued Board and congressional visits.

Branch night outcomes for the Class of 2026 demonstrated strong alignment with Army requirements, with the majority of Cadets branching into operational and multidomain specialties and most receiving one of their top branch preferences. He highlighted the high quality of West Point graduates as assessed by the Army and noted increased acceptance of longer service obligations, particularly in aviation.

Athletics were presented as a critical component of leader development, with conference championships, strong academic performance among Cadet-athletes, and national recognition for individual excellence. The Superintendent emphasized that Cadet-athletes continue to excel academically while competing at the NCAA Division I level.

The Superintendent highlighted significant academic and scholarship achievements, including multiple Rhodes and Marshall Scholars, impactful undergraduate research, and strong alignment between scholarship programs and warfighting relevance. He noted higher long-term retention and promotion rates among scholarship recipients and reported a 100 percent medical school acceptance rate for Cadets who applied this year.

In closing, LTG Gilland cited a recent example of Cadet heroism involving lifesaving actions off post, noting that the Cadet will be formally recognized by the Corps. He concluded by situating the Academy's mission within the context of the Army's and the nation's 250th anniversaries, reaffirming West Point's enduring role in developing leaders of character and expressing appreciation for the Board's continued support.

Following a break, the Commandant of Cadets, BG R.J. Garcia, provided an overview of the Cadet Honor Code, emphasizing that it is the foundation of the United States Military Academy's character development and underpins the academic, physical, and military programs. He noted that the Academy's excellence is inseparable from the Honor Code and the culture it establishes across the Corps of Cadets.

He emphasized the importance of understanding the evolution of the honor system, noting that while the core principle, "a Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do", has endured, the system has evolved to remain relevant and effective.

The Commandant outlined three major periods in the honor system's development: pre-1920, 1920-1976, and 1976 to the present. He described early ethical standards under Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, reforms under then-Superintendent Douglas MacArthur that introduced a Cadet-run honor committee, and the gradual expansion of Cadet ownership of the system.

He highlighted key milestones, including the addition of the toleration clause in 1970 and significant honor incidents in 1951 and 1976 that prompted institutional review. These events, combined with societal change and legal scrutiny, led to the adoption of the current one-tier honor system in 1976, in which Cadets administer the system and make recommendations to the Superintendent, who retains discretionary authority.

Since 1976, changes to the honor system have been incremental and informed by Cadet feedback, lessons learned, and leadership oversight. He referenced the adoption and later removal of the willful admissions process following a 2020 review and noted that the system is codified in USMA Regulation 15-1 and USCC Pamphlet 15-1, which are reviewed regularly.

BG Garcia highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen honor education and transparency, including enhanced training for the Cadet Honor Committee, quarterly briefings to the Corps, and company-level discussions of anonymized honor cases.

In closing, he reaffirmed that the Cadet Honor Code remains the cornerstone of leader development at West Point, emphasizing that Cadets are expected not merely to comply with the code, but to live it as future leaders entrusted with America's sons and daughters

COL Nick Gist, Head of USMA's Department of Physical Education (DPE), provided an overview of the Academy's physical program, emphasizing its direct support to USMA's mission to develop leaders of character who are physically prepared to lead Soldiers in combat. He stated that the program is deliberately designed to cultivate excellence in physical fitness and prepare Cadets for the demands of land warfare, fully integrated with the West Point Leader Development System and the Army's leader requirements model.

COL Gist explained that the program develops warrior ethos, movement lethality, and mental toughness through rigorous, militarily relevant training. Across seven required courses, Cadets build strength, endurance, agility, power, coordination, and mobility through boxing, military movement, survival swimming, combatives, exercise science, and Army fitness principles. Integration of the Army's Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) concept reinforces readiness across all domains.

He highlighted certification and performance outcomes, noting that Cadets earned Modern Army Combatives and H2F Integrator certifications in significant numbers. Cadets consistently perform at high levels on standards-based fitness assessments, exceeding Army-wide and company-grade officer averages, with measurable improvement across class years. Fitness performance now accounts for a greater share of Cadets' military development grades, reinforcing its importance.

COL Gist discussed use of the Expert Physical Fitness Assessment (EPFA) to prepare Cadets for anticipated changes to Army combat fitness testing, noting strong early results and no Cadet failures to date.

He emphasized competitive athletics as a mandatory component of development, with all Cadets participating each semester at the intercollegiate, club, or intramural level. National championships and record-setting performances reinforce discipline, resilience, teamwork, and a competitive mindset. Cadets also performed strongly in Army-wide competitions and demanding schools, including Best Sapper, Combat Dive Qualification, Ranger-related events, and the Norwegian Foot March, often outperforming operational Army units.

COL Gist reaffirmed that DPE remains fully aligned with USMA and Army priorities and focused on developing disciplined, fit, tough, and lethal leaders ready to win on day one of service.

Chair Womack asked about the baseline physical fitness of incoming Cadets and whether the Academy is satisfied with their readiness to compete at higher levels. COL Rance Lee, USMA Director of Admissions responded that candidate fitness assessment scores indicate strong incoming physical ability, though levels vary by region. COL Gist added that while incoming fitness levels are solid, the Academy is intentionally rigorous and has an obligation to challenge Cadets physically to maintain high standards.

Chair Womack also for clarification on the Expert Physical Fitness Assessment (EPFA), including events, standards, and performance. COL Gist explained that the EPFA is a functional, continuous test used in Army programs such as Ranger School and the Expert Soldier Badge. The assessment includes running and multiple strength and endurance events conducted within a fixed time standard and performed in Army combat uniform with protective equipment. Leadership confirmed that multiple Cadet regiments have completed the assessment with no failures to date.

BG Garcia next provided an overview of the Sandhurst International Military Skills Competition, describing it as the world's premier international military skills competition and a signature event that showcases Cadet grit, toughness, and military proficiency while strengthening partnerships with ROTC programs and international allies. He noted that Sandhurst has evolved significantly from its earlier form into a week-long, highly demanding competition that integrates physical endurance, tactical problem-solving, and leadership under stress.

He explained that the competition begins with the arrival and preparation of international teams, including orientation, weapons familiarization, and qualification on U.S. weapon systems to ensure safety and standardization. The event includes a Sandhurst conference featuring senior Army leaders and panel discussions among international partners focused on leadership, operating environments, and tactical and operational challenges, reinforcing mutual learning and professional exchange.

The Commandant described the competitive structure, noting that the final event spans approximately 36 hours and includes more than 20 miles of movement under load, significant elevation change, and a wide range of military skill events. These include

marksmanship, land navigation, obstacle courses, crew-served weapons training, call-for-fire, and a culminating crucible event. He emphasized that the physical and mental demands of Sandhurst are intentionally extreme and designed to reflect the realities of modern land warfare.

He highlighted that Sandhurst is the culmination of a year-long competitive process within the Corps of Cadets. All 36 companies field teams that compete throughout the fall semester, with the field progressively narrowed during the spring. Cadets who do not advance are deliberately integrated into advancing teams to capture lessons learned and build future leadership capacity, ensuring broad developmental impact across the Corps.

The Commandant discussed participation by U.S. service academies, ROTC programs, and international partners. To compete equitably against teams selected from entire academies, West Point fields two all-star teams in addition to company teams, which consistently perform at a high level. International participation is capped, with teams selected based on rotational priorities aligned with Department of Defense and Army partnership objectives, including a deliberate emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region.

He also noted that Sandhurst integrates advanced technology and innovation, including the use of drones, simulation, and emerging technologies developed at West Point and through industry partnerships. These capabilities enhance realism, scoring accuracy, and learning outcomes, reinforcing the competition's relevance to contemporary and future operational environments.

BG Garcia reiterated that Sandhurst, together with initiatives such as the Vanguard Initiative, exemplifies the integration of academic, military, and physical development at West Point. He emphasized that these programs develop adaptive, resilient leaders and strengthen partnerships across the Army, ROTC, and allied forces.

LTG(R) Flynn asked how international teams are selected to participate in the Sandhurst competition and whether additional countries can join. BG Garcia explained that participation is limited due to capacity and risk management considerations. Prospective nations are typically invited to observe first to assess readiness, as differences in baseline fitness levels have previously resulted in medical issues. A limited number of observer nations participate each year, and international teams are rotated based on strategic partnership priorities, with enduring invitations extended to select allied academies. He further noted that international participation is deliberately aligned with Department of Defense and Army regional priorities, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. He highlighted the mutual learning benefits of hosting partners with different operational approaches, emphasizing that Sandhurst provides a forum for Cadets and international counterparts to exchange perspectives on tactical challenges and leadership in diverse environments.

The Dean of the Academic Board provided an overview of the United States Military Academy's academic mission, emphasizing the enduring requirement to produce

officers who are both timeless in character and timely in skills. He framed the academic program as a strategic national investment dating to the Academy's founding in 1802, highlighting its historic role in adapting to changes in the character of warfare while remaining grounded in values of duty, honor, and country. Drawing on historical examples—from early engineering education through modern conflicts—the Dean underscored that intellectual stagnation leads to failure and that innovation is essential to military success.

The Dean described the evolving security environment, including the increasing likelihood of large-scale, peer conflict and the changing nature of warfare driven by artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, biotechnology, and energy demands. Based on observations from recent operational engagements, he noted that future battlefields will be characterized by pervasive threats from above and across domains, reinforcing the need for officers with strong critical thinking skills and technological fluency.

To address these challenges, the Dean highlighted significant academic initiatives, most notably the West Point Werx Innovation Hub, established to integrate research, classroom instruction, and Army requirements through project-based, experiential learning. The Hub organizes work across multiple portfolios, including artificial intelligence, autonomy, energy resilience, biotechnology, space, and ethics. Key examples included the introduction of a required core course in artificial intelligence (AI 105), the establishment of an AI major, expanded nuclear engineering and energy research capabilities, ethical training related to autonomous weapons systems, and rapid integration of drones into Cadet field training.

The Dean also emphasized the importance of academic infrastructure modernization through the Academic Building Upgrade Program, highlighting the construction of Goethals Hall and the planned renovation of Thayer Hall as transformational investments. He described plans to expand innovation capacity through public-private collaboration space at Spellman Hall and the development of the West Point Werx Proving Ground, which will allow testing of emerging Army technologies in realistic terrain integrated with Cadet training.

Concluding, the Dean reinforced that these efforts are ultimately about preparing future officers for the wars they are likely to fight. He expressed confidence that West Point Cadets are motivated, capable, and prepared to lead in a highly complex and technologically advanced operational environment, provided the Academy continues to innovate and invest in people, facilities, and partnerships.

SEN Kaine asked about the structure and intent of the required AI 105 course and the AI major, and how AI is being integrated into higher education. The Dean explained that AI 105 introduces Cadets early to AI systems, their capabilities, limitations, and ethical use, with a strong emphasis on project-based learning and application. The curriculum balances AI integration with preservation of critical thinking skills through oral exams, writing, and hands-on problem solving. AI is viewed as a revolutionary shift that requires adaptation rather than avoidance.

REP Bice raised concern that biotechnology and biowarfare risks may be underemphasized relative to other emerging technologies. The Dean agreed and noted the recent establishment of a bioengineering minor to address national security gaps related to bioengineering and the weaponization of biology. He highlighted strong Cadet interest in biological sciences and their recognition of the convergence of biology and technology as a future threat vector.

REP Harrigan asked how the Honor Code applies in an environment where AI tools are widely available and rapidly evolving. The Dean stated that the Honor Code remains fully applicable and is enforced through evolving guidance that clarifies when AI use is permitted, required, or prohibited. Faculty and Cadets share responsibility for ethical use, with disclosure requirements and frequent updates to policy. Education, transparency, and Cadet ownership were emphasized as key elements of enforcement.

SEN Slotkin inquired whether AI misuse is monitored through technical tools or relies solely on honor. The Dean stated that while technical tools exist to detect AI-generated work, enforcement relies primarily on the honor system, faculty-Cadet relationships, and clarification discussions. Small class sizes and instructor familiarity with Cadet work were cited as effective safeguards.

SEN Slotkin also asked whether Cadets can participate in classified AI research to prepare for competition with near-peer adversaries. BG Reeves acknowledged the importance of expanding classified research opportunities and noted ongoing efforts to increase secure facilities and clearance pathways so Cadets can engage with classified AI applications prior to commissioning.

Chairman Womack asked whether there are limitations related to facilities, equipment, or staffing affecting the Academy's academic and innovation efforts. BG Reeves responded that constraints exist across all three areas—personnel, facilities, and funding—and emphasized the need for additional capacity. He highlighted the Academic Building Upgrade Program as critical, describing Goethals Hall as a transformational capability and Thayer Hall as essential to sustaining academic excellence. He further emphasized the importance of expanding the West Point Werx Innovation Hub, including development of public-private collaboration space at Spellman Hall and, most critically, establishment of the West Point Werx Proving Ground at Camp Buckner. He noted that the Proving Ground would enable realistic indoor-outdoor testing of emerging technologies—such as drones, counter-UAS, directed energy, and radiation—and would leverage existing 5G infrastructure to collect data, pilot capabilities, and accelerate scaling for Army use. He also stressed that partnerships with Army organizations, particularly through reimbursable positions with DEVCOM and other entities, are essential to maintaining momentum and integration of Cadet innovation efforts.

Chairman Womack raised connectivity as a recurring concern expressed by Cadets, specifically citing Wi-Fi limitations and inquiring whether Starlink could play a role in

improving access. The Dean acknowledged that Wi-Fi limitations are a known challenge that can impede academic and research activities, noting that connectivity has improved significantly in recent years but remains uneven. He deferred to the Superintendent for additional detail.

LTG Gilland confirmed that connectivity challenges are not unique to West Point but affect the broader region. He noted ongoing infrastructure upgrades across the West Point reservation and training areas through partnerships with commercial providers, while acknowledging persistent challenges in historic granite buildings. He stated that Starlink has not yet been implemented but remains an option for future consideration.

Mr. Fitzgerald added that connectivity challenges extend across Army installations worldwide and noted that discussions with Starlink have recently begun to explore enterprise-level pricing models that could address connectivity issues at West Point and more broadly across the Army

Mr. Bellavia raised concerns regarding West Point's long-term electrical capacity and dependence on the civilian power grid, noting current demand estimates (~215 MW) and potential future requirements approaching 800 megawatts to 1 gigawatt due to mission growth, emerging technologies (including AI), and national security demands. He emphasized that West Point's unique academic and statutory authorities could allow it to pursue innovative energy solutions not available to other Army installations. He argued that reliance on the civilian grid constrains expansion, creates vulnerability, and poses a national security risk, urging that autonomous or independently controlled energy production be treated as a top priority for the Academy.

LTG Gilland acknowledged ongoing discussions regarding energy resilience and noted that West Point had previously been proposed as a candidate site for a Small Modular Reactor (SMR), though the Army elected to place initial efforts elsewhere. He highlighted West Point's current reliance on Orange and Rockland Utilities and the installation of a new 69-kilovolt transmission line, projected to be operational in 2027. He stated that regional load shedding, particularly during summer months, has already affected the Academy. LTG Gilland emphasized that an SMR could meet West Point's requirements, provide energy independence, and potentially support the surrounding region during periods of excess capacity.

Mr. Bellavia reiterated that energy independence is foundational to West Point's ability to fulfill its mission of developing future Army leaders, arguing that infrastructure limitations undermine readiness and growth. He stressed the urgency of addressing power generation now, noting regulatory and certification constraints associated with SMRs and asserting that alternative solutions, including renewables, should be explored to ensure West Point controls its own energy future.

Chairman Womack acknowledged the points raised and affirmed the importance of the issue.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Department recognizes resilient microgrids as a national security priority. He noted that the Secretary of the Army is advancing this effort and that a Request for Information (RFI), scheduled for release on 1 March, seeks industry input on financing and implementation models for behind-the-meter power solutions to improve installation resilience and self-sufficiency.

REP Harrigan added that the recent National Defense Authorization Act provides the necessary statutory authorities for West Point, the Army, or other installations to site a nuclear reactor outside the traditional regulatory framework, and that remaining barriers are primarily financial. He characterized the challenge as a multi-billion-dollar funding gap rather than a legal or policy limitation.

Mr. Fitzgerald agreed that while funding is a major issue, technical challenges associated with SMRs also remain.

Chairman Womack concluded by noting that, even with authorities in place, the Department of the Army must prioritize among many installations—both CONUS and OCONUS—with significant energy shortfalls, and thanked the participants for the discussion.

7. OPEN DISCUSSION. Chair Womack opened the floor for Board discussion, inviting members to raise topics of continuing or emerging importance.

REP Bishop raised the potential expansion of Army–Navy Game locations beyond the traditional Mid-Atlantic region, including southern venues such as Atlanta. Mr. Theodorakis explained that changes in the college football playoff schedule may conflict with the traditional Army–Navy weekend, necessitating flexibility to preserve the game’s national prominence. He noted logistical challenges associated with moving the Corps of Cadets and Brigade of Midshipmen and emphasized coordination with the Naval Academy. He stated that a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) would be issued, including clear venue criteria. Chairman Womack underscored cost, security, and housing considerations for large-scale Cadet movement and highlighted the importance of maintaining the Army–Navy Game as the season finale, while remaining adaptable on timing and location.

REP Ryan provided an update on prior Board concerns regarding the potential downgrade or closure of military treatment facilities, including Keller Army Community Hospital. He noted bipartisan and bicameral congressional action through the NDAA to prevent closures. Chairman Womack stated that Keller has since been nationally recognized for performance and outcomes, and that collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs is ongoing to expand patient throughput. He emphasized that Keller is currently on solid footing, crediting Board advocacy and Army leadership support.

LTG(R) Flynn asked about Cadet security clearances and whether Cadets graduate with at least a Secret clearance. LTG Gilland confirmed that all Cadets graduate with a

Secret clearance, with some obtaining Top Secret clearances based on research requirements, branch selection, or academic programs.

LTG(R) Flynn also raised questions regarding accreditation across the Service Academies and whether a consolidated or higher standard should exist beyond regional accreditation. LTG Gilland explained that West Point and the Naval Academy are accredited through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, with additional discipline-specific accreditation (e.g., ABET). He noted recent changes to accrediting standards and emphasized that West Point is leading in accreditation compliance. Mr. Fitzgerald distinguished between academic accreditation requirements and broader ethical or institutional standards, noting Department-level awareness and discussion across the academies.

Ms. Bannon asked about the status of funding and timelines for ongoing construction projects and the modernization of Thayer Hall, expressing concern about delays and reallocation of funds. LTG Gilland stated that ongoing projects are proceeding through established Army and Corps of Engineers processes. He explained that Thayer Hall has completed demolition and design charrettes, with approximately 10 percent design completion, and that demolition funding begins in FY27, with construction projected as a multi-year effort.

CSM Barretto provided updates on Soldier barracks, noting that one facility will reopen in April and another in August following delays related to equipment and HVAC issues.

COL Rich Gash, Vice Dean for Resources, clarified that Cadet barracks renovations are not facing funding shortfalls, but rather execution and processing timelines for above-threshold funding requests.

Chairman Womack observed that, over time, federal investment in West Point infrastructure has been significant, including major housing and academic facilities, and that progress has been made in addressing longstanding gaps.

REP Harrigan asked whether Infantry was a “forced branch” for the current class and expressed concern about long-term trends in Cadet interest in combat arms. LTG Gilland and BG Garcia explained the modern branching model, which includes Cadet interviews, branch preferences, and branch selection input. They stated that the vast majority of Cadets receive one of their top choices and that no Cadet is assigned to infantry against both Cadet and branch preference. BG Garcia noted that infantry met accession requirements, including branch-detail officers, and offered to provide detailed statistics. He also discussed enterprise-level adjustments with ROTC to optimize officer talent distribution. LTG Gilland acknowledged shifting trends in Armor branch interest and emphasized that Army requirements for operational branches continue to be met.

LTG(R) Flynn emphasized the need to rethink traditional branch structures in light of emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, and unmanned systems. He highlighted evolving threat environments and urged the academies to lead innovation and challenge

legacy systems. LTG Gilland agreed, emphasizing the importance of public-private partnerships, industry engagement, and exposure of Cadets and faculty to emerging technologies.

REP Bishop asked about the status of extracurricular clubs affected by recent Executive Orders. LTG Gilland stated that there has been no change since last summer: clubs not compliant with Executive Orders were disbanded, while over 100 other clubs remain available. BG Garcia confirmed that no additional clubs have been disbanded.

Dr. Mobbs questioned why Ukraine is not currently an approved partner for sending Cadets to West Point, noting the strategic relevance and recent expansion of international Cadet slots. LTG Gilland acknowledged the interest and explained that decisions require coordination with the Department of War and Department of State. He noted existing partnerships and agreed that Ukraine, along with other strategic partners such as India, merits discussion. COL Lee confirmed that such decisions are made at the Department level. The discussion concluded with general agreement on the need to reassess international partnerships in alignment with long-term national security objectives.

8. CLOSING COMMENTS/ADJOURNMENT. With no further discussion, Chair Womack thanked LTG Gilland and the USMA team for their updates and thanked the Board in general for their participation. He stated that a date for the next Board meeting was being worked with the Academy. Chair Womack asked for a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Ryan made a motion, which was seconded by Dr. Mobbs. With no objections, the February 2026 meeting of the USMA Board of Visitors was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Certified by:



STEVE WOMACK
United States Representative
Chair, USMA Board of Visitors



DAVID NAGLE
Designated Federal Officer
USMA Board of Visitors



UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT

Board of Visitors Meeting
23 February 2026



UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT

Agenda

Opening Statements

Board Business

- *Elect 2026 Chair & Vice Chair*
- *Approve 2026 Rules of BOV*
- *Approve Minutes from July 2025 Meeting*

Academy Update

- *Superintendent Update*
- *Commandant's Update*
 - *Honor Code/Program*
 - *Physical Program*
 - *2026 Sandhurst Military Skills Competition*
- *Dean's Update*
 - *Innovation/Transformation*
 - *West Point Werx Expansion*
 - *Curricular Transformation Update*

Open Discussion

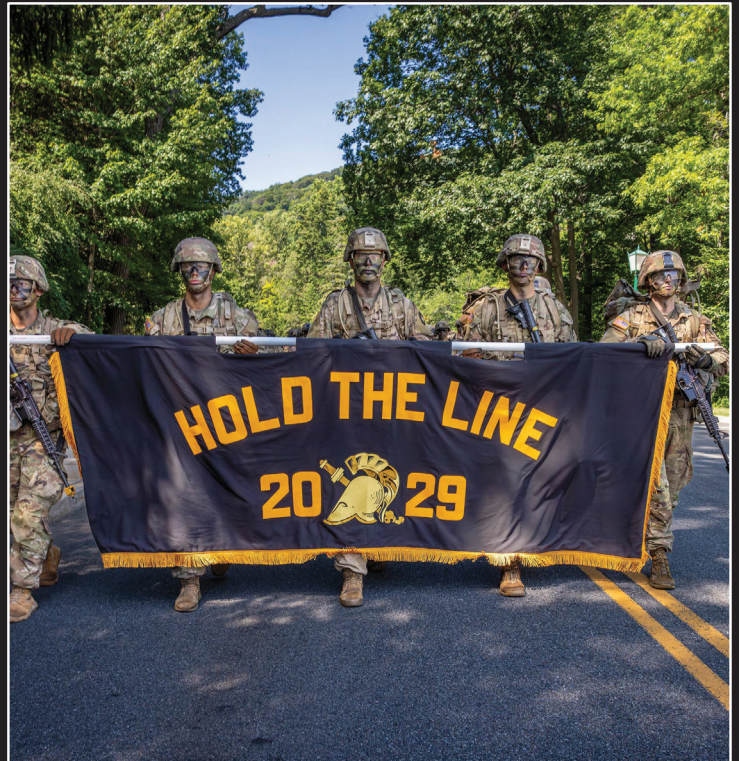
Closing Remarks



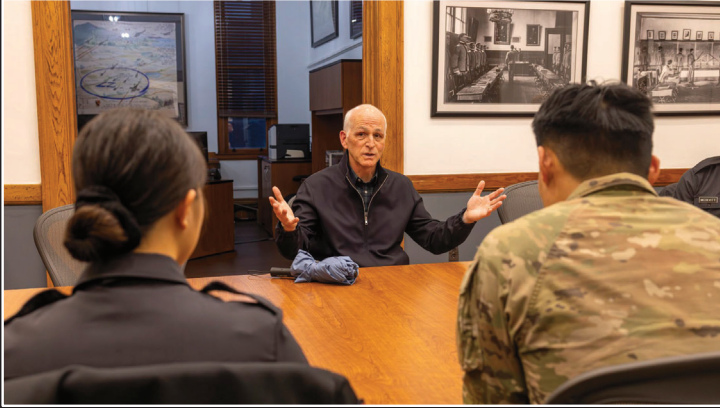
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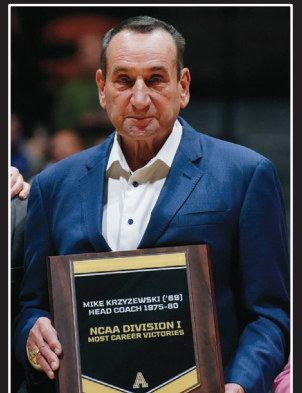
Academy Update

LTG Steve Gilland, 61st Superintendent
BG R.J. Garcia, 81st Commandant of Cadets
BG Shane Reeves, 15th Dean of the Academic Board











CDT Johnathan Pinc ~ CDT Max Felter ~ CDT Brandon Tran
2026 Rhodes Scholars



CDT Mark Clemons
2026 Marshall Scholar

CDT LARRY PICKETT JR.



"At West Point, we're taught what it truly means to live with courage, honor, and selfless service, and that night was just one moment to live out what so many around me model everyday"

- CDT Larry Pickett Jr.



"Video shows Army football player rescue driver before car bursts into flames in Orange County, N.Y."

CBS NEWS

"Army football player and father rescue man from burning car" **NBC NEWS**

"Army football player Larry Pickett Jr. rescues man from burning vehicle"



"Army safety Larry Pickett Jr. and his dad save a man from flames after a car crash near West Point"

Chicago Tribune



History

- **1817:** COL Thayer establishes 'ethical considerations' to commission or dismiss a cadet.
- **Pre-1920:** One-Tier System
- **1922:** BG MacArthur, then Superintendent, establishes Cadet Honor Committee and a Two-Tier Honor System
- **1948:** MG Taylor, then Superintendent, codifies the Honor Code
 - "A cadet will not lie, cheat, or steal."
- **1951:** Cheating honor violations
- **1970:** Modern Honor Code established by the Corps of Cadets (inclusion of the toleration clause)
 - "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal or tolerate those who do."
- **1976:** EE304 honor violations
- **1976:** BG Ulmer, then Commandant, re-introduces a One-Tier System and the Superintendent is granted authority of discretion.
- **2017:** Honor Committee implements "Willful Admission Process"
- **2020:** MA104 honor violations
 - Results in the removal of the "Willful Admission Process"

Regulations

- USMA REG 15-1: United States Military Academy: The Cadet Honor Code, the Honor System, and the Honor Community
- USCC PAM 15-1: The Cadet Honor Code, System, and Committee Procedures



Physical Program video available to view at
<https://www.youtube.com/@westpoint>



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WEST POINT

Academy Update
Physical Program (USCC)



UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT

Academy Update
Sandhurst Competition 2026 (USCC)

Sandhurst video available to view at
<https://www.youtube.com/@westpoint>



Sandhurst Train Up Week

25-30 April 2026

- 25 APR: External team arrival
- 26 APR: Rifle issue, swim training, and opening address
- 27 APR: Sandhurst Conference
- 27 APR: Order of March Relay



Day 1 Rotational Events



- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Tactical Combat Casualty Care | 5. Communications |
| 2. Grenade Assault Course | 6. Weapons Assembly |
| 3. Zodiac Boat Race | 7. Functional Fitness |
| 4. Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Response | 8. M17 Pistol Shoot |
| | 9. Ruck March |

Day 2 Rotational Events

- Land Navigation
- M4 Rifle Night Shoot
- Obstacle Course
- M4 Rifle Shoot
- Call For Fire / Crew Served Weapons Employment
- The Crucible



Awards Dinner and Ceremony

36 hours / 21 miles traversed under combat load / 32,460 rounds expended / ~ 5,000 ft elevation change



Current Top USCC Company Teams (x10)

1. G2		4. A2		8. A1	
2. G3		5. A3		9. E1	
3. B2		6. H4		10. H1	
		7. C4			

International Teams (x17)

UK	UK	Canada	Canada	Australia	Norway
Japan	RoK	Mexico	Brazil	Denmark	Philippines
France	Germany	Sweden	Finland	Poland	

Service Academy Teams (x5)

GOLD	BLACK	USNA
USFA	USCGA	

ROTC Teams (x16)

TBD
 Ranger Challenge
 Competitions Ongoing

Observers

Thailand	Netherlands
Lithuania	



APPENDIX B

Walter Heinz

23 Nov 2025

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senator
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6065

Subject: USMA BoV Designee – Senator Slotkin

Dear Senator Reed:

I continue to be concerned with the USMA BoV as expressed in prior correspondence. It is my understanding that Senator Elissa Slotkin is your current designee to the USMA BoV.

Senator Slotkin and five other serving U.S. Senators and Congressmen/women this past week released a video calling on U.S. Service members to disobey “illegal” orders. This was released via Senator Slotkin’s media accounts, so I assume that she was the organizer of this group. The content of this video is unnecessary and clearly politically motivated!

As such, it indicates that Senator Slotkin is unsuited to be your designee on the USMA BoV. She cannot bring a balanced and unbiased perspective to the USMA BoV.

I strongly request that you immediately replace her with a thoughtful designee on the USMA BoV.

Sincerely,

Walter Heinz

USMA Class 1971

Cc: USMA BoV



February 9, 2026

Secretary of the General Staff
United States Military Academy
ATTN: David Nagle
646 Swift Road
West Point, NY 10996

Subject: USMA BOV Public Comment

Dear Board of Visitors,

I am Doug Truax, USMA 1992 graduate and CEO of [Restoration of America Foundation/Restoration of America](#).

My organization continues to advocate for all our service academies to develop the best leaders of warfighters in the world. In past comments to the Board, we have outlined our priorities and have again included them in this letter.

One area of concern we want to highlight is USMA's ongoing participation in the Rhodes Scholar program. Our researchers have outlined the concerns with this program [in this article](#). Even the United Arab Emirates [removed funding](#) for study abroad programs at British universities over concerns their students could be radicalized by the Muslim Brotherhood.

We are calling on the USMA Board of Visitors to recommend the Academy cease participation in the Rhodes Scholar program immediately.

We must also address the leadership of the [Superintendent, Lt. Gen. Steven W. Gilland](#). Gilland's tenure has been marred by the injection of anti-American ideologies and wokeness into the Long Gray Line. For instance, Superintendent Gilland has previously:

1. **Institutionalized Racism:** Hosted and directed multiple West Point DEI conferences, including West Point's [biggest-ever DEI conference](#), at which he described diversity in terms of "how important and how critical it is not only to our U.S. Military Academy, to our military, but especially to our nation."
2. **Compromised Meritocracy:** Admitted to Congress that USMA had race-based composition [goals](#).
3. **Degraded the Brand:** Presided over the removal of the "Duty, Honor, Country" [motto](#) from the West Point Mission Statement.

Additionally, we are calling for the removal of the [Dean of the Academic Board, BG Shane Reeves](#). Reeves has similarly compromised the integrity of West Point with his advocacy of institutionalized racism. For instance, under his oversight, [USMA embedded critical race theory \(CRT\)](#) and studies on "whiteness" directly into its core academic curriculum. He also gave multiple [Dean's Awards for "DEI Excellence."](#)

This is totally unacceptable. West Point is NOT a liberal arts college. It is the United States *Military Academy*, and its purpose is to train leaders of warriors. In combat, diversity is not our strength—unity is. In a foxhole, you want the best, most capable soldiers by your side, regardless of their ethnicity. When the stakes are life or death, the only metric that matters is lethality.



Let me be clear: social engineering has no place in our military or our service academies. We are calling for an immediate change in the offices of both the Superintendent and the Dean of the Academic Board.

A thorough review of all USMA employees must be conducted to dismiss those who push agendas not in alignment with the directives of the War Secretary and President. We've identified several of those employees at RestoreTheMilitary.com.

As a reminder, I'm including the items submitted in our previous letters to the BOV. We're asking that these issues continue to be matters of importance.

High Quality Education:

1. Conduct an immediate, thorough, and independent review of curriculum and instruction to make sure cadets are receiving the highest quality education focused on creating the best leaders and warfighters for America.
2. Conduct a thorough assessment of all professors to make sure they align fully with the mission above and not on "social justice" agendas.
3. Eliminate the Rhodes Scholar program that seeks to indoctrinate students in Marxist ideals. [Read our report on the topic here.](#)
4. Increase the percentage of professors who have a previous or current military background.

Admissions:

1. Conduct a thorough review of the recruitment and admissions process to make sure employees are seeking candidates that align with USMA's traditional mission without regard to non-merit factors such as race or gender.
2. Immediately remove all data tracking related to race and gender for admission and appointments.
3. Remove the requirement for photos to be submitted with applications.

Staff:

1. Remove [Superintendent Lt. Gen. Steven W. Gilland](#).
2. Remove [Dean of the Academic Board BG Shane Reeves](#).
3. Remove any other staff member with a political agenda.

It is our desire at Restoration of America Foundation/Restoration of America to be a resource and advocate for the United States Military Academy. Please reach out if we can assist in any way.

Very Respectfully,

Doug Truax
Founder and CEO
Restoration of America Foundation / Restoration of America

Appendix C: MEETING ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS

Members of Congress:

Senator Joni Ernst

Senator Tim Kaine

Senator Elissa Slotkin

Representative Steve Womack – Chair

Representative Patrick Ryan – Vice Chair

Representative Sanford Bishop, Jr. ** - joined the meeting at 9:56 am

Representative Stephanie Bice

Representative Patrick Harrigan

Presidential Appointees:

LTG(R) Michael Flynn

MG(R) Dan Walrath

Mr. David Bellavia

Dr. Meaghan Mobbs

Ms. Maureen Bannon

The following members were absent:

Senator Jerry Moran

Representative Wesley Hunt

Based on the BOV attendance, a quorum was present.

OTHER ATTENDEES

Headquarters, Department of the Army:

Mr. David Fitzgerald – Deputy Undersecretary of the Army (DUSA)
COL John Oliver – Chief, DUSA Initiatives Group
MAJ Brianna Startzell-Nunez – Army Legislative Liaison
CPT Jessica Burkett – Army Legislative Liaison
CPT Andrew Cook – DUSA Initiatives Group

USMA Command and Staff Members:

LTG Steven Gilland – Superintendent
BG RJ Garcia – Commandant of Cadets
BG Shane Reeves – Dean of the Academic Board
CSM Phil Barretto – USMA Command Sergeant Major
CSM Anthony Powers – USCC Command Sergeant Major
Mr. Tom Theodorakis – Director of Athletics
COL Khanh Diep – USMA Chief of Staff
COL Richard Gash – Vice Dean for Resources
COL Nicholas Gist, Director, Department of Physical Education
COL Michael Kovacevic – Director, Strategic Plans and Assessment (G5)
COL Rance Lee – Director of Admissions
COL Michael Rizzotti – USMA Staff Judge Advocate
LTC Bryan Jones – Superintendent's Executive Officer
LTC Charles Patterson – Director of Communications
MAJ Jacqueline Asis – USCC G5
MAJ McCoy Bean – Special Assistant to the Commandant for Honor
MAJ Brandon Clayton – Superintendent's Aide de Camp
MAJ Matthew Fiorelli – Dean's Executive Officer
MAJ Sam Litz – Commandant's Executive Officer
SSG German Morales – USMA Staff
Mr. Zachary Cruz - USMA Multimedia Specialist
Mr. John Frost – Academy Counsel
Ms. Vanesha Jackson – USMA Protocol
Mr. David Nagle – Designated Federal Officer (DFO)/Commander's Action Group
Mr. Jeffrey Reynolds – ADFO/Chief of Protocol
Dr. Kraig Sheetz – Vice Dean for Engagement
Mr. Nicholas Tantillo – USMA Multimedia Specialist

Board Member Staff:

Ms. Allison Booth – REP Womack Staff
Mr. Martain Brown – REP Bishop Staff
Mr. Sultan Durzi - REP Ryan Staff
Ms. Grace Kim – SEN Slotkin Staff
Ms. Kaitlin Kleiber – SEN Kaine Staff
Mr. Niels Larson – REP Harrigan Staff
Ms. Olivia Mullaney – REP Ryan Staff
Ms. Melissa Radovich – LTG(R) Flynn Executive Assistant
Mr. Nick Runkel – Chief of Staff, REP Womack

Members of the Public:

BG(R) Lance Betros
COL(R) Jenny Davis
Mr. Carl Fisher
Ms. Brenda Sue Fulton
Mrs. Elizabeth Garcia
Mr. Walter Heinz
Ms. Cynthia Kwitchoff
Ms. Elvia Lopez
COL(R) Ralph Masi
Ms. Jill McElroy
Ms. Susan Morrow
Mr. Matthew Newgent
Dr. Martha Ostrom
COL(R) Charles Rash
Mr. James Wyman
HON Mitchell Zais