



# UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY WEST POINT®



## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

LIVE HONORABLY AND BUILD TRUST





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“At the heart of every Soldier must be unwavering character. Character is what defines us.”<sup>1</sup>

General Raymond T. Odierno  
Chief of Staff of the Army

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond T. Odierno, “The U.S. Army: Trusted Professionals for the Nation,” *Army 2014-2015 Green Book*, October, 2014, p. 28.<sup>2</sup> This discussion about the root of the word character can be found in many sources. The author thought this was the most concise and appropriate. Murphy, Madonna M. *Character Education in America’s Blue Ribbon Schools: Best Practices for Meeting the Challenge*. (Lancaster: Technomic Publishing Company, 1998), 5.





OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY  
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The United States Military Academy educates, trains, and inspires leaders of character. The Army and the Nation deserve and demand West Point graduates committed to the ideals of Duty, Honor, Country and the Army Ethic.

This document, ***Live Honorably and Build Trust***, describes the strategy that both develops character and modifies behavior over the course of the 47-month cadet experience. The desired end state is for graduating cadets and rotating faculty members to depart West Point with the character, competence, and commitment to build and lead resilient teams that thrive in complex security environments. Cadets, all staff and faculty, and coaches are important and directly contribute to our Academy Mission. It is important that we all commit to living honorably and building trust, on and off duty.

The purpose of this strategy is to create a common framework that inspires, empowers, and holds everyone accountable for their individual actions and those in their charge. This includes both Army Professionals (military and civilian staff & faculty and coaches) and Aspiring Professionals (the Corps of Cadets). We all must display the appropriate attitudes and behaviors that inspire each other to live honorably and build trust. We must leverage every opportunity to not only educate and train, but also to inspire and challenge each cadet and every Army professional.

Fortunately, West Point possesses sufficient ***means*** (Resources: leaders and programs) and ***ways*** (Concept: Cadet Development Model) to achieve our ***ends*** (Objective: internalization of the ideals of Duty, Honor, Country and the Army Ethic). We look forward to the dialogue and thoughtful planning that will ensure West Point remains the Nation's premier leader development institution.

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## Purpose

The West Point Character Development Strategy describes how, at all levels and across programs, the United States Military Academy (USMA) develops leaders of character who internalize the ideals of Duty, Honor, Country and the Army Ethic. The strategy supports USMA Strategic Goal 1 (Develop the United States Corps of Cadets) and USMA Strategic Goal 2 (Live Honorably and Build Trust). After reading this strategy, all cadets should understand their responsibility for taking ownership of their character development and everyone (military and civilian staff and faculty, coaches, and the Corps of Cadets) should understand their role and the intended Academy outcomes for character development.

## Introduction

*“Educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that **each** graduate is a commissioned leader of **character** committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army.”*

*-USMA Mission Statement, 2014*

Our mission statement clearly identifies West Point’s requirement to produce individuals who are certified in the character (Honor), competence (Duty), and commitment (Country) of a commissioned officer in the Army Profession. Unlike most operational units, we do not pursue unit readiness. Every team, club, department, and directorate has an overarching responsibility to build character or facilitate character development in each individual throughout the course of the 47-month cadet experience. Character development can either be the primary goal or an ancillary goal, but every member of the West Point team involved with cadet development has an important role to play in character development. None of us can say, “That’s someone else’s responsibility.”

The word *character* is derived from the word *charakter*, which was the permanent mark placed on a coin that determined the coin’s worth. Similarly, a person’s character is “marked” by the set of beliefs and values which serve as guideposts for how that person behaves, decides, and acts.<sup>2</sup> At West Point, we want each graduate’s character to be “marked” with the values of West Point and the Army Ethic.<sup>3</sup> When a cadet graduates from West Point and is commissioned as a second lieutenant, the Academy has certified that he/she has internalized the values of West Point and will behave in a manner consistent with those values, 24/7 and online.

Living honorably is the evidence that a graduate’s character is consistent with West Point’s values and the Army Ethic.<sup>4</sup> Here is a working definition: ***Living honorably is the daily commitment to internalize and uphold the values inherent in West Point’s motto ‘Duty, Honor, Country’ and the Army Ethic; to strive for excellence, and to develop character, competence, and commitment in us and others; to serve the Nation as members of the Army Profession now and into the future.***

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<sup>2</sup> This discussion about the root of the word character can be found in many sources. The author thought this was the most concise and appropriate. Murphy, Madonna M. *Character Education in America’s Blue Ribbon Schools: Best Practices for Meeting the Challenge*. (Lancaster: Technomic Publishing Company, 1998), 5.

<sup>3</sup> ADRP 1 The Army Profession, 14 June 13, p. 1-3, defines the Army Ethic as “the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, deeply embedded within the core of the Army culture and practiced by all members of the Army Profession to motivate and guide the appropriate conduct of individual members bound together in common moral purpose.”

<sup>4</sup> West Point values are: Duty, Honor, and Country. The values espoused by the Army Ethic are the established Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.



## **Character and Honorable Living are Mission Essential**

Strong character demonstrated by honorable living strengthens the Army Profession by enabling us to build trust, which is relying on the integrity of another professional. Trust is the “vital organizing principle that establishes the conditions necessary for effective and ethical mission command and a profession that continues to earn the trust of the American people.”<sup>5</sup> Trust derived from strong character is a mission essential requirement. Trust allows the Army to maintain a professional status with the public. Trust enables mission command and permits leaders to conduct decentralized operations without constant oversight. In contrast, weak character breeds mistrust, undermines cohesion, and degrades military effectiveness. Even worse, weak character can lead to short cuts, half truths, and moral cowardice that result in mission failure and unnecessary loss of life.

Secretary of War Newton D. Baker succinctly summarized the importance of character in 1920. His words continue to ring true a century later:

*“Men may be inexact or even untruthful in ordinary matters and suffer as a consequence only the disesteem of their associates or the inconvenience of unfavorable litigation, but the inexact or untruthful soldier trifles with the lives of his fellow men (Soldiers) and with the honor of his government, and it is therefore no matter of pride but rather a stern disciplinary necessity that makes West Point require of her students a character for trustworthiness that knows no evasions.”*<sup>6</sup>

The trust built through strong character and honorable living also brings tangible benefits to each of us, our unit, and our country. Graduates will enjoy professional autonomy and the respect granted to a member of the Army Profession. Units operate more efficiently under the mission command philosophy without the close management required in a unit plagued with mistrust. Finally, the Nation benefits from having an Army that provides security in an honorable way, knowing that each Army professional will fulfill that responsibility without abusing his/her authority.

## **The Need for a Character Development Strategy**

West Point needs a character development strategy to better integrate and synchronize the many programs and people who impact cadet character. Furthermore, we require an assessment plan to ensure we are fulfilling our mission. We must ensure we are not only doing the right things, but also doing things right. A clear strategy will help us do so.

Additionally, recent assessment indicates trends that trust, honor, and toleration are areas we should address. For example, surveys indicate that not all cadets have internalized the spirit of the Honor Code by the time that they graduate.<sup>7</sup> Extensive focus group interviews with cadets indicate that toleration is a challenging issue within the Corps of Cadets for six major reasons:

1. **Severe Punishment:** Cadets believe that the punishment for violating the Honor Code is too severe for most Honor violations. Cadets make a distinction between a “big” lie and a

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<sup>5</sup> ADRP 1 The Army Profession, June 2013, p. 2-1.

<sup>6</sup> Secretary of War Baker was quoted by MG Maxwell Taylor in a white paper, “West Point Honor System: Its Objectives and Procedures,” access on October 14, 2014 at: <http://www.west-point.org/users/usma1983/40768/docs/taylor.html>.

<sup>7</sup> SHRC Update to the Superintendent, SHRC Briefing dated 04 DEC 14.



“small” lie. As a result, cadets view the Superintendent’s options (i.e. six-month Honor Mentorship Program, December graduation, full-year turn back, two-year Academy/Army Mentorship Program, and separation) as too harsh for “small” offenses.

2. **Personal Impact:** Cadets fear tarnishing their own personal reputation and standing with their peers. They also fear “ruining someone’s career” because of a “small” offense.
3. **Low Trust in the Honor System:** Cadets believe the Honor System is too random in its outcomes, has different standards for different populations, and is subject to outside influence by lawyers and officers. Staff and faculty also mistrust the system because they believe too many cadets are not being found for obvious violations of the Honor Code.
4. **Bad Cost-Benefit:** It takes too much time and effort to conduct a Cadet Advisory Board (CAB) or Honor Investigation Hearing (HIH). This time investment detracts from other requirements that do not get delayed. Therefore, some cadets are content with bystander indifference because it saves them personal time and energy.
5. **If Others Tolerate, So Will I:** Some staff, faculty and coaches believe that they can adjudicate “minor” Honor violations at their level through counseling or corrective training. Cadets see this poor example and follow suit. The harder right is to always report the suspected Honor violation and allow a cadet Honor investigative team to make a recommendation to either pursue or drop the case. Only the Superintendent has the authority to grant discretion; however, some staff, faculty, coaches, and cadets usurp his authority by either ignoring a suspected Honor violation or thinking that they can handle the situation at their level without the involvement of the Cadet Honor Committee.
6. **Competing Loyalties:** From the start of their West Point experience, cadets are reminded continuously about the importance of relationships and the concept of “cooperate and graduate.” Both concepts contribute to the perception that turning in a fellow cadet, especially a classmate or teammate, is the equivalent of disloyalty or betrayal.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, there are some examples of what appears to be overt toleration by cadet Honor Panels that disregard unequivocal evidence of an Honor violation and render a “not-found” verdict based upon lack of premeditated intent and stressful circumstances. Cadets have testified that sleep deprivation caused them to lie, cheat, or steal without the intent to deceive or gain personal advantage. Their argument is that they are not accountable for their actions because of the tremendous academic, physical, and military training workload placed on all cadets. Recent Honor Panels have accepted this rationale and struggled with their responsibilities to consider the facts, judge their cadet peers, and make a recommendation to the Superintendent (i.e. act as stewards of the Cadet Honor Code and system).

This strategy provides a plan to address these trends, which are inconsistent with good character.

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<sup>8</sup> These reasons are based on data collected from OCT 13 – DEC 14 during a series of cadet focus groups conducted by the SHRC and the Honorable Living Tiger Team.

## **Character Development Goals (Ends)**

There are **three overarching goals** for this Character Development Strategy:

1. Military and civilian staff and faculty, coaches, and cadets acknowledge that **change is necessary** to shift from behaviors extrinsically motivated by fear and compliance with the Cadet Honor Code and regulations to intrinsic behaviors that demonstrate internalization of the ideals of Duty, Honor, Country and the Army Ethic.
2. Establish a thoughtful character development model that describes what actions are necessary and periodically assesses the strategy's effectiveness.
3. Set the conditions for integrating, synchronizing, and assessing individual and collective efforts at the department/directorate level.

At the **individual level**, the goal is to develop these **five facets of character** in each graduate:<sup>9</sup>

1. **Moral:** Internalization of the Army Values that results in the knowledge, integrity, and awareness to assess the moral-ethical aspects of every situation and the personal courage to take appropriate action regardless of consequences.
2. **Performance:** The sense of duty, resilience, and grit necessary to accomplish the mission and get results.
3. **Civic:** The empathy, loyalty, respect, and humility that enables an individual to treat others with dignity and display selflessness.
4. **Leadership:** The ability to inspire and develop others while establishing a safe, positive command climate where everyone thrives while achieving tangible results.
5. **Social:** The ability to act with the proper professional decorum in all professional, social, and online environments.<sup>10</sup>

At the **group level** within companies, teams, and clubs, we are inspiring excellence and developing individual cadet character by demonstrating the following:

1. **Positive Command Climate:** The importance of treating people with dignity and respect while ensuring a safe and positive environment where everyone can thrive.
2. **Winning Culture:** How to pursue excellence and win in a manner consistent with Army Values and good sportsmanship.

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<sup>9</sup> Seider, Scott. Character Compass: How Powerful School Culture Can Point Students Toward Success. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> The first three facets of character listed are from Scott Seider's work cited above. The Leadership and Social facets of character were added by the SCPME based on a broader description of character more appropriate for West Point's mission and the expectations of commissioned service.

3. **Enforcing Standards:** Upholding the professional requirement to enforce standards and self-police the individuals and culture of the organization.
4. **Maintaining Proper Loyalty:** Harnessing the strengths of cohesion and accountability in small organizations while maintaining values consistent with Duty, Honor, and Country.

At the **Academy level** (SUPE, DEAN, CMDT, ODIA, Admissions):

1. **Consistent Policies and Messages:** Ensure that all policies and command decisions are consistent with espoused values that facilitate honorable living.
2. **Staff, Faculty, Coaches as Exemplars:** All members of the West Point leader development community enforce and uphold standards; lead and inspire by example.
3. **Time Allocation:** Protect adequate time for mentor relationships and structured reflection.
4. **Assessment:** Manage an effective character development assessment process.
5. **Talent Management:** Manage accessions, development, evaluation, and attrition to ensure the best candidates are selected, all cadets are properly evaluated, and the cadets who do not demonstrate proper character are either placed into a developmental program or separated.

### **Character Development Guiding Principles and Model (Ways)**

West Point character development starts with Cadet Basic Training and continues through graduation. All cadets enter West Point with their own set of personal values shaped by their family, friends, communities, school, athletic teams, etc. Ideally, their values align with Army Values. However, the West Point Character Development Strategy exists to describe how we close any values gaps that might exist between what a cadet candidate brings to West Point and the internalization of Army Values by graduation.

The process begins with education so that they understand what is expected of them as cadets and officers. This establishes their “left and right” limits for acceptable behavior as a member of the Army Profession. They will then experience several challenges that require them to exercise one or more of the five facets of character. After the experience, which should make them uncomfortable, we must provide them time for structured reflection and introspection so they understand where they are and where they need further development. This iterative, continuous process does not happen in a single event. Every year, we begin character development for 1,000 new cadets and continue developing 3,000 other cadets, all of whom are at a different level of internalization. This is certainly no easy task.

## Guiding Principles

There is no perfect development model. All involved with character development will face situations where they have to use their best judgment for developing a young person's character. In the absence of specific guidance, these guiding principles can help you decide how to lead and maximize the cadet character development experience.

1. **The goal is internalization, not simply compliance.** Leaders of character are intrinsically motivated to live honorably because there is inherent value in virtue. They are not extrinsically motivated simply to avoid punishment or gain reward. Explain to them why this is essential to both mission accomplishment and the maintenance of trust with their Soldiers, non-commissioned officers, peers, families, and the chain of command.
2. **Character development is an iterative, continuous process.** Character development is unique for each cadet and requires multiple, iterative experiences under the mentorship of staff, faculty, and coaches who educate, train, and inspire individual cadets. Staff, faculty and coaches should continually remind cadets that development and mentorship are not limited to formal instruction and counseling. Mentorship and development experiences can also include spontaneous, informal, and short duration events that happen throughout the normal routine of a typical cadet day.
3. **Character development at West Point is a mutual responsibility.** Once each cadet takes ownership of his/her own development, every member of the West Point team must also teach, support, mentor, and inspire cadets as they navigate the iterative process of character development.
4. **Character development must be deliberate.** The Academic, Military, Physical, and Character Programs must clearly define and assess their character outcome goals for the appropriate facets of character. All program leaders must ensure their activities and policies support the overall character development strategy without undermining or impeding the goals of another program. Great outcomes may have some spontaneity, but permanent change comes from deliberate effort. Finally, mentors and instructors must explain to cadets how and why the activity facilitates character development.
5. **Leaders develop leaders.** The best way to provide purpose, motivation, and direction for a cadet's character development is to be a moral exemplar and mentor. Staff, faculty and coaches must all display the appropriate attitudes and behaviors that inspire cadets to live honorably and build trust. We must invest time, effort, and attention not only to educate and train, but also to inspire and challenge each cadet.

## Character Development Model

We will align our efforts by implementing a commonly understood and approved model of cadet and character development. ***Building Capacity to Lead***, which establishes the framework for the West Point Leader Development System (WPLDS), provides a detailed Cadet Developmental Model (Figure 1).

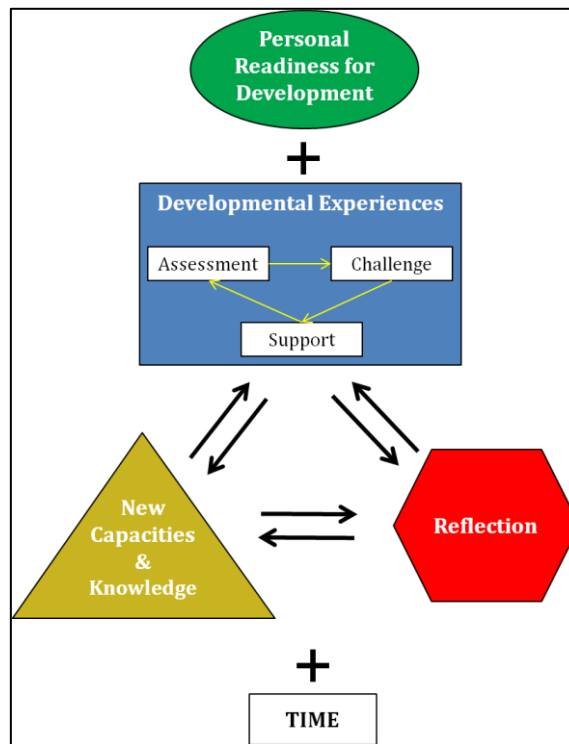


Figure 1. Cadet Developmental Model.

The Cadet Developmental Model consists of five components for developing individual character:

1. **Personal Readiness for Development:** Cadets must be open and ready to learn from their experiences. The staff and faculty have a responsibility to remind cadets how various experiences contribute to their character development and prepare them for service.
2. **Developmental Experiences:** The Academy must provide cadets developmental experiences that are challenging, assessed, and supported. These experiences can be planned or spontaneous. Each experience helps cadets understand themselves and others in a new way.
3. **Reflection:** The Academy must afford cadets opportunities for structured reflection so they understand the gaps in their development. Two of the most powerful reflective methods are journaling and meeting with mentors who have high expectations for them.
4. **New Capacities and Knowledge:** The combination of developmental experiences, classroom education, and structured reflection produces new perspectives, understanding, and skills.

5. **Time:** Development requires a significant investment of time for cadets, staff, faculty, and coaches. Each part of this model requires time allocated for preparation, structured reflection, and assessment. Inadequate time allocation reduces the impact of the experiences and handicaps the developmental process.<sup>11</sup>

This model and the guiding principles are the ways each person, program, department, and directorate will approach character development. These ways support USMA Strategic Goal 1 (Develop the Corps of Cadets) by ensuring that at the conclusion of the 47-month experience, cadets do, “Live Honorably and Build Trust,” which is the first WPLDS outcome. When designing, improving, or assessing any character development opportunity, all department heads and directors must ensure that they incorporate the guiding principles and the basic elements of this model.

### **Program, Group, and Academy Support for Character Development (Means)**

The Academic, Military, Physical, and Character Programs are the primary means for developing the five facets of individual character. The four programs have primary character goals highlighted in green and the supporting goals highlighted in yellow (Table 1). For example, the Academic Program has primary character development goals in the moral, performance and social facets of character. As supporting goals, the Academic Program develops civic and leadership character. The other programs contribute to primary and supporting character goals based on their activities.

**Academic Program (Red Book).** The Academic Program provides knowledge about moral-ethical reasoning and opportunities for critical thinking and reflection. Core courses in philosophy, psychology, military leadership, and Constitutional law (among others) provide foundational understanding and opportunities for application. The Red Book provides the following goal for ethical reasoning – *recognize ethical issues and apply ethical perspectives in decision making*.

**Table 1: Program Contributions to Character Development**

		Development Program			
		Academic	Military	Physical	Character
Character Facet	Moral				
	Civic				
	Performance				
	Leadership				
	Social				

<sup>11</sup> Building Capacity to Lead: The West Point System for Leader Development (United States Military Academy at West Point, 2009), 20-22.

**Military Program (Green Book).** Character development is woven throughout the military program which emphasizes performance and leadership character. The Green Book reflects a strong character development component: *Cadets will demonstrate courage, character, integrity and toughness; understand and demonstrate effective leadership.* Progressive leader development experiences allow cadets to establish and refine their own values to ensure they are consistent with the ideals of West Point and the Army Ethic. Summer leadership experiences and Academic Year Periodic Development Reviews (PDRs) provide cadets with necessary feedback on their leadership, character, and competence. TAC teams and the cadet chain of command provide individual and collective character feedback in many forms throughout the year.

**Physical Program (White Book).** The Physical Program focuses on the performance and leadership facets of character by increasing physical and mental toughness, strengthening courage through personal and team adversity, developing a winning spirit, and demonstrating good sportsmanship. Department of Physical Education instructors, ODIA coaches, competitive club officers-in-charge and officer representatives challenge and inspire cadets to increase their performance and leadership character. The White Book provides the character goal: *Develop in cadets the moral-ethical attributes essential for effective leadership; Mental and Physical courage, balance and lifelong commitment.* Active participation in Division I sports, competitive clubs, and/or company athletics provides every cadet a daily opportunity to develop physically, mentally and ethically. Physical tests (APFT, IOCT) and Physical Individual Advanced Development assess cadet mental and physical toughness.

**Character Program (Gold Book – TBP).** The Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic (SCPME), in conjunction with the Brigade Tactical Department is responsible for planning, executing, and assessing the Character Program that focuses on the moral, civic, and social facets of character. The foundation of this program is the Professional Military Ethic Education (PME2) which is executed during both Cadet Basic Training and Commandant's Hour during the Academic year. The major themes of Honorable Living (Compliance and Thriving Under the Cadet Honor Code, SHARP, Respect, and Social /Online Decorum) are key components of PME2. PME2 will transition to the Cadet Character Development Program (CCDP) during the 2015-2016 academic year. CCDP will continue to focus on the major themes of Honorable Living but will also emphasize increased empowerment and ownership by the cadet chain of command and more closely align with ADRP 1 The Army Profession and ADP 6-0 Mission Command. The Character Program describes how the entire Academy team (ODIA, 13 academic departments, DMI, and DPE) assists SCPME and inspires the Corps of Cadets by providing mentors for PME2/CCDP, MX400 Mission Command Conference, and developmental programs (Honor and Respect mentorship). The goal for each of these programs is to educate cadets on moral-ethical topics, to challenge them with critical thinking experiences, and to provide structured reflection. These goals support cadet ownership of their character development and internalization of shared values.

**Social Development.** While the Academy does not have a distinct social program, the social aspect of character is integrated throughout the Academic, Military, Physical, and Character Programs. The goal of social development helps cadets identify themselves as part of the military profession and, more specifically, as a leader of character within that profession. Throughout our formal programs, and within the various social activities, each staff and faculty member, coach, officer representative, and sponsor must be a role model and moral exemplar. Each of us must take every opportunity to mentor cadets and contribute to their development, in and out of the classroom, on the field, at our



homes, while on a trip section, or during a chance contact. Every contact with our cadets provides a unique opportunity to mentor and develop them. We desire graduates who can interact appropriately with others in a wide range of cultural, social and professional settings displaying proper etiquette and dress, consideration of others, and respect for social and professional conventions and traditions. In essence, we desire graduates who display professional decorum at all times. The standard for proper decorum extends to online forums where statements and pictures can harm others or portray a lifestyle inconsistent with Army Values. Anonymity and alcohol are not excuses for improper, unprofessional conduct. Examples of social development include participation in the various cadet clubs, athletic and academic trip sections, the Semester Abroad Program, intercollegiate athletics, staff and faculty sponsorship, etiquette courses, cadet functions (spirit dinners, holiday meal, class-specific formals), and student conferences (SCUSA, the Class of 1970 National Conference on Ethics in America, the McDonald Cadet Leadership Conference, the MX400 Mission Command Conference, etc.).

**Group Programs:** Many groups at West Point contribute to character development in a variety of ways. Groups are often the primary source of development and a key source of variety in the character development experience. USCC companies, DCA clubs, and ODIA athletic teams are examples of the various groups that establish sub-cultures at West Point. These sub-cultures can have a tremendously positive effect on character development by achieving the objectives previously listed. Without proper stewardship by the cadets and the group leadership, however, these sub-cultures can undermine character development. The group's leadership has a responsibility to ensure their company, team, or club provides the positive example of command climate, winning culture, enforcement of standards, and proper loyalty.

**Academy Programs:** Senior leaders and their staffs have responsibilities for resourcing, supporting, and assessing character development. The institution must ensure that policies and decisions are consistent with espoused values and enable character development throughout the Academy. Setting and enforcing standards throughout the staff and faculty are critical for providing the cadets an inspirational example of good character. Additionally, staff and faculty should seek mentorship opportunities to strengthen cadet character, rehabilitate those who struggle, and separate those who cannot or will not demonstrate the character expected of a cadet or officer.

### **Character Development Assessment**

SCPME is responsible for assessing character development on the Superintendent's behalf and is also the proponent for the first WPLDS outcome, "Live Honorably and Build Trust." The assessment includes both direct and indirect measures for individual cadets and organizational culture. SCPME coordinates with the Superintendent's Honor Review Committee (SHRC) and the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to collect and analyze data from several sources to include the Corps of Cadets, staff, faculty, coaches, recent graduates, field commanders, and former battalion commanders. This effort augments character assessment in other programs such as academic key experiences and course grades, the Character in Sports Index, military key experience, military development grades, and Periodic Development Reviews (PDRs).

The PDR is the only individual assessment of character outside the other four programs. The PDR is a multi-faceted assessment of leader competencies and attributes that map directly into the five facets of character described earlier in this strategy. The PDRs are conducted each semester and are used to assess individual character traits to develop individual cadets. Five additional

annual assessment tools are used to assess the state of character development. The five assessment tools are the Character Development Survey, the SHRC Honor Survey (cadets and faculty), the New Faculty Leader Development Survey, the Basic Officer Leadership Course Survey, and the U.S. Army War College Survey. These surveys are indirect assessments of cadet attitudes and behaviors, which enable military and civilian staff, faculty, and coaches to reinforce / reward excellence and correct attitudes and behavior that is not aligned with West Point's values.

These additional surveys capture trends in character development. Each survey maps questions into the following categories: the five facets of character, cadet attitudes toward the Honor System, performance of graduates in the operational force, and West Point program effectiveness. Annual adjustments are made to activities in each program and Academy policies based on the survey results. SCPME will coordinate with the OIR and other programs to annually assess character development and provide a formal assessment to the Superintendent at the beginning of each academic year.

### **Specified Tasks**

Publishing a strategy is only the first step. Effective implementation is the true test of an excellent organization. The first actions required of every department and directorate follow:

1. **Shared Understanding:** Department heads, coaches, and directors must ensure that all members of their organizations read the Character Development Strategy and understand the Character Development Model.
2. **Assessment:** Each program leader will assess the character dimensions of his/her program using specific character development goals and direct assessment tools whenever possible.
3. **Activity Inventory:** Department heads, coaches, and directorates will identify at least five significant character development activities that utilize the guidelines and Character Development Model to integrate character development into existing activities. These activities will be shared across all departments, teams, and directorates.
4. **Expand the Conversation:** Department heads, coaches, and directors will brainstorm ideas to further the discussion of character development within their department, initiate collaboration between Academy organizations, and increase Academy wide adoption of best practices.
5. **Reward Excellence in Character:** Department heads, coaches, and directors will identify ways to publicly recognize and reward examples of individual character and honorable living.
6. **Evaluate Policies for Consistency:** Seek feedback from within your organization to identify policies that are inconsistent with espoused values, impede character development, or send mixed messages about priorities. Recommend solutions or policy changes within the appropriate organizational authority (i.e. the Dean, Commandant, or Director of Intercollegiate Athletics).
7. **Annual Report:** The Dean, Commandant, and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics will present an annual report that provides the Superintendent an overview and assessment of

these six implementation tasks. The scheduling and the report format are at the discretion of the briefing organization and the Superintendent to allow sufficient flexibility for integration into established assessment reports.

## **Conclusion**

This strategy provides the ends, ways, and means for ensuring West Point programs and activities are integrated and synchronized in support of West Point's mission to provide the Nation with commissioned leaders of character. This strategy is a call to action for every member of the West Point team to understand his/her role in character development and to take the necessary steps to ensure that **each graduate** is certified in character, competence, and commitment before commissioning.





# **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The William E. Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic  
December 2014

