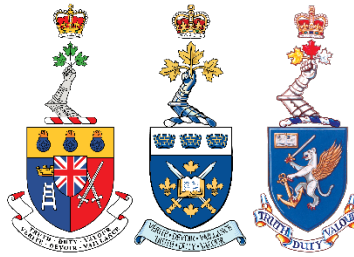


**RMC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION DES ANCIEN(NE)S DES CMR**



## **Responding to the CMC Review: Towards Renewal**

### **The Process**

#### **The Arbour Report, the Canadian Military Colleges Review Board (CMCRB), and RMCAA's Strategy**

##### *Where it started: The Arbour Report recommendations*

Imagine a world where every leader inspires those around them to greatness, no matter the situation. That is the kind of leadership the RMC Alumni Association wants to cultivate in graduates of the Canadian Military Colleges (CMCs). Our view is that by responding to the CMC Review and to [recommendations #28 and #29 from the Arbour Report](#) we can help shape a roadmap to this vision.

**Recommendation #28:** The Cadet Wing responsibility and authority command structure should be eliminated.

The RMCAA's view is that the Cadet Wing structure should not be eliminated but that it must be vastly improved so that it can achieve desired leadership outcomes while minimizing opportunities for misconduct – including abuse of power.

The most fundamental change involves a much higher level of staff supervision of cadets. Canada's partner countries apply 24/7 supervision by the most qualified military instructors to the training of officers.

With appropriate supervision Cadets can rotate leadership roles frequently, allowing everyone to experience various positions and responsibilities, thus developing a more holistic understanding of leadership. This approach fosters teamwork, mutual respect, and a sense of collective ownership, essential qualities for effective leadership.

The dynamic assignment of roles for specific tasks would test different leadership styles. This way cadet wing leaders must display and be assessed on specific traits. A 360-degree approach allowing peers, superiors, and subordinates to weigh in on how the cadet leader performs his/her duties would allow for constant, real-time feedback and learning.

Alongside this rotational model, the CMCs can implement structured mentorship programs where military staff mentor senior cadets who, in turn, mentor junior cadets. This provides

valuable guidance and role modeling for future leaders and facilitates the transfer of knowledge, skills, and values essential for effective leadership. Mentorship also helps create a supportive environment where cadets can learn from each other's experiences and perspectives, further enhancing their leadership capabilities.

**Recommendation #29:** An expert panel should review the benefits, disadvantages, and costs<sup>1</sup> of continuing to educate cadets at the CMCs.

This recommendation, like recommendation 28, brings into question the continuation of the CMCs as undergraduate degree institutions. The response to sexual misconduct is an essential element of the recommended review but the reach is much broader than that.

The RMCAA believes that the CMCs have an important role to play in the future of Canada. The RMCAA sees this review as an opportunity to take a step back to see how the Canadian Military College (ROTP) program can be improved to better prepare cadets to lead, inspire, succeed, and for life in the Canadian Armed Forces, including the military's unique role in Canadian society. The CMCs are unique, national institutions, that each have played a key role in the history of building Canada as a country. It is not enough, however, to rely on this legacy of contribution to Canada as the rationale for their continuation. Improvement is needed.

The RMCAA wants to contribute constructively to the review process while addressing cultural issues and misconduct in the college environment. This means creating a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone feels respected, safe, and valued. This can be done through enhanced education and training programs that promote diversity, inclusion, and respect among cadets and provide better supervision. Ensuring that CMC graduates understand and live up to the CAF Ethos – Trusted to Serve, are skilled, adaptive, leaders, and compassionate, empathetic individuals of exemplary character who can inspire others to greatness.

Rigorous independent review of recommendations #28 and #29 will produce a better experience and can help Canada's Military Colleges produce future leaders who lead, inspire, and succeed in any situation. Such a review acknowledges a fundamental difference between a cadet at a CMC and a student at a university – those who attend a CMC may potentially be asked to give their life or take a life in the service of Canada. By adopting a collaborative leadership model, enhancing academic programs, promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion, providing more effective supervision, and implementing mentorship programs, the CMCs can be a beacon of leadership excellence in Canada for future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> The RMCAA does not have the resources or expertise to do a detailed cost analysis of the CMC program. Its focus is on the execution of the strategic intent of the program and how it can be delivered.

## ***The CMC Review Board***

The Government responded to the Arbour Report by appointing the Canadian Military Colleges Review Board (CMCRB) to:

...analyze the costs, benefits, advantages, and disadvantages, both to the CAF and Canada, of continuing to educate Regular Officer Training Plan (ROTP) naval/officer cadets at Canada's two military colleges...

The CMCRB is Chaired by Dr. Kathy Hogarth of Wilfrid Laurier University and includes three senior educators, a human resource professional, a senior public servant and the previous Commandant of the Canadian Army Command and Staff College (Colonel Kyle Solomon, RMC 1997). The five external appointees were selected through a competitive process designed to select candidates with a diverse range of experiences and expertise with demonstrated independence and impartiality.

The CMCRB is mandated to use an evidence-based approach to fulfill its mandate<sup>2</sup>. It has been directed to "...consult broadly with subject-matter experts across a range of domains, both in Canada and abroad..." These two elements of the CMCRB mandate have informed the response of the RMCAA to the Arbour Report.

For the RMCAA to credibly advance its position that the CMCs can be improved and are a valuable tool to cultivate future leaders of the CAF its response must be:

- Evidence based.
- Draw upon subject matter expertise.
- Consider practises:
  - As they were in Canada; and,
  - As they are in other jurisdictions.

The CMCRB commenced its work on January 15, 2024. It has completed four weeks of orientation briefings at the Canadian Defence Academy Headquarters and visited both RMC and RMC St-Jean. With a reporting deadline of December 2024, the CMCRB has begun seeking information from stakeholders during their "information gathering" phase. It is anticipated that the RMCAA Board of Directors will have an initial interaction with the CMCRB in early June.

## ***The RMCAA's Strategy***

The RMCAA determined early on that a professional response was necessary to address the significant questions raised by the Arbour Report. With the generous support of a philanthropic donor, it launched a competitive process to identify the expertise necessary to support its submission. Boston Consulting Group (lead consultant Genevieve Bonin – RMC 1993) was the successful bidder.

BCG's proposal included the following elements:

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<sup>2</sup> [Canadian Military College Review Board – Terms of Reference](#)

- A scan of previous reports and work on CMC operations and the Arbour Report;
- A survey of ex-cadets (e-mail survey, focus groups and one-on one interviews) to get a better understanding of the experiences of ex-cadets;
- One-on-one interviews of individuals with expertise in education or the operation of other military academies;
- Benchmarking the CMCs against military academies in the other ‘Five Eyes’ countries;
- Looking at the best practices of academic and private-sector learning institutions; and,
- Integrating submissions from individual ex-cadets (more than two hundred) and classes (4).

Response development has been overseen at all stages by a Steering Committee<sup>3</sup> (chaired by Michèle Mullen – RRMC 1991) with eight members – among the committee members are six veterans (four of whom are alumni) and four members with a background in education or mental health.

The SteerCo held a series of five formal meetings during which the research completed by BCG and draft findings were discussed and debated to produce a series of broad recommendations for change.

The RMCAA’s goal in this process is to develop a response to the Arbour Report that undeniably demonstrates an immersive undergraduate experience at the CMCs is still the best way to forge the top-notch future military leaders that Canada needs. The response will also make specific and constructive recommendations for how to tackle cultural issues and misconduct while providing an environment where all cadets feel valued and thrive.



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<sup>3</sup> [November 13, 2023](#) update includes biographies of Steering Committee members.