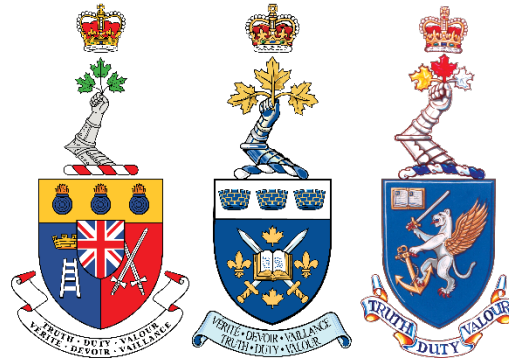


# RMC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION L'ASSOCIATION DES ANCIEN(NE)S DES CMR



## Responding to the CMC Review: Towards Renewal – What we learned from Allies and Canadian post-secondary institutions

### Summary

As part of preparing to engage with the CMC Review Board, we conducted an extensive benchmarking study of military academies in the US, UK, and Australia, as well as Canadian civilian universities. This study identified best practices in program structure, instructor / cadet roles and selection processes, and strategies to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) and address misconduct.

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As part of preparing to engage with the CMC Review Board, alongside conducting a detailed alumni survey and reviewing alumni submissions, the RMCAA undertook a comprehensive benchmarking study involving Canadian universities and international military academies. The study includes reviewing public domain reports and news articles, as well as interviews with former leaders, instructors and graduates of the U.S. service academies, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (UK), and the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).

The benchmarking focused on five topics:

- Program structure of Allied service academies
- Military instructor roles and selection processes
- Cadet leader selection processes
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) strategies and initiatives
- Initiatives to address misconduct and mental health

### Program structure of Allied service academies

There are various models for program structure in Allied service academies. The Canadian Military Colleges (CMCs) and U.S. service academies offer four/five-year undergraduate degree programs combined with military and athletic training, often requiring cadets to live on campus (boarding). Meanwhile, the ADFA offers a joint four-year program with civilian universities, where the military oversees physical and military training while UNSW Canberra<sup>1</sup> manages the academic component. Conversely, the Royal Military Academy (Sandhurst) model has candidates complete degrees at civilian universities followed by one year of post-graduate military training.

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<sup>1</sup> University of New South Wales, Canberra

There are advantages and disadvantages to each model. However, the four/five-year boarding program structure offers officer and naval cadets unique developmental opportunities, such as experiential leadership, formation of strong bonds between peers, strong familiarity with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), early development of basic military skills and inculcation of values. Indeed, a significant majority of CMC alumni — nearly nine in ten (86%) — agree that the CMCs effectively prepared them for careers in the CAF and beyond, and a similar proportion (92%) believe that the program structure equipped them to tackle challenging situations. The one-year Sandhurst model has the advantage of being seen as a true “leadership center of excellence” for the British Army and driving consistency in officer training across all cohorts. However, other academies, like West Point, also provide a model recognized for leadership excellence that combines undergraduate education with military training and athletics.

*“Managing my responsibilities as a cadet and varsity athlete helped prepare me for the intensity of army operations.” - CMC Graduate, Class of 2000-2009*

### **Military instructor roles and selection processes**

In the CMCs, the Training Wing instructors are primarily involved in supervising the Cadet Wing. These military instructors are the first exposure to the CAF outside of basic training. Our alumni survey results suggest opportunities for improvement in instructor selection, given the importance of having good role models in these positions.

At U.K. and U.S. service academies, there are various initiatives to attract, select and retain the best military talent as instructors. At Sandhurst, instructors are primarily non-commissioned officers, under the theory that officers are best trained by the soldiers they will ultimately lead. The selection process is highly competitive, taking up to three years from nomination to selection, culminating in a four-week course consisting of arduous mental and physical assessments.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, instructors are eligible for fast-track promotions and receive civilian education accreditation after ~2 years, enhancing the role's appeal. Similarly, in the US, instructors receive strong career recognition in command and leadership, and can complete additional graduate studies as an incentive. For instance, USAFA<sup>3</sup> instructors have opportunity to complete a Masters in Counselling and Leadership at the University of Colorado.<sup>4</sup> These structured programs and emphasis on professional development ensure that instructors are among the best of the best from the armed forces, and are also effective educators and mentors.

*“Serving as an instructor in Sandhurst is known as getting ‘the Golden Ticket’ because you are fast tracked to success.” - Former UK Army leader*

### **Cadet leadership selection processes**

At CMCs, the Cadet Wing offers important opportunities for experiential learning opportunities for officer and naval cadets in more senior years, mirroring the hierarchical nature of the CAF's chain of command. The Cadet Wing has been recommended for elimination in the IECR because of issues with culture and safety. Structures similar to the CMC Cadet Wing can be found in all allied service academies.<sup>5</sup> The U.S. academies have three robust features to limit misuse of power among cadet leaders. First, informal and formal peer evaluations are used in cadet leader selection,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://bootcampmilitaryfitnessinstitute.com/military-training/armed-forces-of-the-united-kingdom/british-army-phase-1-initial-military-training/the-sandhurst-group-snco-instructor-cadre/>

<sup>3</sup> US Air Force Academy

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.usafa.edu/aoc-mp/>

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN INSTRUCTION 1601.12E (Aug 31 2021), USNA (<https://www.usna.edu/Commandant/Directives/Instructions/1000-1999/COMDTMIDNINST-1601.12E-BRIGADE-STRIPER-ORGANIZATION-AND-SELECTION-PROCEDURES.pdf>)

with defined criteria for character and leadership ability. Second, there is more staff supervision during night/off hours, with many instructors living on campus. Third, cadet leaders do not have disciplinary authority, only being able to impose remedial training, such as physical exercises, while sanctions require training instructor/officer approval (e.g., confinement to base). The majority of the CMC alumni surveyed (81%) agree that the Cadet Wing structure at the CMCs enables experiential leadership and should not be dismantled. However, the findings of the benchmarking study underscore opportunities to enhance peer leadership, restructure the selection process, realign authorities for sanctions, and improve supervision.

*“The officers would come to us and ask – ‘We want to make this person a leader, what do you think?’” - USMA graduate*

## **DE&I Strategies and Initiatives**

CMCs lag in DE&I metrics: visible minorities represent ~24-26% of CMCs compared to ~40% at Canadian universities, and women represent ~23% of students at CMCs versus ~40-50% at other universities.<sup>6</sup>

The CMCs have DE&I strategies in place, including the Athena Network and AGORA. The Athena Network, created by two professors and with the full support of the commandants and chains of command, offers all CMC cadets unique opportunities to meet and share ideas with current and former CAF members, and alumni, through networking and mentorship activities. The Athena Network’s primary focus is to encourage women’s initiatives and discussions on gender roles at the CMCs. AGORA is the CMCs support and social group for Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex Plus (2SLGBTQI+) communities and their allies. Monthly meetings include ‘talking circles’, guest speakers, film nights, social events, and discussions on various topics.

Our benchmarking observed that there are many DE&I initiatives at civilian universities that could further inform DE&I strategy improvements at the CMCs. For recruitment and retention, McGill University has launched the 'Branches' program, which provides academic programming and community mentorship for under-represented youth. McGill has also published a DE&I Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 outlining five main aspirations and conducts student demographic surveys to inform enrollment and operational decisions. Queen’s University's Access and Inclusion team actively engages with underserved communities in the GTA and Ottawa, assisting with applications, financial aid information, campus tours and events.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, they use interim metrics to publicly track and enhance representation from under-represented groups, ensuring accountability.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Western University's 'Big Sister/Little Sister'<sup>9</sup> system supports female students often underrepresented in engineering programs.

## **Initiatives to address misconduct and better support mental health**

We researched mental health supports and misconduct prevention programs in Allied service academies and civilian universities. We recognize that the CMCs have existing programs and supports in place for student success, and mental health support, including the Sentinel Program, and Resilience Plus which is actively supported by the RMCAA.

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<sup>6</sup> IEQR. Ranges based on differences between RMC Kingston and RMC Saint-Jean, and various civilian universities

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.queensu.ca/admission/access/first-generation-supports>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.queensu.ca/inclusive/initiatives/progress>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eng.uwo.ca/undergraduate/women-in-engineering.html>

U.S. service academies have dedicated offices to address harassment and misconduct. For instance, the USAFA<sup>10</sup> has an Equal Opportunity Office,<sup>11</sup> the USNA<sup>12</sup> operates a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office<sup>13</sup> with expert staff, and the USMA<sup>14</sup> has the ACT Program<sup>15</sup> where cadets lead preventive peer discussions. Additionally, support and rehabilitation efforts are significant. The USMA's Return to Health<sup>16</sup> policy supports cadet recovery after sexual assault by ensuring access to necessary services, while the USNA offers the NeuroFlow<sup>17</sup> program, teaching resilience techniques to 4,500 midshipmen to improve mental well-being.

Canadian universities like McGill University have established extensive programs to educate on and deter harassment and sexual violence.<sup>18</sup> The mandatory "It Takes All of Us" program is designed to enhance awareness and foster a community free from sexual violence. Additional initiatives include mandatory faculty training, strict alcohol and drug policies, the appointment of an Ombudsperson, and "WalkSafe," a peer buddy system to improve security. McGill also has an Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education, which handles investigation processes and aids with reporting. It offers direct support through group therapy, trauma support groups, various self-care options, and crisis response planning that advises on post-assault protection and security measures. These comprehensive measures aim to address misconduct and improve mental health outcomes, ensuring that both cadets and students have access to comprehensive prevention and support programs.

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<sup>10</sup> US Air Force Academy

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.usafa.af.mil/Portals/21/documents/10ABW/10ABW\\_EqualOpportunityOffice/EqualOpportunityFlyer2018.pdf?ver=2018-04-04-102725-930](https://www.usafa.af.mil/Portals/21/documents/10ABW/10ABW_EqualOpportunityOffice/EqualOpportunityFlyer2018.pdf?ver=2018-04-04-102725-930)

<sup>12</sup> US Naval Academy

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.navy.mwrannapolis.com/family-support/fleet-and-family-support/sexual-assault-prevention-responseprogram#:~:text=The%20Sexual%20Assault%20Prevention%20and,%2C%20respect%2C%20and%20trust%2C%20while>

<sup>14</sup> US Military Academy

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.westpoint.edu/news/press-releases/west-point-remains-committed-creating-culture-of-trust#:~:text=Established%20the%20ACT%20\(Addressing%20Sexual,student%20body%20of%204%2C400%20cadets.](https://www.westpoint.edu/news/press-releases/west-point-remains-committed-creating-culture-of-trust#:~:text=Established%20the%20ACT%20(Addressing%20Sexual,student%20body%20of%204%2C400%20cadets.)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.westpoint.edu/about/academy-leadership/superintendent/sexual-harassment-assault-response-prevention>

<sup>17</sup> <https://start.neuroflow.com/usna>

<sup>18</sup> McGill University website