ABSTRACT

The Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point) is one of five U.S. federal service academies. Students, called “midshipmen” on campus and “cadets” while at sea, graduate with Bachelor of Science degrees and U.S. Coast Guard licenses as Third Mates or Third Assistant Engineers. All graduates (with the exception of those who choose “active duty” military service for a minimum of five years) must accept, if offered, an eight-year commission in the Naval Reserve. The Academy has a four-year program, with one year (broken into two parts) devoted to student apprenticeship on commercial vessels at sea. Until July 1974, Academy education was single sex -- exclusively male. This paper will explore the changes in maritime education and training following the inclusion of women as students at the Academy.

The paper argues that efforts to integrate women at Kings Point had lasting impact on its training and educational programs, to the benefit of both men and women students. Initially, the Academy took a laissez faire approach to women’s entry. By defining equality as sameness, Academy administrators assumed that women would adjust to the status quo. High rates of female attrition, estrangement, and underachievement, and changes in U.S. laws, altered this course. By redefining equality as the recognition of differences, the Academy began to change its leadership program and took notice of pedagogical discussions among educators, shifting its educational program accordingly. The paper will describe this evolution, spawned from efforts to integrate women and end their isolation. It will argue that these changes have produced graduates, men and women, better equipped to serve the global maritime community.

Keywords: Equality: Recognition of Differences

1. INTRODUCTION

The United States Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point) is one of five U.S. federal service academies.¹ The Academy has a four-year college program, with one year (broken into two parts) devoted to student apprenticeship on commercial vessels at sea. Students must meet academic and physical admissions standards, receive Congressional nominations, and satisfy geographic quotas. At graduation, students (called “midshipmen” on campus and “cadets” while at sea) receive Bachelor of Science degrees and U.S. Coast Guard licenses as Third Mates or Third Assistant Engineers. All graduates except those who choose “active duty” military service for at least five years must, if offered, accept eight-year commissions in the Naval Reserve.

Until July 1974, Academy students were exclusively male. This paper will explore the changes in maritime education and training that followed the admission of women to the Academy’s program. I will argue that the inclusion of women in the Academy has made it a finer educational and training institution. Efforts to overcome the obstacles to women’s full integration – to prevent high attrition among women, and their isolation and loneliness, women’s academic underachievement, inappropriate group behavior among men, and sexual harassment – have had a “sociological trickle-down effect,” resulting in graduates, men and women alike, who

¹ The other federal service academies are U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, and U.S. Coast Guard Academy.
are better trained and able to cope in today’s changing business and cultural environments. Maritime education nonetheless remains predominantly male, and as we learned, numerical dominance shapes student culture.

Notwithstanding the 34 years and nearly 600 women graduates since women first enrolled in the Academy, the effort to make women full citizens of Kings Point is still a work in progress. While female retention rates have improved significantly,\(^2\) our recruitment levels linger between 10 and 12% of each entering class. Studies show that until a numerical minority (ethnic or racial, as well as gender) reaches a “critical mass,” the educational experience for the minority group in some ways is shortchanged. (Kanter 1977; Brush 1991; Didion 1994)

2. EARLY YEARS
In fall 1973, in the wake of the American Civil Rights movement, the U.S. Maritime Administrator told the Academy Dean that the entering class at Kings Point would be coeducational. The Academy thus became the first federal service academy to admit women. With less than six months to recruit women qualified to win Congressional nominations and meet physical and scholastic requirements for admission, the Director of Admissions enrolled fifteen women to join a class of 333 men. Perhaps unwittingly and certainly unaware of the twists and turns that would follow, the faculty, staff, and administrators at Kings Point embarked on an historical struggle to integrate a previously excluded group into their program.

The effort to incorporate women into traditional male educational environments has some generic aspects. As women in the 1970s forged their ways into medicine, law, and engineering, they engaged the “riddle of acceptance.” Is it won by subordinating differences or by acknowledging them? What distinguished the struggle to integrate women into the Academy program, defined by military and maritime (male) ethos, was the intense, round-the-clock relationship among midshipmen. Proximity among students and substantial isolation from the broad community made the Academy experience more volatile and thwarted the easy assimilation of its women students.

Women in the early classes were both “pioneers” and “survivors.” (Skrocki 1984) Of the 15 women who joined the class of 1978, eight graduated. The Academy’s rigorous program generally resulted in high attrition, but women’s attrition was even greater, significantly so, than men’s. (In 1979, close to 50% of women did not graduate, while the male drop-out rate stood at 33%).\(^3\) In spite of the fact that the women who applied to the Academy in the 1970s were motivated by the Academy’s program and many went on to illustrious maritime careers, the early years were difficult. (Alumni 2007) A barrage of media attention exacerbated the resentment of male peers and appeared to contradict the Academy’s policy of undifferentiated treatment of men and women.

Initially, Academy administrators focused on the physical integration of women. After creating quarters in the barracks, ensuring appropriate lavatory facilities, and securing berthing space aboard ships, the Academy did little if anything to help women students deal with an often unwelcoming, if not hostile, environment.\(^4\) The Regimental training program included no discussion of civil rights, changing sexual roles, human relations, or

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\(^3\) In the classes of 1979 and 1980, fifteen women graduated each year. (Original female enrollment was 27 in the class of 1979 and 26 in the class of 1980.) Recruitment of women students became more competitive after the other federal service academies admitted women in 1976. Twelve women were in the class of 1981, 19 in the class of 1982, 22 in the class of 1983, and 31 in the class of 1984. Because some female students were at sea, female representation on campus remained even smaller than these numbers indicate.

\(^4\) Women who entered the Academy in the 1970s were drawn to maritime careers; in the next two decades women’s reasons for applying to the Academy, like men’s, were more varied, some seeking active-duty military careers and others because the Academy offers tuition-free education. As part of information gathering, the USMMA Working Group on Women’s Recruitment and Retention sent a questionnaire to 517 women graduates. As of December 31, 2007, 210 alumnae had responded, a 41% return rate. While most respondents strongly endorsed their Academy experience, the over 2,000 anonymous written comments by respondents offer a more nuanced reflection on their overall Academy education. See Appendix for selected excerpts from the Survey.

The modification of “standards” included alteration of the Academy push up requirement, allowing women to do push-ups from the knees, a practice consistent with physical education programs. The only other change in the Academy program made touch football an optional physical education activity for women.
appropriate (and legal) behavior. No one addressed the educational impact of academic sections, which might have only one woman, that traveled together from class to class all day. As one observer commented, the “hands-off” Academy policy was tantamount to making the successful integration of women dependent on their abilities to “prove themselves.” (Wiegand 1979) (While a retired female Coast Guard officer served as an advisor to the first two classes of women, training was not part of her responsibilities.) Academy leaders hoped that as women graduated and moved into positions of authority in the maritime industry, male attitudes would change.\(^6\)

But that was the long view; immediately attitudes remained entrenched. With only one varsity sport available, few women on the faculty, staff, or in the administration, and no women officers aboard merchant vessels, the Kings Point women of the 1970s and early 1980s made it through the program with little or no encouragement. The lack of support exacted a price, the most obvious in female attrition. But increasing evidence that a Kings Point education, while opening professional doors, also might result in psychological scars for many of its women graduates caused administrators to rethink policy. So did new federal law, altered by feminist concerns to define and outlaw discrimination and sexual harassment.

3. NEW RECOGNITION/NEW APPROACH

By the early 1980s Academy administrators acknowledged that unless they abandoned attitudes and procedures that acknowledged no difference between the education of male and female students, they were depriving women of equal education. In 1983, the 80-person faculty included only four women. No woman served as a senior administrator or department head, and women students held none of the top leadership positions in the Regimental (military training) program. The attrition rate of women stood almost consistently between 40 and 50 percent. The student body represented a classic prototype of “group behavior,” where the whole did not represent the sum of its parts. Public conformity often governed men’s behavior, notwithstanding the character and private beliefs of individuals. Dissent meant breaking ranks. Male students might say privately that they would never want their sisters to attend the Academy because of its difficulties for women, but they would not come to the public defense of their female peers.

Group behavior shaped women students as well, often transforming vivacious high school graduates into timid college students. Academic sections followed lockstep schedules, maintaining homogeneous groups until evening. Often a woman could find herself the sole female in her academic group. Depending on personality, this isolation frequently translated into a lack of study partners. In challenging technical programs, this regularly meant the difference between success and failure – a situation educator would later dub a “hostile learning environment.” (Krupnick 1985; Crawford & MacLeod 1990; Sadker & Sadker 1994) (For example, the elite Systems Engineering major was established in 1981. For two years no woman selected the major; two women enrolled in 1983, followed by a hiatus of three years. One woman joined in each of 1987 and 1989. The isolation of women Systems Engineering majors in the early years discouraged most women from choosing the program.) Leaving for sea with no specific advice on how to handle the sea year, some women midshipmen endured painful shipboard experiences. A part-time counselor represented the sole advisory/support system for all students, male and female.

With fewer than 20 women in each entering class through 1982, administrators gradually recognized that coeducation in a school with skewed gender ratios required differentiated treatment. Where male students outnumbered females by nine to one, no rhetoric could mask the reality that the female experience would be different and that to create an even playing field, administrators had to provide women students with services and attention that they did not necessarily give to men.\(^7\) By 1983, administrators abandoned the earlier laissez faire approach to women’s integration and initiated a series of programs and services for women that were (at least initially) not offered to male students. Without fanfare or specific articulation, the Academy changed its

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\(^6\) In 1980, the wife of a KP alumnus, Julie Burke, announced she would give $10,000 to each of the first women to earn Master’s and Chief Engineer’s licenses; the prizes went respectively to Nancy Wagner, ’78, and Jeanne Kraus, ’79, in 1985 and 1986. Many hoped that these early achievements would confirm that women in fact belonged to the merchant marine.

\(^7\) In 1990, 1991, and 1992, 11, 21, and 10 women graduated. For the classes of 1997 through 2011 women represented the following percentage of each entering class: 9.8%, 7.2%, 11.8%, 10.6%, 12.8%, 7.2%, 10.5%, 10.1%, 13.7%, 14.5%, 16.8%, 12.3%, 9.9%, 13.3%, and 10.4%.
approach to the integration of women by altering the concept of equality from sameness to recognition of difference.

3.1. Contravening the Power of Numbers
With attention to the sheer force of numbers – how skewed gender ratios shape the behavior of both men and women students – Academy administrators appointed an advisor for women and began to expand the varsity sports program for female midshipmen. (Unlike men’s sports, numbers did not justify establishment of women’s teams; instead the Academy relied on rationales of recruitment and retention.) Women’s varsity sports and the female advisory program fostered strength through community building. Alumnae attest that their survival lay in the support network from other women on teams and through special meetings for women to share ideas, develop confidence, and listen to each other’s stories. One alumna recalled that “athletics [was] the closest form of ‘family’ [we] had on campus.” Another acknowledged that without “varsity softball, I doubt I would have made it through.” Community building through athletics and through conversation began to have impact. An alumna remembers that “back in the 1980s we had special female only gatherings that made it feel like home.” Another alumna declared that “it was the camaraderie of the women that made it bearable. The advisor fostered that.” (Alumni 2007)

The Academy’s leadership program is integral to its mission to educate and train officers and leaders for the maritime industry. The Regimental program is an invaluable laboratory for leadership training; the program increases responsibility until the final year, when senior midshipmen administer the system. But in the first decade for women at the Academy, by defining equality as sameness and assuming women’s adjustment to the status quo, administrators essentially ensured that the Regiment was a place for men, run by men. The inevitable message conveyed was that men lead and women follow.  (Hall and Sandler 1984; Smith 1989)

Reports of female estrangement and unreported harassment, even rape, compelled officials to alter regimental training and promote diversity in the leadership structure. The female advisor began special programs for women students and tracked their collective and individual needs. Insisting that women gather confidence from each other, the female advisor initiated a series of outreach programs addressing rape and sexual assault prevention and response, sexual harassment, eating disorders, self-esteem, assertiveness training, preparation for sea year, and the establishment of mentoring relationships with women graduates. Lunch and dinner meetings provided the forum for guest speakers, including graduates, to share their experiences in “nontraditional” fields. Membership in the Society of Women Engineers also gave opportunities for female midshipmen to learn from other women. The advisory program operated on the premise that there was no contradiction in being a woman and a midshipman. But underpinning the program was the conviction that skewed gender ratios made the Academy experience different for women; without discussing and addressing those differences, too many women students would suffer unequal educations.

In addition to planning programs, the advisor acted as advocate and liaison between female midshipmen and the administration, bringing attention to inappropriate behavior and promoting changes in regulations that would enhance women’s self-esteem (for example, rules governing length of hair or permitting civilian attire at formal events). Although seemingly superficial, issues of hair and dress became more significant for women pioneers in an educational and training program designed for a quintessentially male profession. With peers suggesting that “real” women would not join the maritime field, issues of women’s appearance assumed special meaning.

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8 In AY 1979-80, women could participate on a coed swim team; in 1982, the Academy started a separate swim team and a women’s track team. In 1994-95 at the urging of female midshipmen, a softball club began. A year later, it became a varsity sport. More recently, the Academy has added a women’s varsity basketball team. Women’s volleyball and softball have made the NCAA and KP has had women national champions in swimming and diving and in track and field. Currently, the PE Department is considering women’s lacrosse and soccer (football) teams.

9 For example, the advisor brought attention to and stopped the blatantly sexist marching chants repeated by plebe candidates during indoctrination; she also arranged adoption of a Navy regulation formal military uniform to replace the hodgepodge of outfits female midshipmen wore at the two formal dances. Later she urged permission for first-class women to wear civilian gowns at these events. In addition, the Academy formulated policy defining, prohibiting, and listing procedures for reporting harassment and sexual assault.
Acting on the belief that heightened awareness produces change, the advisor drew the faculty and staff into discussion of “chill,” or behavior and language – sometimes of professors and often inadvertent – that reinforced the exclusion of the minority. Whether calling on women to answer gender-specific questions, beginning classes with off-color jokes, asking the “ladies” in the room for license to use inappropriate verbiage, or failing to intervene when male students interrupt women in class discussion, unconscious use of language (verbal and nonverbal) empowers some and assigns second-class citizenship to others. (Hall and Sandler 1982; Crawford & MacLeob 1990; Barba & Cardinale 1991; Bok 1996)

Did skewed gender ratios also account for the contradiction between women’s high academic predictors and their relatively low academic performance? Administrators, prompted by new educational research, began to address the behavioral implications (and learning effects) of numbers. New studies began to focus on group dynamics and their impact on learning. Some researchers recommended single-sex education for women because their studies revealed that even in colleges where men and women were represented equally, men dominated the classrooms and leadership roles. (Kanter 1977; Hall and Sandler 1982; Krupnick 1986; Barba and Cardinale 1991) If active engagement and out-of-class participation enhanced learning, how were women at Kings Point to have equal educations when they represented less than 12 percent of the student population? Indeed, female midshipmen, significantly outnumbered in each academic section, typically remained mute and assumed little, if any, leadership responsibilities in the Regimental program.

For approximately ten years, women students received attention and training that their male peers did not receive. This effort did not go without criticism. Many male midshipmen regarded the program as a form of special privilege – anathema at a federal academy. And some women insisted that integration was best achieved by underplaying the differences between themselves and their male classmates – that striving to be “one of the guys” offered protection and acceptance. Even some female midshipmen who embraced the advisory program worried that perhaps they paid too high a price in deflecting male taunts. Nevertheless for a decade the female advisory program remained autonomous, although increasingly its programs proved elastic. Gradually, many of the changes that the female advisory system advanced became universal, leading to what I have referred to as a “sociological trickle-down effect.”

4. CHANGES IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM

While military protocol governs midshipman life, the student life program is governed now by awareness of the developmental needs of young adults. If women had psychological issues adjusting to the Academy, administrators soon recognized that male students, notwithstanding their majority status, were not immune to emotional problems. If women needed to talk, if they needed to be heard, so did men. By adding a Counseling Department, the Academy acknowledged that military leadership and emotional self-reliance were not equivalent, and that seeking help was not an admission of weakness. At the same time, in a nod to the different realities that women face, midshipmen are permitted to lock their room doors and that seeking help was not an admission of weakness. At the Academy, in a two-day conference, celebrated women’s twenty years at the Academy.

Most significantly, the underpinnings of the female advisory program became universalized and absorbed by the Regimental training program. While women students profited by discussion of sexual harassment, self-esteem, and assertiveness, male midshipmen, if they were to become strong leaders, needed opportunities to talk, be

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10 By the late 1980s, there was evidence that women’s confidence and sense of belonging had increased. In 1988, the active KP chapter of the Society of Women Engineers proposed a celebration in honor of the tenth anniversary of women’s first graduation from the Academy. The dinner, attended by all female midshipmen and their male midshipmen guests, was an unapologetic celebration of women’s deserved and earned place at the Academy. In 1994 KP hosted a three-day Women Underway Symposium, attended by representatives from all of the state maritime colleges and the Naval Academy, as well as professionals from shipping and shore-side companies. In 1998, the Academy, in a two-day conference, celebrated women’s twenty years at the Academy.
heard, and engage in conversations about diversity. Indeed, the female advisory program was a form of privilege that needed to be expanded. As the program waned, it was replaced by a new layer in the Regimental program, a human relations division. Conversations initially reserved for female midshipmen have become integral to the Regimental training program.

Midshipmen Human Relations Officers, trained by the Counseling Department, now guide their peers in discussion of the challenges of leading heterogeneous groups and leaders’ responsibilities in preventing sexual harassment and assault. If Academy students are to function effectively in this quintessential global industry, all of them (not just women) need to know how to deal with a racially, ethnically, and sexually mixed work force. Replacing the Female Advisor, the Human Relations Committee, an inter-departmental group, now updates Academy human relations policies and advises the Superintendent and Commandant. These transformations reflect leadership’s recognition that in an increasingly multicultural and mix-gendered workforce, women’s issues are not separate and apart from men’s issues. These are human issues that all future leaders need to discuss.

5. CHANGES IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
The same forces were at work altering the educational program. At the time of women’s admission, the Academy offered three academic options: Marine Transportation for a deck license, Marine Engineering for an engineer’s license, and the Dual program that conferred both. Today, within each of the Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering Departments there are three distinct majors, layered atop the core course components for Coast Guard license qualification.

While new majors responded to market demands, not the admission of women, it soon became apparent that broader educational options were critical to the recruitment and retention of women. Women students consistently gravitate to the Marine Transportation and Logistics majors, both featuring strong business components. Currently, as the Academy seeks to recruit more women to achieve a critical mass, administrators are considering adding minors in the social sciences, international relations, international business, and ethics and literature, in the belief that broadening the curriculum will interest more women in enrolling in the Academy.

A survey of midshipmen taking Humanities courses in the third term of AY 2007-08 asked what kinds of minors would interest them. Ironically and revealingly, male students expressed enthusiastic interest in the very areas, including foreign language, that administrators believed would attract women. Therefore expansion of the curriculum to lure women students presumably would have the unintended benefit of enriching men’s education as well. While Academy women students and graduates are competent mariners working at sea or ashore, the variegated programs are attractive to women midshipmen because women wish to contextualize shipping in the broader business world and see their professional evolution – from deep water, coastal, and inland sailing to shore-side business management. But we are learning that men too view their careers in the nautical sciences within a larger professional frame. This corresponds to the findings of Michelle Thomas, who noted that shipping companies’ off-stated reason for not hiring women mariners, i.e., that they leave shipping once they start families is incomplete. Her study shows that male mariners also see sailing as a chapter of their maritime careers, and indeed men often leave deep-water sailing once they have families. This of course suggests that issues of retention in the sea-going professions are gender neutral. (Thomas 2003)

Approaches to pedagogy, initially conceived to improve women’s retention, proved elastic and had impact on the quality of men’s education as well. Literature increasingly emphasized the link between self-esteem and learning. (Lenney 1981) If high self-esteem fosters learning, educators at Kings Point had to understand the psychological dynamics of pedagogy to enhance the value of the classroom experience. Faculty needed to adopt new teaching methods. Today the obvious beneficiaries are all of the students, although it was the recognition that the Academy experience too often robbed women of self-esteem that prompted attention to new pedagogical methods.

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12 Since 2002, between 50% and 60% of the women in each class have selected these majors.
The dynamic continued. With recognition that some women felt ostracized, the Academy created an academic advisory system and hired a full-time psychologist. While concern about women students provided the impetus for structural changes, male students also have benefited from what has become a complex academic support program, including tutors, faculty mentors, and a learning and counseling center. In seeking to overcome women’s reticence in the classroom, the Registrar’s office sought whenever possible to place at least three women midshipmen in each section. And academic sections, instead of remaining the same all day every week, became mixed, with students shuffled among the groups. Men profited too; by breaking up sections, administrators made inroads against “group behavior” or relatively infantile clannishness that interfered with learning. In addition, if clustering women in sections was an attempt to give them “voice,” the change emerged from recognition that learning flourishes in an active classroom environment, in which all students are engaged in discussion, projects, and group work, rather than the “recipients” of didactic lectures. With greater emphasis on participatory learning, group-based projects, and team work, the initial drive to give “voice” to women has provided male students with a much richer educational experience.13

6. CONCLUSION
Spawned by efforts to integrate women, the Academy made changes in its training and educational programs that have produced graduates, men and women, better equipped to serve the global maritime community. While more must be done, the Academy has achieved a great deal. We boast of a woman valedictorian and women in key leadership positions, including Regimental Commander (the top student officer). There are nine women, including two licensed ships’ captains, on the faculty, three women in the administration, and for more than ten years, women have led the Humanities and Athletics Departments.

What lessons does this hold for other maritime academies? Certainly the world is a different place today than in 1974. We have become accustomed to women as heads of state and government, senior leaders in business, in the professions, and mariners. Accordingly, it appears that women entering maritime academies are not greeted with the same hostility as 30 years ago. But still numbers are numbers. Unless women students represent a significant portion of the student body, administrators should be prepared to make adaptations to their programs and provide differentiated treatment in order to deliver equal educational and training experiences for women.

7. Appendix I: Voices of Graduates

- Early Years
  - “I am sorry if I sound so bitter or negative. I am not at all. I have two decades and a dozen states between me and KP. I realize things were very different back then.”
  - “I graduated in 1983. Back then I think we (the women) were a necessary evil and the Academy had to comply.”
  - “I didn’t think the school really wanted women in ’79 but they had to accept us.”
  - “There were virtually NO female role models or mentors, not even from the upper classes.”
  - “Did not have many academic resources and was left to ‘sick or swim.’”
  - “I was on the first women’s crew team; the men hated us.”
  - “Very difficult early on with so few women’s sports – much better now.”
  - “We had academy student support services???”
  - “What support services?”
  - “Who did/could you report rape, harassment, threats? Answer – No one.”
  - “I never felt safe.”
  - “The way I was treated by male classmates. It was truly brutal. They admit that now.”

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13 Through the early 1980s, there was little if any student “input” into shaping Academy life or the classroom. Enconced in a military environment in which instructors and officers had traditionally barked orders or presented material, Academy administrators showed little interest in how midshipmen reacted. Now midshipman opinion is regularly sought through focus groups and midshipmen participate in the selection of new faculty and administrators.
Chill

- "The regimental attitude towards female midshipmen—the attitude of a majority is the women do not belong."
- "One professor was outright hostile to me because he did not feel females belonged in an engineering school."
- "One [professor] refused to call me by my name; instead [he] called me Mr. and last name."
- "Many math and engineering professors did not treat women in a professional manner. Many still called us 'Mr. ______' after a month of classes."
- "I felt most instructors would have celebrated my failure. I heard several times that I took a spot from a man and therefore shouldn’t have been there. It was very hostile."
- "I did not feel at home."
- "The majority of my instructors ranged from nonchalant about my progress to downright hostile and verbally abusive."
- "I was harassed and singled out more times than I can count."
- "Whatever story was going around campus there was always an undertone that the women were somehow to blame."

Self-Esteem

- "We [were] considered ‘less than real women.’"
- "They shave[d] the girls’ heads. It took one year for my hair to reach my eyebrows. It robbed me of my self-esteem."
- "I was never physically abused, but emotionally it was a nightmare."
- "I was sexually assaulted both at KP and at Sea."
- "There was an unwritten policy that if you reported something, you paid dearly for that action."
- "Your life at the school is over the day you ‘sell someone out.’ A lot of rape is hidden out of [fear] of the repercussions."
- "As a girl, you feel ugly because the uniforms are horrible and your self-esteem is lowered."

Scars

- "So many of my female friends failed out of school due to lack of any real support."
- "Most of us ended up with eating disorders."
- "The assault still haunts me."
- "I was a bitter bitch at graduation. I was .01 away from being the first female valedictorian."
- "I enjoy having no college loans. However, I was very lonely and miserable. I used to run to the chapel and cry. Being a female and an engineer. You were very isolated. I was in a company with three other women. None of them shared the same major or interests as me. I wish I could have changed companies to get friends."
- "Emotionally KP can eat you alive if you don’t have self-respect and know what you want."
- "The men’s naval uniforms look great, while the women’s uniforms make the best looking girl look horrible by accentuating the butt and hips with high-waist pants."

Sea Year

- "I have been sailing deep sea since graduation (1986)."
- "I was banned from going on the bridge . . . because the captain didn’t believe in women at sea."
- "I had . . . an awful captain who told me that I had three strikes against me as far as he was concerned. I was young, female, and inexperienced. He then proceeded to force me off of his ship . . . ."
- "I was raped aboard ship my first sea year (1980)."
- "Threatened to be kicked off/poor reviews when I declined advances."
“On one ship a drunk AB took an ax to my door, trying to get in. On another the CM told me how I could avoid having to do all that bothersome cadet work – if I slept with him. I was often only one of two women on the ship, the other being my sea partner.”

• Limited majors

- “If there were not diverse employment opportunities, I would not have attended. I hear they are requiring more to go out to sea. I would not have attended.”
- “There were only 2 when I went; I am very pleased to see a much greater variety offered now.”
- “We had two choices, Deck or Engine. I was given very little guidance or advice as to what careers would be available with each of the degrees.”
- “Offer minors in things such as ethics, government, or science.

• Community Building

- “Back in the 80’s we had special female only gatherings that made it feel like home.”
- “The women’s club. Thank God for that!”
- “Athletics is the closes form of ‘family’ you have on campus.
- “Varsity softball was the most beneficial experience while I was at KP.”
- “My best life-long friends are the women I swam with night after night for those four years.”
- “Could not have made it without the friends I made on the team and the breaks we had from the school.”
- “I was in the first group of girls in 6th company; the guy who ran the company did not want any girls in his barracks, so he made appointments for the girls with the strongest personalities with the school’s shrink. I was one of those girls. My appointment conflicted with a lab. I finally went to the Women’s Advisor and told her what was going on. I never went to my appointment and I don’t think any other girls had appointments made for them.”

• Riddle of Acceptance

- “I think the female advisor tried to serve the women but the pressure to fit into a man’s world tends to separate the women as a group.”
- “It was easier to fin it and not be labeled a bitch.”
- “Special treatment creates inequalities between the males and females which makes it more difficult for females.”
- “Stop focusing on ‘female midshipmen.’ It only perpetuates the myth that women have it easier than men and makes it more difficult for female midshipmen.”
- “Have a social club for females to bond and share experiences.”
- “The men made us feel that we were being given a ‘special privilege’ by having women only meetings.”
- “Create a women’s group around issues related to being a female midshipmen.”
- “Try an all female company (or platoon). It really will work.”
- “More female sports.”

• Change

- “Faculty and staff at the USMMA were supportive and were always willing to help Midshipmen anytime.”
- “There were no support services, though I believe from what I heard and read that there is a good support system now.”
- “I felt very safe.”
- “The small campus was great. We really were one big family.”
- “Sea Year was brilliant.”
- “It is a different place now.”
Appendix II: Voices of Graduates: How can KP attract more women?

- Introduce more liberal arts and science offerings
- Have a women’s advocate on campus
- Establish an effective mentoring system
- House all women students together
- Hold meetings related to women’s issues
- Introduce more women’s sports
- Appoint more licensed women faculty
- Hire women Company Officers
- Hire more women faculty and administrators
- Allow women to grow their hair and provide them better-fitting uniforms

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