

Helis/Rodriguez NPA Meeting, Sept. 1, 2016 Rough Transcript

Tom Wesley: I want to extend a warm welcome to Deputy Maritime administrator Mike Rodriguez and Superintendent Jim Helis for taking time during this time of crisis, to spend time with us and to take obviously make some statement and take some questions from us. I can assure you this morning we spent an awful lot of time talking about many items. First and foremost of course is the accreditation and stand down. I'm going to ask Terry Gray to moderate it while I take some photos and record. We've got permission to record this. We thank you very much in preparation for this as you well know we've had a nationwide parents call in speaking about what questions you would like to have raised. There has been a lot of issues raised as you and I have talked about about the thoroughness of the town hall meetings, the town hall questions and answers and so we wanted to bring those in.

I've got many emails, voice mails, Facebook messages etcetera. We've compiled a bunch of that. I've asked Terry to take the lead in that but I'd like to offer to you gentlemen first to make whatever statements you'd like to make and have a good evening. Good afternoon.

Mike Rodriguez: Well good afternoon everyone. I will be very brief and I'll turn it over the superintendent because this is all about taking your questions and communicating. I'm Mike Rodriguez. I'm a graduate of class of '79, the great class of '79. Everyone who has heard me say this spiel before knows that I have seven classmates here on the faculty and on the staff. Over in shipboard training, marine trans, and marine engineering. My background very quickly was I 17 years at sea after I graduated, went ashore took a job in Manhattan, I was here for four years as an ATR. I left here and I went to the international organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots which is one of the seafaring labor unions that represents deck officers on board merchant ships.

I went there as headquarters staff. I was the assistant to the president. At that job I got to do a lot of terrific things. I did unions work down in Washington along with some of our, some of our staff down there. I represented seafaring labor at the International Maritime Organization as a delegate over in London. I'm also a naval reservist, very pleased to say that I was promoted back on the first of August to Captain so had a wonderful career. Three and a half years on active duty. I was deployed in 2006 to operate a merchant ship, special operation in the Indian Ocean. I've had a ... Obviously the Deputy Maritime administrator so it's been just a

wonderful career for me.

I don't think it's over yet but it's been my ... Having graduated from this institution and some of the things that I've been privileged to do in my career have all come from again being a graduate from here. The people that I've met and would help me a lot in a way, so enough about me, I'll turn it over to the superintendent.

James Helis:

Thank you all for the opportunity to speak here this afternoon. I'm now going in my fifth year as superintendent. Like the deputy I'll keep my remarks brief. One thing I'm going to focus on, few points to focus on is something I've consistently heard from midshipmen, staff and faculty is that yes obviously there are some difficult times, but there is still a lot of good going on here. And there is still more positive and good. We should not ignore the positive in spite of the difficulties. Every major institution goes through troubled times. Ok. It did just happen that all the academies have been through these. We talk as superintendents; we talk about our collective history or about things. What can go wrong or where can things come off the rails?

And we all go through this. We all come out on the other side better. And while we are going through this journey, there's still a lot that's very positive that's going on at the academy. We shouldn't lose sight of that. It's very easy to say to dwell on the sea year stand down and accreditation issues ok but you do that at the risk of ignoring how much positive is going on especially for the midshipmen, how much positive is going on in their lives. So, class of 2020, it was about a 15% acceptance rate from applications to coming through Victory Gate on the 28th of June. The mean SATs was 1280 which is on par with what we've had the last couple of years. We were at 19.7% women and 24% minorities for women. That's the highest percentage in the academies history.

It's the third year in a row that we pushed through that. The minorities. We hit a peak two years ago but this is the second or third highest in minorities. So again we've maintained a high academic quality and improved the diversity in the class. Would note that our attrition in indoc was negligible. Two resignations for I don't want to be here and two medicals that will return next year. You're looking surprised. OK. That's a tribute to the quality and the screening that we do that we're finding people who are truly motivated to be here. In years passed we would see people talking well, it's June, July I can check it out and always go home and go back to college or I'll go somewhere else.

Pete is laughing because you remember that. This wasn't it. And again so we've lost a couple of more since academics since the start of the attrition rate is remarkably low. I credit that to the screening that we do in admissions. The recruiting work where we do. We're actually identify that a lot of you can tribute to identify people who got the right motivation and the right stuff to be here. It's also tribute to the leadership and the commandant's department and the class of 2016 who led indoc, put together the plan, led the training, kept them motivated and got virtually everybody through that first three weeks.

Again I'll just hit my four priorities remain the same and I put them out alphabetically. Infrastructure revitalization, zero deck construction is well underway. I went through the other day. For those who remember zero deck, I can get you lost in about ten seconds down there because most of the walls are down. It's impressive when you see how much space is available and we've got enough markings on the floor that you can walk through it. Here is a new baggage locker area where every midshipmen instead of piling in the company baggage locker will have his or her own individual locker for storing the stuff when they go to sea, we got one in each zero deck, one for each battalion.

You can say here is the new cardio room, turn around and across the hall, here is the new fitness room which is sometimes called the yoga room or weight room, the midshipmen aren't exactly sure what they want to do with it but they're going to be an exercise space so they will have two facilities underneath here's where the help desk is. For those of you who's kids have had to tromp down to Samuel's Hall in February to get work done on the computer, the help desk will be across where the barber shop was and will be returned to. To get their computer fixed, to get work done they can just go downstairs to the barracks, drop their computer off, and go back to their room or whatever.

You can see club spaces, purpose built spaces for vice locker, purpose built for hockey, for other clubs. We're rehabbing the old rec room, again meeting and study spaces. We had a lot of wasted storage space down there, a lot of wasted utility space if it came through like geothermal. Again you can get lost very quickly down there because with all the walls down, you can see the space. That part you can see, the design work is beginning on Samuel's Hall to convert that from what it is into a world class simulation center. We're expecting to be able to go out to contract with construction work around January. Again the dean's department works through the design phase with the contractors.

We continue on the security enhancements. The next wave is going to be more security cameras. I think the number 77; they're going to be going in throughout the barracks. Again no this is not to watch everybody and take notes. This is in case there is an incident reported in the barracks we can potentially have videotape in case there is an intruder in the barracks we can monitor the situation. And, frankly there is also the thought that if you know you're being watched it will deter some behaviors that we want to see ended in the barracks. We're continuing there. Information technology. We've been going through changing out the relay switches building by building on campus which is improving the bandwidth and the speed of the local area network as we continue to work on the IT system.

Next step in IT is going to replacing the servers that will occur ... We'll get in this fiscal year, we'll be some time the fiscal year 17. Second on the list, leadership development program the commandant's staff working with the Dean and some of the critical staff such as the sexual assault response coordinator, we have a revamped regimental training and reg periods. It's now focused class by class where each week, each class will have a subject. It is generally now being taught by company by class. The groups will be much smaller. It's not going to be the slide show increment but it will be settings like here where I taught a couple of classes last spring.

Talking to midshipmen about what is relevant for you. The plebe year is about the foundations of leadership and the fundamentals of being a leader of character for life. Second and third class we're focusing it on sea year and Maritime leadership. For the first class we're focusing in on, "Okay it's time to make the transition from being a cadet midshipman to going out to the real world and taking on your responsibilities as an officer and discussing what those responsibilities are." That's a complete revamp, it's underway now. Infrastructure ... Then preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment.

This remains an ongoing concern at the academy. As we study the problem and we'll probably get into this in more detail, we've concluded that we know there are challenges at sea as well as on campus. Made the decision in June to do the senior stand down to work through with the shipping companies of how to improve the overall climate aboard merchant ships? Onboard the commercial ships that our midshipmen are on. It's about creating a climate of trust and respect both on campus and at sea. The trust and respect issues are addressed in great detail in the commandant's leadership program during the reg periods. We're going to continue to work our way through them.

It's a national issue. It's a national priority. We should be leading the way. The stand down is an Acta. We've talked about this, we've tried to work it, but we got to the point where we just could not continue with the status quo. And so the secretary made the decision that we were going to stand down from commercial shipping until we got to a place where we were more comfortable with the shipboard climate in which we were sending our midshipmen and I'm sure we will discuss that more as we go on.

We're putting a greater emphasis on what is referred to in a lot of literature and studies as pre cursor behaviors, climate behaviors, hazing, bullying, coercion that creates a climate in which sexual assault sexual harassment become tolerable. Military figures say that in US where there is sexiest behavior is prevalent the chances of a woman being sexually assaulted are 300% higher. It is about addressing the overall climate, not just simply standing up saying don't do these bad things. Fourth, re-accreditation we are continuing to work through that. We were put on warning by middle states. That's up on our website, that's our public notice. We do remain fully accredited.

While we're in a warning status our monitoring report is due to middle states one March 17. That is our first report. They will send a small team to the campus. Again to the ... That evaluation team that came last April that will focus in on that monitoring report and we'll get an update and status report from middle states in late June or early July of 17. The accreditation issues largely follow the requirements which are the issues that caused us to be put on warning fall in two large baskets. One that we refer to together as governance and management of the academy for lack of a more a formal governance structure.

And the reality that the academy does not have the authorities or the capacity to manage its own affairs particularly in administrative areas of financing, procurement, human resources and so on. A lot of those authorities were pulled away from the academy back in 2008,'09 and '10. The middle states evaluation is that the academy's report with those authorities should be restored and should be passed back. That's going to be a process. We can't just throw a switch. It's going to involve rewriting procedure to policies what work that MARAD headquarters does in these areas is going to translate back to the academy.

How are we going to manage those here? Then there is a staffing issue of if somebody at MARAD is doing it now, there is nobody here at the academy to do that. There's going to be some staffing adjustments that have to go. I expect that that is probably going to take us nearly the full two years to get through just

especially when we look at the staffing issues and we want to do this in an orderly manner. We don't want to say here it's yours run the place. There is also an issue on the finance side that requires a legislative change on financial authorities on the financial autonomy of the institution. That is now in the House Senate conference on our appropriation for FY 2017. We'll see how that sorts out.

The second batch are climate issues. Just a couple of quotes from the report the formal requirement is to build a climate of mutual trust and respect on campus and during the sea year. Some of the findings in more detail put to it in the evaluation team report can prove the safety and climate of respect that all midshipmen encounter during the sea year experience. The institution must take demonstrable steps in preparation for and upon return from the sea year experience. Further the pervasiveness of sexual harassment on campus must be addressed as a pressing and substantial concern that is fostered a hostile climate.

We must build a climate of mutual respect and trust among the midshipmen, faculty and staff with respect to the sexual assault and sexual harassment. Steps we've taken in sea year it has been the stand down. It has been a step to working with the shipping company to improve the policies, procedures, and training of the crews on the vessels to which midshipmen can be assigned in commercial shipping. We're going to be increasing the staffing in the SARC sexual assault response coordinator's office. We'll have one strategic sea lift officer mobilize navy reservist who is an alumnus who has sailed commercially and on active duty who will be joining the office on 1 October to provide assistance with focus on the sea year issues.

And we're looking to hire an assistant to the sexual assault response coordinator just because the work load in that office has gotten beyond what one person can handle. A third area that was addressed that we have to address in the monitoring report, although we were not found out of compliance we were told we have to address it in the monitoring report is the area of institutional assessment. That's the process where basically you look yourself in the mirror and say okay how are we doing? It's a process that takes you ... Where you are able to roadmap from the institutions mission right down to course of learning objectives.

What we've done is we've redesigned the assessment roadmap if you will. Right now I'm in the process of redeveloping new institutional learning objectives that cross walk back to the mission statement. Again the first part it's a top down which will then inform program learning objectives which would be both on the academic side and the regimental side and athletics. Then in the academic side going down to

course learning objectives. It all has to cross walk from top to bottom. So we've redesigned the process. We've identified what the evaluation is the problems are. We have now gone on our second version of institutional learning objectives, the senior management council met and reviewed those again this morning. We're making progress in the assessment program.

That's where we stand on the accreditation. The bottom line is we remain accredited and a warning status from middle stages indicates that we believe that you will be able to meet the standards within two years. The evaluation teams report was explicitly expressed confidence that institution could meet the standards expected in two years. I fully expect that we are going to get there. But it's probably going to take the full two years. It's a process. Sometimes it's going to be like watching paint dry on a wall. There will be surges where we will publish institutional learning objectives and there's going to be a lot of underground work where ok how do we look at the program objectives and titles back to the institutional learning objectives.

There's not going to be much progress to announce because it's going to be all the grunt work that has to be underneath it. So this is not something that is like watching a race. It's going to be a long steady process. The same thing with the governance. How do we start identifying what specific functions we can transfer back to the academy and what sequence do we do that? How do we revise our SOPs? Again you're given two years because the intent is that this is an intentional, deliberate, thought out process that the changes you put in place are going to work and that they are in the words of middle states sustainable, that these will last.

It won't simply be that you can make these changes. On a magic date you get a green light you're approved and then everything comes apart. Part of this we have to demonstrate with evidence that these are in fact sustainable changes and sustainable processes that we are putting in place. But again, I would say a lot more positive going on. We to often do not look at the achievements of staff and faculty Brian Ackerman in engineering just received approval for publication in a major engineering, publication on magnetic nano technology-

Rodriguez: Reusable nano magnetic sponges in oil

Helis: In separation of oil from water. Water oil separation.

Rodriguez: It is important on board a ship.

Helis: Which is really important in marine engineering but it's a mouthful to try and remember and put out.

Speaker 3: I'd also add that I think that was the paper that Dr. Furlan presented at a conference in China last November so we're very, very proud of the work that our faculty is doing.

Helis: With that, I think we that we'll through it open to questions.

Terry: Good afternoon. I'm Terry Gray. My son is an '02 graduate. I'm down here at the far end of the table so that I can speak loudly so you can hear and everyone in between will hear and I hope you will do the same in response. I'd like to start with Mr. Rodriguez. Is there a reason that administrator Jaenichen didn't come to this conference today?

Mr Rodriguez: He was on travel this week so he's just getting back to the office.

Terry: Wasn't it important enough to him to come here?

Mr Rodriguez: I can tell you these issues are extremely important to our administrator.

Terry: Do you speak directly for him?

Mr Rodriguez: Yes I do, Yes I do sir.

Helis: I'll jump in that I spoke with the administrator multiple times this week about this event.

Terry: I don't doubt that you both spoke to him; our concern is that we want to speak to him; we want him to hear what we have to say. The young man who's just taken over in admissions was the last speaker to come in here and frankly he left battered and bruised based on the questions being asked of him. We're very, very

concerned over what's going on. Let me begin with this, it is widely reported that the five failing standards that middle states adopted were informally communicated to the academy and MARAD in 2015, in fact in March of 2015. In order to give the academy an opportunity to meet those standards so that they would not be forced to put the academy on warning. So I'd like to go to standard two which is institutional planning

Helis: I'll jump in. I've not heard that. I've not heard that anywhere.

Terry: The first thing you ever heard was when you received the official report.

Helis: The first thing I heard-

Terry: In June. Of this year?

Helis: No, in April of this year. In April, in April of 16, in April of 16 the evaluation team visited the academy. At the end of it they presented to us what they were going to recommend to the commissioners. Ok. So they complete their report and we didn't get a chance to review and chop on that report from the evaluation team. We get to provide input saying here is what we disagree with what's in the report.

Terry: You did get the report?

Helis: Yes.

Terry: Let me cut you off-

Helis: To say that we were told in March of '15, the first time I heard that is when you just said that.

Terry: I've heard that from someone else who used to work here and isn't here any longer. All right two months, during those two months, what was done to improve the academies institutional planning? Not for response to middle states but to do

what middle states wanted done but to improve intuitional planning. Was something done?

Helis: What? The first thing we're doing was providing our responses to middle states. That's the-

Terry: That's a letter to middle states. The underlying issue of institutional planning. Was anything done during those two months?

Helis: Ok. We hired a new director of institutional assessment at that time, who came in who's been taking lead on addressing the middle states problems. But understand you say that's writing a letter. That's a letter that had to be approved by the secretary. The response included the letter from the secretary. That doesn't happen. That's not me sitting down scribbling on a pen. This is a process.

Rodriguez: I would just say that if the line of questioning is that we didn't take action immediately or take appropriate action.

Terry: It certainly is.

Rodriguez: Well, I would dispute that very strongly because we did. We took it very seriously within the department. We had some challenges in terms of explaining to staff about the process. But when we came together, we got the job done. We responded to the middle states report.

Rodriguez: We got the job done but it hasn't happened.

Male: As the superintendent has explained this is going to be an ongoing process. It's not ... We don't flip on a switch and solve these issues.

Helis: Part of the process-

Terry: Let me ask you. You mentioned that you have to look in the mirror and say how are we doing. You both have been in charge for four years. Have you not done that

before four years?

Helis/Rodriguez: Yes.

Terry: Did you have to wait for middle stage to get here to tell you that you need institutional planning?

Helis: What I can tell you is where we are in the last four years. If we want to list what we have done in the last four years ... It's always possible, this may sound defensive but you're acting like we sat here and done nothing for four years.

Terry: That's the impression we have.

Male: We have made substantial improvements in the infrastructure. In the capital improvements program. We've made substantial improvements in security, we've improved the admissions process in the class [inaudible 00:24:16] coming in. We've instituted and put in place an entirely new curriculum for '17 and beyond. We've improved the licensing group; we've set records on licensing exams this May. We have done a lot.

Terry: I don't doubt that. I'm not challenging that. My point is that you're talking about the class you've just brought in. What's going to happen to the class of 2021 when they see an academy that is on warning. They see an academy where the Maritime Administrator said he wouldn't send his daughter. Are people going to send their children here or have you just cut the legs out from under the Academy? I suspect you have.

Rodriguez: I really don't think that is fair.

Terry: Why not? When the man stands up publicly and says I wouldn't send my daughter there.

Rodriguez: The administrator was expressing his concern over an issue that we have not begun to measure or begun to address.

Terry: Exactly you've not begun to measure it.

Rodriguez: Sir if you let me finish. That we had not begun to measure until 2012 when Admiral Helis came on board. He was expressing ... and to get on your first point he was expressing his concern about that issue.

Terry: We all have that concern. We all have that concern. No matter where our children go to school or what corporation our children work at. You don't shut down a corporation.

Rodriguez: As I said I'd like to get to my point. We're very willing to address your questions and your concerns and talk about them and put them out on the table but if we're going to be ... if this is the tact that we're going to take while we're trying to talk over one another that's not going to be productive. If you would permit us to answer.

Terry: I'll be happy for you to answer but not to filibuster.

Rodriguez: This, the whole process of accreditation involves a long, a long candid look at the institution. Addressing the issues that were identified in the middle states report is going to take a similar effort. It's not something that is going to happen tomorrow or next week or even within, and I'll get to this, even within the time that I have in my job. That's why we're taking it extremely seriously. I hope nobody is in doubt of that if you would ... I'm not trying to filibuster, I'm trying to complete my thought. So we are moving in that direction. What we need is support. We need the Kings Point community here to come together, that means everybody around this table and the people that you represent. It means our alumni, it means the students, it means the faculty out there. It means the staff the folks-

Terry: How about the Maritime Administrator?

Rodriguez: I was about to get to that. I was about to get to that.

Terry: When he says he wouldn't send his daughter here?

Rodriguez: Mr. Gray I would be very pleased to address that as well.

Terry: Please do.

Rodriguez: This is a priority of mine for the rest of the time I have on board. This is my top priority! Anybody can tell you that I'm here two, three, four, five every week at least.

Helis: Every week you're here.

Rodriguez: I should start to get my mail delivered here. So it's the number one priority on my play. It's the number one priority on the superintendent's. So to go down this road where we're dragging our feet and we're not taking action, I really have to strongly tell you that that's not the case here.

Terry: Is there a commercial shipping company that does not have a comprehensive policy regarding sexual assault, sexual harassment?

Rodriguez: Are we going to jump around? We can do that.

Terry: That's one of the issues.

Helis: There are companies that have policies about sexual assault, sexual harassment. Every single shipping company, I can't answer that.

Terry: We don't send students on every single shipping company, it's [inaudible 00:28:08].

Rodriguez: What I can tell you this, yesterday I was at a meeting with the major shipping companies. I opened the meeting with an update on where we are on this effort. I took a lot of concerns of theirs. Afterwards many of them came up to me and said

we support you. We're concerned about what we're doing and where we're going but we support you. Now to answer your question they all have policies but many of them have policies on workforce violence. There's sometimes a disconnect between the language that we're speaking here in at institution of higher education and the language that's spoken or the regulatory regime that the shipping companies have to follow and have to meet.

So that's part of our challenge with them is to balance those two. That's those of the discussions that we've been having. That's what we've been finding as we go through the process with them. If you want to get into the topic of our relationship with the companies, they are concerned but they are working with us.

Terry: They don't feel that they've been slandered by the comments, they've got predators on board.

Rodriguez: These are professional people who when they understand that there is an issue they take action and they are taking action with us.

Terry: And when will that action be complete? When can we see our students going back to school?

Helis: Students are at sea! To say that some[crosstalk 00:29:32]

Helis: I sat with Gene Albert this morning and he said essentially every midshipmen today is doing something to contribute to the sea days. They're either at internships or they are at sea. We put nine aboard navy, eight more are going aboard navy this afternoon. We basically got everybody out to MSC except I think three and the engineers will all, from what Gene is telling me, the engineers will all make it. And at least half of the deck from '18 will make it.

Terry: Half?

Helis: At least. ok

Terry: What about the other half?

Helis: Then we've got spring breaks, fall breaks, next summer. We've already planning to get it. [Crosstalk 00:30:15]. Let me stop. Let me stop. That's not the issue. That's not the issue.

Terry: What's the issue?

Helis: The issue is that our evidence tells us that the climate at sea on commercial ships is not an appropriate climate for our midshipmen to go out there. That is our issue.

Terry: What evidence. Not innuendo, not suggestions, not Mr. O'Connor's letter dreaming up imaginary ghosts of Christmas pasts.

Helis: 2012 sexual assault gender relations survey. First time we did it.

Terry: Four years ago.

Helis: You want the evidence. It's been a four year accumulation of evidence. If you want to have a dialogue fine. If you want to sit here and yell at us, we can sit here and let you yell at us. If you want to hear the evidence let me put it out in a four year continuum of how we got from 12 to the decision this year to do the stand down. The issue is not getting them to see the proximate issue is making the environment safe and a safe learning environment. That's what the issue is. And that has been lost in all the conversation. We say that the safety-

Terry: Where has it been lost in the conversation?

Helis: Because we say that our priority is the safety and well-being of our midshipmen.

Terry: And we agree.

Helis: But nobody is asking and we have taken action to protect midshipmen and to make it a better learning environment for them. All I hear back is yeah, yeah but I want

my son and daughter to graduate on time. That's all I hear back. I don't hear what's going to happen to make it better. How can we help improve it? How can we fix the problem?

Terry: You're not listening. Because plenty of things that we're saying one of which is pornography on the state ships is rampant. It's okay for them to go on state ships.

Helis: I'm not, ok, I don't control the state schools, I don't control the state ships

Terry: [crosstalk 00:32:08] And were you at the debriefing when they came back from the-

Helis: Yes I did. I didn't make the Empire State debrief but I debriefed the Golden Bear personally.

Terry: You missed one and caught the other.

Rodriguez: Mr. Gray, we made assignments to the state vessels. We identified open billets on those ships to address the very concern that you are raising here is to make sure that we are sending our people out to sea at every opportunity. The reason we sent our midshipmen out on state maritime academy ships, because they have supervision. If you have some anecdotal evidence about some inappropriate behavior why don't you present that to us in an appropriate format and not stand up at the end of the table with all due respect sir and shout at us.

Helis: I debriefed Golden Bear and I asked. They didn't express any of that. Personally did debrief Gene Albert. Gene Albert and Dave Palmer the interim dean, debriefed Empire State. We got a detailed... The Empire State midshipmen actually put together a detailed, typed out here are some things about the voids you think that we should know. That we provided to SUNY Maritime and it was mainly about teaching, learning environment and that. We didn't get that in the debriefs. We didn't get that in the debriefs. And we debriefed the senior level for all of them.

Now 2012 on the survey, one of the questions was if you were sexually assaulted in terms of the paper, experienced unwanted sexual contact, where do the incident that most affected you occur? In the average number of incidences per victim was

2.9 in that survey.

Male: 2.9 incidents per average victim?

Helis: Each victim and it was have you experienced unwanted sexual contact how many times? One, two, three and when you filled it out the average victim of those who reported on the survey experienced 2.9 incidents of unwanted sexual contact. Then the question is of the incidents of unwanted sexual contact you've experienced, which one had the most effect on you? 56% said it was at sea which says at least 56% of the incidences occurred at sea.

Terry: And were those broken down by commercial ship versus MSC?

Male: It was [inaudible 00:34:32]. You wanted the evidence. This is not aYou can pick apart any piece.

Terry: But you've made decisions to send them back out to sea on MSC ships. Do you have evidence that they're safer on a government ship than on a private ship?

Helis: Do you want me to present the evidence that we got to the decision or you want to exercise a cross exam?

Terry: I want to analyze it.

Helis: Then you need to hear the whole picture.

Terry: Go ahead. Give us the whole picture.

Helis: What I'm trying to. We didn't make the decision based on that question and that piece of information. That was four years ago. The '14 survey the question was asked in two different ways: When did it occur? Where did it occur? With the wind being school night, weekend, after hours, in sea. And then the where was on campus, off campus, sea year. So it was asked twice. And the answers there were

33 and 37% I can't remember which one. We concluded from that and the statisticians from the DMDC said, yes, it was legitimate, to estimate that 40 or 50% of the incidence were occurring at sea. Based on those two pieces of survey information that 40-50% were occurring at sea.

Sea year is a quarter of the time here. If almost half your incidents are occurring there, that's a red flag, that's a huge red flag. Then went down in the DMDC does focus groups the year after the survey to drill down into. Try to drill down more than the data. And it came back. The atmosphere at sea was sexist. It is male dominated. Women have problems out there; they frequently hear you don't belong out here. So we've got focus groups that are affirming that. We've also got focus groups particularly coming from faculty saying they see midshipmen bringing these behaviors back to campus.

There are more incidents in class and in other places of sexist comments, sexist behavior from upper class who've come back from sea then from plebes.

Terry: Where is that documented?

Helis: That's in or you can look at it in the 2015 interim report to congress which is online. All of these are online. All these in our reports to Congress. Then I'm not finished.

Terry: Go ahead.

Helis: We've got more. Then the advisory board meeting with focus groups uncovered the same. Particular meeting with groups of women... that experience... did you experience difficulties at sea. It was unanimous that they experienced sexist behavior.

Terry: Every woman, unanimous. Every woman said that?

Helis: In some groups it was every woman. Ok, You sit here and look dumbfounded but this is what we've got.

Terry: I've spoken to so many women who said they did not have any problems. I can't believe that it's unanimous.

Helis: Because they fear coming out publicly because of retaliation. That goes back into survey data that says they fear retaliation if they report. That goes back into

Terry: They've been harassed and if they don't report it they've been harassed. That's the conclusion you're reaching.

Helis: What I can say is that we had a midshipman who reported a case of sexual harassment on campus at the end of April. The accused admitted in his mast that he said the things he did in the place and in the context which he did which were completely inappropriate. He was punished in July. While I met with her again she was still being harassed by classmates for reporting it. It's real. The retaliation is real and the fear of retaliation is there and unanimous environment, the focus groups where they feel comfortable reporting they say it happens. What they are saying when you track it back to the survey says 40-50%. It's syncs.

It syncs up, there is a problem. And they fear, they fear reporting on ships because they fear being black balled in the industry, being labeled a troublemaker. They fear reporting on campus because they fear ostracism and retaliation. And we had seen that happen. We've had so few reports but we've seen it happen. We have one case where a crew member on the vessel reported to the company that a cadet female midshipman from Kings Point on the ship was being sexually harassed by a member of the crew. She refused to cooperate in the investigation. When we got her back here, we put her in the confidential environment and said why not. She told the person asking. The person who harasses me was an alumnus. You think I'm that crazy.

If I report on an alumnus I will be doomed. Then middle states come in evaluation and I read you the quote. They studied the information and the data and met with midshipmen and came to the same conclusions. Everybody who has looked at this problem, who has sat down and looked at the surveys, looked at the focus groups, met with midshipmen has come to the same conclusion. That we have a problem with the climate at sea.

Terry: The middle states survey said that there is a problem on campus.

Helis: It also said there is a problem at sea. I just read that to you.

Terry: You've taken an approach to at sea and none to on campus?

Helis: That's absolutely false.

Terry: You've taken the midshipmen off the ships. They aren't going to sea.

Helis: They are going to sea.

Terry: And many of them are not having enough sea days to graduate on time because in our opinion, and I think I'm speaking for most of us, an ill-advised stand down was taken. Let me ask you-

Helis: Let me respond to that, let me respond.

Terry: Go ahead.

Helis: We took the stand down to protect the safety of our midshipmen and to put a better learning environment in place, that's why we did it. And if the worst consequence is that some of our midshipmen graduate late and that is the price that we pay to protect our midshipmen, to protect them from being harassed, hazed, bullied and traumatized, I'm willing to pay that price. I'm willing to pay that price.

Terry: Can I ask a question, who made the decision to stand down?

Helis: The secretary of transportation makes the decision.

Terry: Did you talk to him before, you say you did?

Helis: We were both in the room, with the Maritime Administrator with his senior staff.

Rodriguez: It was the Maritime Administrator that you questioned whether or not he was concerned, so we were all there.

Terry: I want to know, when did this first come up? When did you first talk to the secretary of transportation?

Helis: We presented this evidence to the secretary I believe it was 9th of June.

Rodriguez: Ninth eighth, ninth of June.

Terry: And six days later the stand down was announced.

Rodriguez: We made the decision to stand down-

Terry: There was no discussion of this ever before that day?

Rodriguez: There was ... we presented-

Helis: There was no discussion with the secretary before that day.

Terry: The discussion with MARAD and with you?

Helis: We had had conversations.

Rodriguez: We've been discussing the evidence that we've been collecting.

Helis: We announced the call of the action when. When did we start to talk about this, January?

Rodriguez: The call of action was ... When did we announce that? In May. We had planned it in May so it must have been back in April when we started planning.

Terry: And when was the issue of a stand out first discussed?

Helis: I began, I did not discuss the issue of a stand down, I begun discussing the issue of sexual harassment. We had been discussing sexual harassment at sea for some time. We had conference call with industry before this, we began talking about ok this accumulation of evidence and what it meant. I started having those conversations with senior staff in April here at the academy.

Rodriguez: We-

Helis: We presented the evidence to the secretary in June and he made a decision at the meeting to stop putting midshipmen aboard commercial vessels.

Rodriguez: [crosstalk 00:42:13] We had the evidence of the superintendent has described to you. Now there are people who want to quibble with the evidence, I don't understand that easy because, excuse me. You just made a statement.

Terry: I want to follow up on it.

Rodriguez: I think I should take a moment, we have a number of issues that we have to discuss and I understand that this one is very important to people. I have to apologize for the direction that we are going in here. I thought we were going to come in here and have a civil discussion about some serious issues that are facing the academy. I understand that there are a lot strong feelings about that but I really ... I'm uncomfortable with the direction that this is going. I don't really appreciate sir coming in and being cross-examined. That's not why I came here I came here to address these issues and your concerns. I didn't come here to be cross-examined.

I apologize to the people who have other questions and who want to present to me their concerns in a civil tone, in a civil manner and I'll be very, very pleased to do that all afternoon.

Male: Just quick questions, when was the last time that you sail on a vessel? Have you ever sailed?

Male: Me?

Rodriguez: When I was in the Coast Guard, a long time ago.

Male: Yeah the [inaudible 00:43:43] in the military. So have you actually experienced the environment that is occurring on commercial vessels today and I mean last week?

Rodriguez: I'm not.

Male: I am, the thing is I talk with [inaudible 00:43:55] on the industry, I represent the company and I appreciate you taking that step to take care of the safety of the cadet because myself I have seen situations not in the US flag vessels but in other flags [inaudible 00:44:12] where the cadet are actually mistreated, they are actually being beaten some of them. I have personally experience with that. Now the fact that you are doing this and the fact that you are taking the safety of the cadet into account. I was wondering when my son went on board the second it. As soon as he stepped on the cargo ship, he was put to operate a crane with no training, no familiarization, nothing to do, no familiarization.

The safety management system also review by the office that send him [inaudible 00:44:46] he's just asking, can you drive the Xbox, yeah. I mean the whatever and say yes, you will be able to do this. When he told me that as a professional mariner today, no license and as an auditor I was appalled anyway. At the same time, I don't know, if you [inaudible 00:45:07] the stand down also has something to do with the maritime labor convention, you requirement for cadets?

Rodriguez: I will answer that and it had nothing really to do with the maritime labor convention however this issue is being addressed internationally, between

international ship owners.

Male: It's a situation all over the world-

Rodriguez: International maritime labor which as I mentioned.

Male: What time they are supposed to work, will my son tell me, no put us to work and of the engine to clean. I said wait a minute what about working rest period? What about SCTW, where do all those things fill? The rules are very clear, they cannot ... There are certain times they can work. I will appreciate you really take a close look on that and those part of the requirements and the regulations are part of whatever the cadet is being assigned to do on board.

Rodriguez: Thank you but that's all. Thank you very much for your comment. That's all part of this, we are talking about sexual assault, sexual harassment but there are also many other behaviors that we need to get our handle on. There's hazing, there's-

Male: Putting vessel [inaudible 00:46:11] or putting cadet vessel [inaudible 00:46:13] like the one that went down just recently.

Male: I have another question.

Male: [crosstalk 00:46:23]

Helis: We've got about 10 minutes.

Male: Some quick question, obviously the alumni and the parents association they are very involved right? Probably more so than you like.

Helis: At the end of the day you're passionate about it. I'd rather have people who are passionate about this than people who are indifferent. I appreciate the passion and the time that you all put into this and the interest you have.

Male: I'll just qualify that, there is involvement that is constructive and involvement that is not, on both sides. What I would say is I don't know like in our [inaudible 00:46:58]parents but I'm sure we'll clearly do the same. We talk to our sons and daughters all the time, we talk to our sons and daughters all the time. How many complains of the academy we are seeing from parents that have heard from their sons and daughters, they may not have wanted to admit it here because of the retaliation but clearly the parents would have picked up the phone and called the academy and said, "You know what, my daughter or son just called me that they've been harassed on the ship and so this is an issue." To your knowledge was there a collection of-

Male: No not to my knowledge.

Male: Why would parents be so quiet if their kids were being victimized to the degree that we say that they are being victimized.

Male: You are making the assumption that the children will tell their parents. Because in part...ok, Midshipmen have told me that they did not report abuse on ships because they got the code word, they will pull them off the ship because if you pull me off the ship, first I'm off the ship I'm going to miss two weeks because it's going to take time to get me back, time to go through the debrief and time to find me a new ship. So I'm going to lose time, I'm going to lose days, I'm going to lose sea projects, so I'm just going to deal with it. One midshipmen told me last week in a group I was meeting with he had a 21 day port to port at one point.

Doing a major cross Pacific and he said "Can't do anything till we get to the next port by the end of the 21 days I'd figured out how to live with it." He wouldn't tell me what it was but they don't report it for a whole host of reasons, they don't tell anyone. They don't want anybody to know because again they fear that there's going to be this in the industry side that they are going to be labeled a trouble maker and if they report on another midshipmen they are going to be subjected to ostracism that's why they don't report it.

Rodriguez: One of the proposals maybe-

Helis: The challenge is how do we get them to report? So we can deal with what we believe we truly believe are a small minority people who engage in these behaviors.

Male: One of the [inaudible 00:48:55] suggestions is to allow parents association if we hear from our students to have a confidential place that we can call to notify you folks that way the cadets here don't know who's reported whom and ship they don't know it's us reporting through a confidential source maybe it's through administration and parents association. In my heart of hearts I have to believe that most parents don't just kiss their kids goodbye for four years and never see them again, we talk to them all the time hopefully. And so I have to admit that ... I mean I have to think that a lot of us are aware of anything that is unusual.

Helis: Let me see what we can do about that.

Male: Thank you.

Male: [crosstalk 00:49:05]

Rodriguez: I just want to point out that what you are getting at is something I mentioned before. To get at this problem to get it at our accreditation issues we have to have a community solution. You are all part of the community now. Along with the alumni, along with the people here on the staff and all the faculty. What you just proposed was a sane approach to the issue.

Helis: We were able to recently create a mechanism for midshipmen and it has to be on the intranet where they can email us a report and the way it gets routed the sender is masked from us, so we simply get the report. That was also something we asked for so if you look at the posters for on campus, that's one of the lines, they are completely anonymous, all we get is whatever they type in and send but that's an internal system have to see what we can do something for external. Technically I don't know it's possible I'm not a wire head but we'll work on it. Yes ma'am.

Female: I think it's important to use intellectual fortitude not to think that we are trying to use semantics to grill you. But I think that no one is arguing about the impetus behind the stand down but if I was hired to get results and in 2012 you had survey data that shows that there was sexual harassment and four years later your

solutions to the problems with the students stand down commercial vessels that have in place. Isn't there someone that can spend less than \$350 an hour and hundreds and hundreds of days to get this. Would we shut down a hospital if the doctors were sexually being accused of sexually harassing nurse interns?

Would we keep the nurses from going in to the hospital? Anywhere in the country in industry, in education it's ... It seems to me throwing the baby out with the bath water and that the point that I think is really important is you say 50% of harassment occurs on sea year which is a quarter of the cadets-

Helis: 50% of the assaults.

Female: 50% of the-?

Helis: Assaults.

Female: What did I say?

Helis: You said harassments, its assaults. 50% of the assaults.

Female: Okay, search is with that the [inaudible 00:52:23] assaults. 50% of assaults according to your survey data, did it begin back in 2012 when we talking-

Helis: The problem is we don't know because we don't have data before 2012.

Female: You don't have data but you ready to stand down and you are saying these students they don't want to report it because they don't want to lose time, they don't want to get taken off the boat and yet that's exactly what you are doing . You are standing them down, you are taking them off, you are displacing their graduation possibly their certification as if ... The cure is worse than the disease. My point is, if they are commercial vessels that can pass and also the other thing that seems to be an assumption is that the best, the brightest, the congressional senatorial nominees this country are not assertive enough to follow some rules and at least keep each other accountable, they have sea partners.

Even if someone is meek or mild mannered and not able to report something that we have ... We direct them. We say you don't get to sea, if you don't do this we are going to send you back, we are going to send you home, we are going to stick you, and make you do push ups, and whatever because its tradition and it's quality and it's what we do but yet we can't say all right midshipmen, if this occurs and you don't report it worse we are sending you home, we are sending you back, we are sending you back. We can't get to that point, we have to hold them back while we pay how much money to have this new advisory board come in and do what?

Have they even been on ships before? The sexual harassment group, do they have sea legs? Can they go on? Do they know what they are looking at? Do they go on the ship? Don't you think it would be best if you the gentlemen who are mariners and have experience with merchant marine protocol ... I just think it's taking way too long and if it was my job, if I was charged to take care of this it would have been done before July 8th.

Male: You said a number-

Female: It's not everyone and it's not everywhere and the most important point with you are saying that it happened on commercial vessels, you don't have to doubt for that. Was it commercial vessels or was it ... Military Sealift Command? You can't say for certain where it was yet you are ready to stand down the commercial vessels which is the ... This is the core, the pinnacle, the centerpiece of the curriculum here, the Sea Year on commercial vessels.

Helis: [crosstalk 00:54:23] Let me address the last one, we initially stood down off of MSC also, we pulled midshipmen off of MSC ships. That-

Female: For how long?

Helis: Until we had evaluated and looked at ... First military looked at military looked at military sea commands protocols and they got the most sophisticated system.

Female: Excellent you are back on Military Sealift, excellent, so why can't we do the same

thing with-

Helis: We also saw commander Military Sealift Commands and all messaged to all captains to all chief engineers expressing that this was on his priority list. This was a concern and they needed to address it. Excuse me, so we did pull them off MSC and then we were able to put them back on MSC. We've always used about third of our days cumulatively come from MSC. Every midshipman, almost every midshipmen it's going to spend some time on MSE vessel but we did pull and then we put them back on [inaudible 00:56:05] I'm sorry.

Rodriguez: The Admiral described that we had a very strong commitment from the Commander of Military Sealift Command Admiral Shannon. Also for those who may not understand, and maybe that's part of the issue here as well is Military Sealift Command falls under the navy. So they also come under the department of defense. The department of defense has a very strong anti-sexual assault sexual harassment program. Everybody in the department of defense whether a contractor or civilian employee gets training in sexual assault sexual harassment and they hold their commanders accountable for the command climate on board their vessels, on board their shore units. That was the reason that we stood up again-

Female: Frankly I think commercial vessels have a lot more to lose because it's their money, it's their bottom line.

Rodriguez: I'll address commercial because I did go to sea for 17 years and I represented people out there for many many, more. They have been doing a lot in terms of trying to get a handle on issues like this, they are willing to help us to do more as part of ... part of the discussion that we are having with them. When you begin to talk, I want to make sure that we didn't stand down on commercial vessels as a solution to this problem. We stood down as a step towards solving the issue, that's why we did it. If anybody is under the impression and if I may for the moment address one other thing I hear all kinds of conspiracies and I got an email the other day about conspiracies and how many there are out there. There are no conspiracies here.

None of that has entered into our thinking. I haven't heard any of that discussion yet but I will sir I will get to you. We did not stand down on commercial vessels for any other reason than we needed to approach this problem immediately. We had a little bit of discussion about how we came to the decision and the timing of it. In

terms of the data, we have described the data that we have. We have the described how we have put it all together to you here today-

Female: I agree 1%-

Male: I cannot understand how people can quibble with that-

Female: No one wants to put our the midshipmen in harm's way in any way and I have to agree with [inaudible 00:58:33] absolutely one hundred percent. But it's what you are implying, you are implying that there are no commercial vessels that are ready to be stood up. [inaudible 00:58:44] or other ... and it's going to take umpteen, it's just abusive I believe to the students. The morale, the time it's going to take, what's they have to lose now, how do we as parents go back to our service academy days and represent students that have full rides to Harvard but they want to go to Brown but okay now they have an opportunity to go to Kings Point what do we say?

It's really, a really bad ... I think unless we can quickly get some of the commercial vessels stood up sooner rather than later and that the data is crystal clear. Let's spend time and energy on it I would say don't fudge if it's 2012-

Female: It would show you are trying.

Female: Is it company by company?

Rodriguez: It's company by company.

Helis: It's company by company-

Female: Is any company ready?

Rodriguez: As I described here before, some of the material that they've given us we have questions on, there are some things we are trying to put in place like some training

that we can all agree upon or at least some approach to training that doesn't happen out there right now or doesn't happen consistently. We are finding that every company, and I think when you look across the shipping industry or any industry, there are levels of compliance some have it and some have better systems than others.

Female: I think one person has to synthesize the data though if you have the group over here, you have the middle states group and you have this new board of SASH consultants and then you have other individuals ... It has to be one person in charge that can report back how quickly, what steps are being taken and communication.

Male: Thank you. If I may, the gentleman-

Male: Can I ask a question that has been bothering me since very beginning of this whole issue is that if the situation in the commercial maritime industry is as bad as you are characterizing then why did not Administer Jaenichen use the bully pulpit of his office and get all the other maritime academies in line. Wouldn't you be more effective in changing the culture at sea if you had the entire educational backbone behind you? Is there some sort of moral character deficit that Kings Pointers have where only they are being corrupted by the adverse culture that you are characterizing that exists.

Rodriguez: Some of what we are discussing with the companies are ... a lot of what I think we've be getting at here are short term measures for them to take for us to stand up again on commercial ships. We are also discussing some long term measures, long term cultural-

Male: [crosstalk 01:01:50]Why didn't the administrator get them to bring in the other Maritime academies, wouldn't you been more effective.

Rodriguez: That's the approach we are going to take over the long term. The industry has a number of forums that they can do that in, where they can come together and talk.

Male: [inaudible 01:02:04].

Rodriguez: Oh I get it and that's where this engagement is going to happen. Because-

Male: They're taking all the commercial billets from Kings Pointers[inaudible 01:02:12].

Female: You do understand that it's from the midshipmen's point of view it's like wait a minute, they're on the ships and I'm not on the ships. I'm at a federal service academy for this industry and I'm not allowed to go on it and they aren't and they are. You understand the mind set here?

Rodriguez: Yeah.

Female: So that's what we would really love to get explanation of, if it is really bad as you are saying it is then it should be maritime administrator who has the authority over the maritime industry it should be complete stand out instead of just the merchant marine academy [inaudible 01:02:46].

Rodriguez: We have some authority and some influence but we don't have-

Rodriguez: [crosstalk 01:02:54] But as I told you we are going to engage, the maritime administration is going to engage long term with the industry and the state maritime academies will be involved in that discussion as well.

Female: You didn't answer the question?

Female: What do we tell the midshipmen as to why the state maritime cadets are on their ships basically?

Rodriguez: You can tell them that the maritime administration is responsible for this program and that we are taking the action that we are taking because we identified a problem. We are not going to go from from ...to each state maritime academy and do that for them, that is something they have to address within their own program-

Female: But if you say the maritime industry is unsafe that is under your-

Rodriguez: I just told you ma'am, in the long term we are going to address it with everyone in the industry. With our commercial characters and our

Female: Just make a statement that you advise that the state academies stand down.

Rodriguez: That's not something that we can do.

Female: You can make a statement. Of course you can.

Male: Very quick question, what's the long term on this, how much longer is this going to take?

Male: Do you have any action time, any due dates? [crosstalk 01:04:12] This is going to be done by this date, can't we have something to talk instead of just asking questions that lead nowhere.

Rodriguez: On the 18th of August we met again with the Secretary and he directed us to go out and hire another firm, an outside firm. As superintendent alluded to earlier it's an outside firm to take a candid look, a frank look at our program. Now that we are looking at sea year and how it integrates with our campus culture here, so we needed some outside help to do that. Because I don't have the expertise to do that neither any of the people in the maritime administration. So we are going outside to do that. Over the course of the couple of weeks since he made that decision we have been putting the administrative pieces together to do that.

We have to have, some of you may have federal procurement experience we have the write a statement of work, we have to get an RFP [inaudible 01:05:11] out on the streets. So we're hoping that we'll finalize that this week before the holiday weekend and we'll have that on the street in....next week

Male: An actual plan.

Rodriguez: I'm telling you what the plan is. So we will expedite that procurement and bring somebody on board, what are we looking at.....

Wesley: Let me, if I might interrupt and I'll give you the chance to wrap up. And I know the gentlemen have a conference call.

Rodriguez: We are hoping that we can do it again by the end of the year.

Male: I do want to ask first of all.

Rodriguez: [inaudible 01:05:42] We do want to get it done by the end of the year.

Wesley: Well thank you for coming into the lion's den and I appreciate that. It hasn't been easy. I don't know that we're all satisfied but we are closer to coming to some degree of understanding. The question that we debated earlier today that I'll put to you I this, as an organization, which is a confederation, a loose confederation of parent associations across the country, what do you expect us to do? What is the ask ... what is that we can do to bring us back to a place where the midshipmen are back at sea and the academy is back full functioning?

Helis: I think one is to continue to point out the positive during recruitment. If somebody were to ask me during recruitment what I was talking, here are all the positives, excuse me at the academy. Here are the opportunities you get from this institution that are unique. Ok. In terms of the total experience, the academics, the training, the leadership development, the athletics, the co-curricular. This academy has tremendous amount to offer. And I'm cognizant too, [inaudible 01:06:53] too, everybody who comes here has got a bunch ... They've got all the thick envelopes and picked this one. I'll tell them look at the advantages, look at the school. We were put in Princeton's 381 best colleges that just came out, what day is it.

It was this week I can't remember what day it is, came out this week. So, there is a lot positive at the academy and emphasize the positive. Every midshipmen's not have a totally positive or totally negative experience here, I think the regimental commander talked about that at plebe parent weekend. Your plebes [inaudible 01:07:33] are going to have very good days and some very not so good days over the next four years. But emphasize the positive, emphasize the opportunities and

my view is we have identified some challenges, we have had some identified force that's why you bring in outside review, you bring in the advisory board, you bring in middle states

You bring in the firm to look at culture. You bring in outsiders and you take a look at the information, the data that they provide you take a hard look at it and if there's a problem, you take it on head on and we are taking all these head on.

Female: Who does that? One person will do that?

Helis: For the culture assessment I don't know who's going to...we ... I've been in... I can say this, I've been involved in drafting of the statement of work. One individual is not going to be able to do all that work by themselves in any kind of a time. We're looking at probably and one single organization will do it ok and there are organizations who do studies and reviews of institutions of higher ed on different issues and that's who we are looking for to come in. Someone with higher ed but we've also got in there some understanding of the maritime because they do have to be able to go out and look at maritime.

But it needs to be outside because sometimes to middle states sometimes that's what it takes. It takes somebody from outside to look and say okay are you aware of your short comings. Because sometimes we're not. And we're an institution that is willing to look at our own short comings and look where we fall in short and try to improve and that's what we are trying to do here. We are trying to make the institution better we are not trying to get rid of commercial shipping. We are trying to make the experience better. Ok. Is it hard? Yes.

Change is hard, breaking from things that we've been doing for a long time is hard and sometimes it's hard to say this that we've been doing for long is really good, there's a lot of positive in the sea year but there are problems that we have not paid attention to. And somebody pointed out, and middle states pointed it out that some of these culture and climate problems are at least a decade old, they proceed many of us in this room from being involved with the institution. We are taking them on head on. We are not ashamed to put our faults in public, we are not ashamed to be held accountable, and we are going to work on this and we are going to fix it.

Every meeting we are not going to give everybody the answer they want, the answer everybody wants now is when is sea year on commercial vessels going to resume? The answer is neither one of us know, ok, we don't know. It's the same for midshipmen I've told them that this is something that is not within your control ok focus on campus on your academics, focus on getting ready to go to sea because we will have all the federal vessel available at the start as opposed to hear where we stopped everything and then had to restart it. And, you know, this is as bad as it was going to get, was through this sailing period where we just said stop.

Ok, we are going to be able to start the next sailing period on time, with all the federal assets available, the navy in the last two weeks has been the organization that's been standing up with combatant vessels and if you want to see a story, one of the navy vessels the midshipmen have been tasked by the crew to teach celestial navigation to the ship's navigation officers. That's probably going to hit the Navy Times so we are going to put a story out of it too. Ok, that's an experience that they never would have gotten and

It's also a form of recognition that we never would have gotten when the United State Navy amid [inaudible 01:10:57] the senior officers commanding the ship were saying we want Kings Point cadets to teach classes to our officers. That is something that we should ... When that story comes out, we should highlight and say this is how good is. There is a lot of good but we're not perfect but we are going to fix it and it's uncertain, it's going to be difficult. But I will say again if the price for this is for deferred graduations, delay graduation dates to catch up sea days for some,

That's the price we as an institution, as a community have to pay, to better protect our midshipmen for being abused and traumatized at sea as you said even if it's just one, that's worth it. We should be willing to make that sacrifice for all of the children here. We should be willing to make the sacrifice for all the children here and for all the children who are yet to come and those to come I'm going to tell you are going to come in '21, you're not going to sea before '22 ok,

You're going to come class of 21, you are going to come at 17 you are not going to sea before '18, two years from now for the A splits two plus years from now. We're going to be there in two years. We're going to be there in two years. That's what I tell them.

Female: Focusing on the positive thing outstanding is what we teach our ... it's part of our mission. I hear the passion when you talk about the zero underway [inaudible 01:12:17] and what going to happen and when it's going to happen. I think you misunderstand ... I'm not against consultants, I think we can't be extra experts in everything [inaudible 01:12:26] bringing them on is good but who is going to ultimately take that and synthesize it and communicate it and tell us what's going on, when can each timeline what they found because if we just wait and say well \$350 an hour and [inaudible 01:12:39]

Helis: The deliverable is going to be a report on culture and the program total, that's going to be the deliverable. And it's going to be my responsibility and his because I'm sure we are going to get it before you check out next January and the Administrator, it's going to be our responsibility to get through that and present it back out. And I know the frustration now is from everybody... I get daily updates from Gene Albert on how many midshipmen are on what ships where. This is not going to be a daily update, it's going to be an involved study and we are going to get through report deliverable and its going to be time to wait. But when it comes out, I'll be reaching out to Tom and we'll figure out how we can best create a forum where we can best communicate this to parents.

Wesley: And I'd like to make this very clear this is an offer from the National Parents Association from the very top all the way down to every chapter. We are requesting to be part of the solution. We are requesting to be a stakeholder and [inaudible 01:13:36] duties as such and have a seat at the table. I've asked you that before and I ask you again to consider taking us on board so that everything we get isn't just a deliverable to us.

Female: If I can piggy back on that Deputy Rodriguez, your introduction is inspiring. To listen to your experiences here and what you've accomplished afterwards, that's what we want for our kids, that's why we're passionate, and we want what you described in the intro to be part of it. Obviously this has shaken us to our core and we fear that that won't be possible for our kids. So that passion that you hear from us if you can just take that into your heart and realize that what you've experienced, we want our kids to experience that and more and that where we are coming from. And there are days that our kids and us feel like they won't get an accredited degree and that's where we get on the wrong side of our passion.

It really struck me, really, to my heart when you've talked about what you've accomplished, that's what we want for our kids and we do want to be part of the

solution.

Rodriguez: And I want you to know that's what we're working towards. We've taken a bold step, we've taken a difficult step, we're going to see it through. You are asking how you can help, tell your midshipmen to concentrate on their studies. They are hearing a lot, they're getting a lot of misinformation ...again going back to some of the rumors that I've heard, it's very disappointing and disturbing to me but none of that's happening but the message to them has to be concentrate on your studies, we are going to get through this. We have to come together as I mentioned before as a community, that's how you can help. Thank you very much for-

Wesley: We just point out that it was Captain Rodriguez who swore in the class of 2020 this year at the Acceptance Day.

Rodriguez: That was fun.

Female: Do we have to wait on the consultants to get the kids back on commercial ships if the commercial ships are ready?

Helis: As of now, yes you have to wait. Secretary's decision is to wait.

Female: There will be no updates or anything?

Rodriguez: No, no we'll communicate. We may not have a lot to say but we'll certainly have a forum. We do...We have the town halls so I understand that there may be some-

Male: You are anticipating by January of '17 that we should have a report.

Rodriguez: Yes, absolutely (Helis also speaking)

Male: The RFP is not complete right now. Right?

Rodriguez: We're finalizing it right now.

Male: So by the time you go to RFP, [inaudible 01:16:21] you're going to bid...

Rodriguez: [crosstalk 01:16:22] Yeah but when the secretary says get it done everybody's ... Believe me, it's a priority there are things that we can do to expedite the process and not go through the whole regular normal procurement thing.

Female: Real quick, is a positive take away that you said the worst of the stand down is behind us and that potentially A splitters [inaudible 01:16:50] though may not be on merchant ships could potentially get the proper number of sea days on the navy or MSC or [inaudible 01:17:00]

Helis: All of the federal assets [inaudible 01:17:00] will be available and the RRF [inaudible 01:17:01] wasn't available for what, until two weeks ago. Engineers can accumulate up to 120 days on RRF and deck can do up to 30. All the MSC will be available which provides some great opportunities. Again lately the navy has been coming aboard with more vessels. We usually have, you can count them on one hand, we have 18 [inaudible 01:17:21] with more in the pipeline. So I expect, yes, it's not going to be this stop and improvise this as we go. We will be able to start the sailing year with a plan knowing the full inventory of [inaudible 01:17:36] vessels available and get it out.

Now there's always some ... Even in the best of times we have to wait weeks to get out because of academic issues and medical clearances but I think it's going to be a much more normal start to sea year than what we just went through.

Female: Starting for A splitters?

Helis: Starting in November.

Female: Is it true that some MSC vessels have the authority to give that to stipend because apparently-

Helis: MSC is paying. MSC pays, RRF is not paying [inaudible 01:18:09]. MSC they are employees of the Military Sealift Command.

Female: [inaudible 01:18:15].

Helis: Again your students, your children are probably going to hear there's a hiring processed for MSC that is more complicated than for commercial so you may have them calling for stuff because we are going to start the MSC process earlier for the A splits because more of them are going to go MSC right out of the gate.

Female: You can't guarantee the safety of the cadet on a MSC ship but you are satisfied that if an incidence reported it will be handled swiftly, is that correct?

Helis: Yes and we did have an incident that involved MSC in...somebody in class of '15 and MSC responded. The response was textbook, NCIS is their investigating body, they were on sight the next day. The coordination, the MSC commander was talking to the Administrator and to me. The JAG at MSC was taking to our attorneys here. The SARC at MSC was talking to our SARC here for coordination for warm hand over of care when we got her off the vessel. The response from MSC...It could not have been better.

Female: That's great and we should strive to have commercial have the same response-

Helis: That's what we're striving for here.

Female: [crosstalk 01:19:36] the reporting. If the cadet doesn't report it and what makes you think a cadet is going to report it on an MSC ship when they're not going to report it on a commercial ship? These are the same contractors, the same people They could be King's Pointers, it could be an alumni.

Helis: It's the same deterrent that you've got here on campus that you've got out there. You still got those same deterrents that we have to deal with and try to address.

Female: You see the logic? It doesn't make sense? That's what parents are questioning,

what's really going on here? Because it just-

Helis: Part of it is creating a climate where they're going to report, to be more willing to report. Part of this how do the companies, how do the crews address the problem? Are you openly talking about it? This is the tough one. This is the hardest part to cracking the problem we've got is getting a report and it involves changing the climate where you don't fear retaliation so it becomes a point of when they're told by somebody, you could report this without fear of retaliation, that it's got some credibility behind it.

Female: I just don't think the stand down moves you any closer to reporting. They're not connected at all.

Helis: Well, procedures on the ship are and I think-

Wesley: Gentlemen, they've got a two thirty phone call back at Wiley [inaudible 01:20:49].

Speaker 1: When you talk about the transition. Presidential administration changes over one way or another. What happens? Are we going to lose ground because we have all new people?

Rodriguez: That's why we're committed and I tried to explain before. It's my priority to put the machinery, the administrative machinery in the place. The people in place at the Maritime Administration. The career people who are going to see through what we're doing now.

Helis: The same at the department level. The career staff has been involved at every step of the way in this because there is an understanding that we're going to try move this as far as we can but it's going to have to carry over the first couple months as the pro staff and the professional staff at both DOT and MARAD [inaudible 01:21:29] and we're all professional staff here, have all been engaged. So the primary actors who are actually going to be doing the working on this are the professional staff and this should carry over.

So, there's always dis-continuities but the way we're staging it and the urgency

we're giving it now to get this thing moving with momentum should minimize that. This not going to stop being a priority issue with the change of administration.

Rodriguez: It's a long term-

Terry: [inaudible 01:21:57] the company officers be given leadership training because that seems to be a weak link.

Helis: The commandant has actually set up a four day session. It's going to be mainly the commandant's staff that we're also trying to pull some of the academic and some of the support staff out at Stony Brook where they have a development session where they brought a professional development, a multi-day event on basically leadership of college students. How to interact, how this generation thinks.

Terry: How to stop bullying?

Helis: Yeah, and how to address issues of-

Terry: Not by the regiment but by themselves.

Helis: Yeah, Yes. It is intended how you interact with students. We've been trying to move it more to a student centric shifting, understanding that is a hybrid military and educational environment. Get them more understanding of the educational side of the environment. Yes.

Male: [inaudible 01:22:48] that is it.

Helis: We've been given the ok.

[OF MIC CONVERSATION]

We have the distinguished chapter certificate and the-

Male: We're going to do this real quick?

Male: Very quick.

Male: [crostalk 01:23:18]. All right, this is the fun part. The real fun part. Colorado Diane.

Male: [crosstalk 01:23:32]. Okay, I'll move to [crosstalk 01:23:39].

[OFF MIC CONVERSATION]

Female: She's got a real camera, we don't see those very often.