

WEST POINT CHARACTER INTEGRATION AND ADVISORY GROUP



West Point
READY 
READY TO SERVE. READY TO LEAD.



"I believe the comparative advantage and unique contribution of West Point is the combination of intellectual, physical and military development combined with an integrated character development program that develops leaders of character who live honorably, lead honorably, and demonstrate excellence," Peterson said. "Choosing and doing the harder right over the easier wrong requires good character that motivates leaders to do the right thing, at the right time, with the right attitude—especially when no one is looking."

— Dr. Jeffrey Peterson, Senior Advisor, Character Integration and Advisory Group



"A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do." These words of the Cadet Honor Code immediately establish the moral-ethical expectations of every cadet and West Point graduate. Choosing and doing the harder right over the easier wrong require more than moral reasoning skills. In addition to being taught what is right, cadets also need to become more aware of situational factors that indicate moral action is required, more confident in their skills to take the morally correct action, and more willing to demonstrate the moral courage sometimes necessary for choosing the harder right.

To address this issue, West Point is implementing an intense and updated character development program for cadets. As part of that effort and to reinforce the ongoing need for character development, Dr. Jeffrey Peterson was officially appointed the Senior Advisor to the Superintendent and Director of the Character Integration Advisory Group (CIAG). The mission of the CIAG is to advise senior leaders on matters related to character development, conduct research on character education and assessment, and to help integrate character development across the four programs—military, academic, physical and character.

The CIAG has been resourced by the Army and Superintendent LTG Darryl A. Williams '83 with nine additional faculty members. The CIAG reports directly to the Superintendent and works closely with the Simon Center for Professional Military Ethic (SCPME) on the design and delivery of the Character Program. In addition to supporting the CIAG mission, the CIAG faculty members also teach courses in various departments aligned with their academic discipline.

The desired outcome for West Point's increased emphasis on character and creation of the CIAG is that West Point graduates will provide the moral leadership necessary to build cohesive teams and ethically accomplish the mission. The CIAG will be an essential resource for the Academy in this endeavor. As part of this effort, there are two primary areas that need funding support: the Character Development Lab and the Character Individual Advanced Development (CIADs).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT LAB

The purpose of establishing a character lab at the United States Military Academy is to advance scientific insights that help cultivate a culture of character growth and, ultimately, produce leaders of character that live and lead honorably as they serve the nation.

Science can enhance the effectiveness of the Army's character development efforts. However, there is much work to be done in assessing the effectiveness of various character development

activities and character growth at the individual level. The CIAG, using the resources within the USMA Character Development Lab, will have the opportunity to develop assessment tools useful for both the West Point and Army mission requirements to develop good character. The USMA Character Development Lab's vision is to create a repertoire of science-based character development strategies and assessments that are tailored specifically to this context. The USMA Character Development Lab will contribute to the pressing challenge of assessing character growth and developing and testing interventions, identifying best practices for character formation, and exporting Army-optimal character activities and measurement instruments.

Research areas include the following initiatives:

- Improving character development opportunities by testing and improving the design, delivery, effectiveness, and utility of character-based interventions.
- Exploring character "in the field" by studying behavior in realistic, scenario-based training environments. Example projects may include assessment centers, observational projects during high intensity training, and field experiments.
- Advancing new virtue and character measurement initiatives at the individual level. Example projects may include the measurement of virtues, virtue constellations, professional identity, or personality structures.
- Assessing the culture of character growth at the collective level. Possible projects include investigating the character-building power of role models and exemplars, as well as specific traditions, policies, norms, and existing developmental strategies.
- Collecting peer evaluations and developmental feedback relevant to character and team performance.
- Identifying the long-term effects that attending USMA has on character.

The USMA Character Development Lab will also focus on forging a consortium of experts in character and development, as well as sharing scientific insights with other service academies. The lab will function to create and disseminate the type of knowledge and best practices that help Army professionals and Army organizations flourish. These objectives will contribute to various margin of excellence opportunities related to character development.

Funding for this concept will allow West Point to purchase the most cutting-edge survey software and complete room renovations needed to prepare a lab facility, including virtual reality headsets, interview cameras, digital tablets, and

wearables such as Fitbits and Go-Pros. Funding will also help West Point incentivize study participants; the number of people willing to participate in our projects will directly influence the accuracy of our conclusions. Funding will also allow the USMA Character Development Lab to remain in tune with the state of the art in the field by hosting and traveling to research meetings attended by top character experts. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, financial backing will allow the USMA Character Development Lab to hire high caliber researchers who will help collect and analyze the results of our projects and determine how to implement and disseminate the findings.

CHARACTER INDIVIDUAL ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT (CIAD)

The purpose of establishing a Character Individual Advanced Development (CIAD) is to advance character insights, share best practices with external institutions, and ultimately, develop cadets who will lead character development activities for the Corps of Cadets and help cultivate a culture of character growth at the United States Military Academy.

The Academy would like to offer summer opportunities for interested and uniquely qualified cadets to participate in an advanced developmental program centered on character development and culture change. The program would offer cadets a unique opportunity to observe and implement concepts relevant to their ongoing character development activities and education over several weeks during a summer internship. This program would align cadets with leading experts in character formation and development to broaden cadets' perspectives and provide them with practical advanced education related to their responsibilities at USMA and as future leaders for the military. CIADs would also increase the Academy's body of knowledge regarding character and help the Character Integration and Advisory Group continue to develop our leaders for the type of character-related challenges they will face in the 21st Century.

Potential CIADs may include:

- Service Academy Internships for Honor, Trust, Resiliency, and Wellness projects.
- Character education opportunities with the Jubilee Center for Character & Virtues at the University of Birmingham



By using virtual reality headsets, cadets are exposed to various situations that require moral action and become part of the scenario. The cadets practice recognizing the cues for moral action, deciding the right action, taking the right action, and responding to the consequences. Throughout the scenario, the technology can track eye movement and monitor unconscious physical reactions. In a separate room, a group of cadets can observe the actions of the cadets within the virtual reality environment and assess the effectiveness of the moral intervention. Following the exercise, all participants discuss the various steps towards moral action and provide feedback for improvement. Quantitative and qualitative data can be collected for use in longitudinal studies and assessing the effectiveness of various character interventions.

- Development, research, and assessment initiatives for character and inclusion at the Wake Forest University Program for Leadership and Character
- Research with the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.
- Internship in the Character Lab (founded by Angela Duckworth), a nonprofit whose mission is to advance scientific insights that help children thrive.

CIADs will also focus on expanding the research and educating select cadets on character development, character assessment methods, positive psychology, mental wellness, resiliency, honor codes and systems, trust formation, and inclusive environments. As is the case for some AIADs, there is the opportunity for some CIADs to lead to Capstone research projects in the following academic year. The goal is to fund ten cadets each summer to share best practices and help build a strong bench of character experts among the Corps of Cadets and contribute to various Margin of Excellence opportunities related to character development.





Photo: Lee Ross '73

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Total Center Endowment	\$8.6 million
Character Individual Advanced Development (CIAD) and Character Assessment Endowment	\$4.7 million
Character Individual Advanced Development (CIAD) Endowment	\$1.7 million
10 Cadets	\$50,000
1 Cadet	\$5,000

Initiatives

Character Development Assessment	\$750,000 endowment/\$30,000 annual
Character in the Field Assessment	\$750,000 endowment/\$30,000 annual
Character Measurement Assessment	\$750,000 endowment/\$30,000 annual
Culture of Character Growth Assessment	\$750,000 endowment/\$30,000 annual
Peer Evaluation Assessment	\$750,000 endowment/\$30,000 annual
USMA Influence on Lifelong Character Assessment	\$750,000 endowment/\$30,000 annual
Bi-annual Character Forum	\$700,000 endowment/\$25,000 annual
Master Character Consortium & Lectures (reserved)	\$700,000 endowment/\$25,000 annual
Subject Matter Honorarium (reserved)	\$500,000 endowment/\$20,000 annual
Technology Endowment	\$500,000 endowment/\$20,000 annual
Start-Up Equipment and Endowment (funded)	\$242,000

MARGIN OF EXCELLENCE



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