

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2018

Admiral Karl L. Schultz
Commandant
Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Admiral Schultz:

Congratulations on your appointment as the 26th Commandant of the Coast Guard. We appreciate the opportunities we have had to work together in the past and are confident that, under your leadership, the Coast Guard will continue to be Semper Paratus for any challenge.

As you begin your new responsibilities, we are writing to inquire about the steps the Coast Guard will take to address serious issues that have come to light at the Coast Guard Academy (CGA).

Over the past decade, we have supported – and conducted oversight over – the Coast Guard’s efforts to expand diversity at the Academy and implement the Equal Employment Opportunity and Equal Opportunity programs. We applaud the progress that has been made at the Academy, but are deeply troubled by the results of recent institutional assessments and questions about the Academy’s climate. Important strides have been made to expand the diversity of incoming classes, but challenges exist in ensuring that incoming students graduate to become officers and future leaders.

We appreciate the Coast Guard’s decision to become the first federal service academy to use the Equity Scorecard process to examine educational outcomes at the Academy. Unfortunately, the Equity Scorecard has found troubling gaps in graduation rates and course pass rates. For example, the Equity Scorecard reported that “Black/African American cadets have been consistently less likely to graduate than the all-cadet average.” The Scorecard also warned, “Of particular urgency is Black/African-American cadets’ disproportionately high share of disciplinary sanctions.”¹

The Equity Scorecard also states:

Cumulative disparities across the four previous areas of cadet success (Admissions, Military and C/Division, Academics, and Athletics), however, suggest that ample opportunities exist for CGA to improve both the outcomes and overall academic

¹ U.S. Coast Guard Academy, *2017 Vital Signs Report* (2018) (online at <https://cue.usc.edu/files/2018/04/Vital-Signs-Report-FINAL-032818-V2.pdf>).

experiences of cadets from marginalized racial/ethnic groups. Addressing and reducing these disparities would also likely help lead to greater parity in graduation rates, which have been substantially lower for Black/African-American cadets than for others during two of the three most recent academic years.²

It is critical that the Coast Guard respond effectively and decisively to the Equity Scorecard results. We would like to know what specific steps the Academy will take in the wake of these urgent findings to identify, address, and ultimately eliminate the disparities contributing to inequitable outcomes.

We are also troubled by recent reports that the Coast Guard has relieved the head of the Academy's management department reportedly "after an investigation found that he bullied a subordinate in early 2018." A spokesman for the Academy indicated that Captain Kevin Lopes was removed "due to a loss of confidence in his ability to effectively lead the department" and that the removal "is the product of no single incident." However, media reports indicate that despite his removal from a leadership position, this officer will continue to be a member of the permanent commissioned teaching staff at the Academy.³

We would like to review, by July 13, 2018, all documents, including convening authority memoranda, investigative reports, panel sheets, final action memoranda, and post-investigation talking points, regarding allegations of harassment or bullying made by any student or faculty member at the Academy during the past three years, the results of any investigations conducted to examine these allegations, and the terms of any settlements reached.


In addition, we request a briefing by July 20, 2018, on the steps being taken to respond to the results of the Equity Scorecard, address disparities in graduation rates, and respond to climate issues at the Academy. We also look forward to discussing the steps being taken to respond to allegations of bullying or unprofessional conduct involving any faculty member at the Academy in order to prevent such conduct in the future.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent matters. We look forward to a productive ongoing dialogue with you about the Coast Guard Academy.

Sincerely,


Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform


Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security


Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

² *Id.*

³ *Coast Guard Academy Removes Management Department Head*, Military.com (May 31, 2018) (online at www.military.com/daily-news/2018/05/31/coast-guard-academy-removes-management-department-head.html).

Admiral Karl Schultz, Commandant
Page 3

cc: The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Michael McCaul, Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security