



UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AND FOUNDATION

Naval Academy Alumni and Community:

As many of you are aware, a now-former alumni volunteer on our Board of Trustees recently made racist and sexist comments [in a public forum](#). These remarks seriously discredited him as a Naval Academy graduate and retired Navy Captain. The comments trampled on our core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. They injured and confused many of our alumni and shipmates and, by association, they reflected poorly on our 65,000 alumni, our parents and friends in our Naval Academy family, and our Alumni Association. He no longer serves on our Board, and he has rightly resigned from his home chapter. As a chapter trustee, he was removed by the local chapter from their membership.

During the Alumni Association Board of Trustees meeting on 10 June 2020, we also reviewed his membership status in the national organization and voted, in accordance with our bylaws, to expel the alumnus from the membership rolls of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association.

As members of the Board and as alumni, we are shocked and disappointed that our alumni, our Alumni Association and likely the broader military community have been impacted and tainted by the bigotry of a Naval Academy graduate. We will move forward and put our hand on the tiller to actively steer our Alumni Association on a course away from racism, sexism and bigotry. Our course will not tolerate bigotry of any type and will provide all present and future Naval Academy alumni with an alumni organization that reflects Naval Academy core values, nurtures all alumni with respect and dignity and treats everyone equally. Our Alumni Association celebrates the diversity of our members and the special talents of each of our alumni. As alumni, we must continue to reflect on the enduring oath we all took on I-Day as plebes and at our graduation and commissioning. We must reaffirm the responsibility we have to our Naval Academy, our Navy and Marine Corps, our nation and to one another to support, promote and live our core values.

We pledge to learn from this incident of bigotry and actively lead to restore the trust and hope of our diverse alumni community. We will purposely improve our alumni board processes and our alumni volunteer organizations to ensure there is no hiding place for racism, sexism or bigotry. Silence on these matters is not an option. We must ensure we are on the right course with the right people in place to lead and represent us. We are committed.

Therefore, we have established a special committee, co-chaired by Lieutenant General David Beydler '81, USMC (Ret.), and Captain Karin Vernazza '90, USN (Ret.), that will include a diverse group of our alumni. The committee will review how we can improve our leadership organizations and operations to support and nurture all alumni and to ensure racism, sexism and bigotry and their damaging effects do not exist and will not be tolerated in our Alumni Association. Additionally, the committee will review all aspects of our Alumni Association mission, board policy, processes, recruitment and succession planning. The committee will report its initial findings at a meeting of the Board of Trustees in September. As the committee gets established, we genuinely request your input and support. Please send comments to alumnifeedback@usna.com.

We have much work to do in the months ahead but let us be clear: there is no place for racism or discrimination among our ranks as Naval Academy leaders, or within the larger Naval Academy alumni community.

Very respectfully,

Chairman and Trustees of the U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association