

United States Merchant Marine Academy Program

ISSUE: In 2007, the Maritime Administration discovered an apparent violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act at the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA), and subsequently conducted an internal controls review consistent with the principals of OMB Circular A-123. As a result of the Internal Controls Review, Congress asked the Government Accountability Office to conduct an audit of USMMA. This audit is underway, with a report expected in late Spring 2009. The USMMA has several important initiatives underway: research in alternative power generation (solar, hydrogen) for shipboard applications; providing manpower to support the Marine Highway initiative (moving cargo by ships to reduce highway congestion); partnering with the National Guard (hiring USMMA grads with transportation and logistics experience); and expansion of training in the operation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) ships.

ACTION NEEDED: None – For Information Only

BACKGROUND:

The USMMA is one of the Nation's five federal service academies and trains young men and women from across the nation as licensed merchant marine officers. Founded in 1943, USMMA is operated by the Maritime Administration, and is DOT's only service academy. Midshipmen are appointed by Members of Congress, and attend at no cost. Each graduate receives: a Bachelor's degree in marine engineering or marine transportation and incurs a service obligation to work aboard merchant ships as an officer for 5 years (or to serve in the military or in a strategic shoreside industry for the same period of time); to maintain their USCG-issued license for 6 years, and, to serve in a military reserve component for 8 years.

Location: Kings Point, Long Island, NY (district of Cong. Gary Ackerman NY-04)

Student Body: 1,001 midshipmen (885 men, 116 women), representing all 50 states.

Graduate Employment: 67% of the Class of 2008 is employed in seagoing jobs in the Merchant Marine, as a deck or engineering officers aboard cargo ships, oil tankers, LNG carriers, coastwise ships, or tugboats. 23% are on active duty in the Armed Forces, serving in all branches. 10% received a waiver to work in a strategic industry ashore (shipbuilding, ship repair, or ship operations).

Members of the Congressional Board of Visitors:

The Board of Visitors was re-established in 2007 following a 13-year hiatus. Three members are appointed by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee; one member is appointed by the Vice President; four members are appointed by the House Armed Services Committee; and two members are appointed by the Speaker of the House. OST is responsible for managing the appointment of new members from the 111th Congress, and for scheduling meetings.

Submitted by: Maritime Administration, United States Merchant Marine Academy

Prepared by: CAPT Eric Wallischeck, wallischecke@usmma.edu, 516-773-5232

Last Updated: 23 September 2008