

Military Service Academy

Written by Emily Zhang, Cynthia Chen

On January 18, CAPA-MC hosted a Service Academy Seminar in Gaithersburg, Maryland in order to inform parents and students of five different service academies and their related programs.

The guest speakers were Colonel Bob Tettelbach, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Atherton, Dr. Alan Cheung, Zhenya, Betty Xiong, and the moderator Julie Yang. The event was around two hours long and around 100 people came to learn about the military service academies. The audience was very engaged, and some members even shared that they wish to apply to the academies or have applied in the past.

About the Speakers:

Colonel Robert Tettelbach is an Air Force Academy admissions liaison. In 1979, he graduated from the Air Force Academy and worked in the field of computer science technology for 18 years. After that, he retired from the army, and worked on computing analysis and consulting. He was the Co-CEO in a private sector and also worked in the federal government. His experiences represent the veteran's good benefits and a good secondary career after retiring from the army.

Lieutenant Colonel Eric Atherton was part of the US Army for over 23 years until 2017. Before that, he served for four years as the army ROTC professor of Military Science and Department Chair at McDaniel College. He currently serves as the Senior Army instructor of the Army JROTC program at Magruder High School.

Dr. Alan Cheung is an honorary advisor for CAPA-MC. From 1990 to 1998, he was a Montgomery County Board of Education committee member and president. Before that, his previous career was at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. He served as an interview panelist on the Service Academy Nomination Committee for Senator Van Hollen.

Zhenya Li is a parent of a daughter who got into the United States Naval Academy. She was the parent perspective, as she gave valuable insights about the application and school life at the United States Naval Academy.

Betty Xiong is a senior at Magruder who recently got accepted to Princeton. She would like to study biological engineering and enjoys being in color guard. She is class president of her current high school and president of Yaomin Engineering. She came to share tips on interviewing for college.

Julie Yang, a Board member and the Curriculum Committee Chair of CAPA-MC, invited the panelists, coordinated and moderated this event.

About the Academies:

Asian American parents, in particular, are always stressing about their children's academics and future universities or colleges, but many have not considered the option of going to a service academy.

So what are the service academies, and why are they worthwhile? The five service academies are United States Military Academy (also known as West Point), United States Naval Academy, United States Air Force Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, and United States Merchant Marine Academy.

The reason why so many students apply to these service academies is that they are rewarding and the student bodies at these programs are truly unique. All of the students show excellent leadership skills.

Many people generally think that ivy league colleges have the most workload as they seem like the most prestigious universities to go to, however service academies can be even more rigorous. At most colleges, students take four classes, but at service academies, all students take seven to eight classes along with demanding physical training.

However, all this relentless workload pays off as all students graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree because of the classes they take. This leaves students prepared for when they enter the private sector because military service is highly valued in the workplace.

Service academies are highly ranked among other universities, and the students develop high moral character and discipline. Not to mention, many families appreciate the free tuition.

Applications:

All of these advantages to service academies may have left you wondering, so how exactly does the application process work? The application process is a four-part ordeal, including academic reports, a physical fitness test, a medical examination, and a nomination by an elected official.

The academic report includes a high school transcript, SAT/ACT superscores, and an impressive resume packed with leadership roles in extracurricular activities. Students should work hard in school and shoot for the best grades they can.

The physical fitness test includes, a basketball throw (from a kneeling position), cadence pull-ups or flexed-arm hang (women's option), a 40-yard shuttle run (for time), abdominal crunches (number completed in 2 minutes), push-ups (number completed in 2 minutes), and 1-mile run (for time).

For the medical examination, students will receive a letter from the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DoDMERB), and it will give you the location and date of the applicant's exam. A word of caution on medical exams, if the applicant knows of any medical conditions, it is best to not do surgery before the medical exam. Let the service academy advise the applicant to get a surgery done at their approved facilities if needed. Do not do any eye surgery prior to the exam, as this will disqualify the applicant. It is best to get the medical exam done as soon as possible, as it can possibly take months to get qualified. The results will be forwarded to the applicant by the DoDMERB.

It is important to note that service academy applications start earlier than regular colleges. The application process begins in the spring of junior year. This means that students should apply for a nomination from a local elective official as soon as possible. Some examples of elective officials are congressional representatives, senators, or the United States Vice

President. In order to seek a nomination, students will need to go through the interview process with the elected official's nomination committee. Dr. Alan Cheung shared that interview questions usually pull from topics like school experiences, personal interests, goals in life, sports, and family attitude towards application just to name a few. After that, Betty Xiong shared tips on answering and preparing. She stated that making a good first impression and answering the initial question of 'tell me about yourself' briefly yet descriptively. She emphasized the importance of getting to know other students that are already in the program.

There are many ways students can increase the chances of getting into one of the service academies. In addition to taking hard classes and meeting the grades, students can get involved in their schools and communities. Many of the applicants are class presidents and VPs, team captains, or presidents of clubs. Showing leadership experience is one of the key values of the service academies.

Another aspect is contacting the academy liaison and networking with nominating individuals. Networking is important, as in today's world, having connections can be a good way of getting an advantage into acceptance, so building relationships with others are essential.

Since there is a physical examination part to getting into an academy, students can prepare themselves physically. The medical aspect is unchangeable, however, students can do their best to get into shape by running or continuing/joining an athletic club or team.

Guest speaker Betty Xiong, who got admitted to Princeton University gave several pieces of advice on how to improve the chances of getting admitted to a prestigious college. She mentioned that the interviews are very important.

First of all, she states that a concise and brief explanation of achievements is important since that is a common interview question asked. She also mentioned that the interviewers are very accomplished and enjoy being praised, so be prepared to listen to them talk about themselves, and act very humbled at their achievements.

She also notes that it is very important to mention achievements and extracurriculars in the application essays because it gives a chance to explain why these achievements and extracurriculars are important and why they are being done.

ROTC program:

There are only five Service Academies with only 4300 students at five locations with limited major choices. The ROTC program can be a good opportunity for those who still want to serve, but cannot go into one of the service academies. ROTC stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps and is a program that prepares young adults to become officers in the US Military. It is offered in over 1,700 universities and colleges. Cadets commit to serving in the military in exchange for free tuition and a guaranteed career after college. There are a few branches of which ROTC is offered, including the Army ROTC, Navy and Marine Corps ROTC, and Air Force ROTC.



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Army ROTC Overview

Roadmap for an ROTC Student

BASIC COURSE				ADVANCED COURSE			
MSL I <i>Freshman</i>	Summer #1	MSL II <i>Sophomore</i>	Summer #2	MSL III <i>Junior*</i>	Summer #3	MSL IV <i>Senior*</i>	Graduation
MSL 101 Intro to Army and Critical Thinking	Summer Training Opportunities CIET, CULP, CPFT, Internships	MSL 201 Innovative Team Leadership	Summer Training Opportunities CIET, CULP, CPFT, Internships	MSL 301 Adaptive Tactical Leadership	Cadet Leader Course (CLC – Mandatory for All Cadets) CPFT, CLT, Internships	MSL 401 Mission Command and the Army Profession	Commission Second Lieutenant
MSL 102 Intro to the Profession of Arms		MSL 202 Foundations of Tactical Leadership		MSL 302 Leadership in Changing Environments		MSL 402 Mission Command and the Company Grade Officer	
1 Class/Week 1 Leadership Lab/Week PRT LTX		1 Class/Week 1 Leadership Lab/Week PRT LTX		2 Classes/Week 1 Leadership Lab/Week Professional Military Education PRT LTX		1 Classes/Week 1 Leadership Lab/Week Professional Military Education PRT LTX	
BASIC COURSE ALTERNATIVES: -Placement Credit (Prior Service/BCT/JROTC) -Cadet Initial Entry Training (CIET) -Accelerated Cadet Commissioning Training -Alternative Entry Option							

*2 Year Master's Degree Program Julie Yang Jan. 2019

To be considered for the ROTC program, the applicant must be 17 with parental consent or 18 without parental consent. Physical requirements vary from the different branches, but in general, the applicant should be in good physical condition – and should be able to pass standard screening. The applicant must be a US citizen and should have completed high school.

Service academies are not for everyone, but many people may not have even considered them an option before this event. Service academies are another great option for those who want a physically and mentally challenging course load after high school, and should be an option to ponder before deciding which colleges to apply to.



Taken by Emily



Taken by Claire



Taken by Claire

Websites for the Academies and ROTC Program:

- United States Military Academy (West Point)
<https://www.usma.edu/>
- United States Naval Academy
<https://www.usna.edu/homepage.php>
- United States Air Force Academy
<https://www.usafa.edu/>
- United States Coast Guard Academy
<https://www.uscga.edu/>

- United States Merchant Marine Academy
<https://www.usmma.edu/>

- ROTC Program
<https://www.todaysmilitary.com/training/rotc>
 - Army ROTC
<https://www.goarmy.com/rotc.html>
 - Navy ROTC and Marine Corps ROTC
<https://www.nrotc.navy.mil/>
 - Air Force ROTC
<https://www.afrotc.com/>