

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL  
RELEASED BY THE HOUSE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**STATEMENT OF  
STEPHEN B. LATTA  
DEAN OF ADMISSIONS, UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**18 JUNE 2009**

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## **STEPHEN B. LATTA DEAN OF ADMISSIONS**



Captain Stephen “Bruce” Latta was born in Pensacola, Florida, the son of a Naval Aviator. He entered the Naval Academy and graduated with a degree in Math in June 1978. He attended flight school and was designated a Naval Aviator in March 1980.

After initial assignments fleet assignments in VP squadrons, Captain Latta reported to Commander, SEVENTH Fleet embarked on the USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19) in Yokosuka, Japan. There, he served as ASW Plans Officer and Aide to Commander, SEVENTH Fleet.

After tours to the Bureau of Naval Personnel as a Rating Assignment Officer, and Patrol Squadron Six (VP-6) as a Department Head, Captain Latta reported to Commander, Patrol Wing Two as Operations Officer in August 1992. In June 1993, He joined Commander, Patrol Wings, U.S. Pacific Fleet as the Current Operations Officer.

Captain Latta served as Executive Officer and Commanding Officer in Patrol Squadron FOUR (VP-4) from April 1995 to April 1997. While assigned, the squadron deployed to Misawa, Japan and supported dual Battlegroup operation during the China-Taiwan crisis. The squadron was also recognized as the Battle "E" winner, the AVCM Donald M. Neal "Golden Wrench" winner for maintenance, and CNO Safety Award winner.

After a tour in the Office of the Secretary of Defense as the EA to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy (DASD(MPP)), Captain Latta reported to Commander, Maritime and Surveillance Forces, U.S. Sixth Fleet as the Chief of Staff in August 1999. Almost immediately, he oversaw the first real world ASW prosecution in the Mediterranean in nearly 10 years, initial P-3 support to Operation JOINT GUARDIAN, and the integration of new technologies to Mediterranean operations.

In June 2000, Captain Latta assumed command of Training Air Wing Four in Corpus Christi, Texas. During his tenure, he sponsored several initiatives that reduced time to train by over 15%, ran two successful unit detachments, and co-authored a long-term procurement roadmap for training aircraft. Over 1800 student aviators trained with nearly 250,000 accident free flight hours executed.

In June 2002, Captain Latta reported to the Naval Academy as Director of Admissions and later as Vice Dean of Admissions. His tenure oversaw several initiatives including the establishment of an electronic admissions process, office realignment to improve efficiency, development of a marketing program, and expansion of the Academy’s outreach efforts to attract the young men and women who are reflective of society and meet the needs of the naval service. In November 2006, Captain Latta, USN, Retired, was selected Dean of Admissions of the United States Naval Academy.

Awards include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, three Naval Commendation Medals, as well as various service awards.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman Cummings, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to discuss the U.S. Naval Academy's efforts to improve diversity in the Brigade of Midshipmen. I first want to thank the members of congress, especially Congressman Cummings, who is on our Board of Visitors, for your ongoing support in both resources and helping us reach out to the nation through your congressional districts. As a national institution, we have worked hard to reach out to all of America, and we believe we are connecting with young men and women and their parents who don't know much about the military service or the Naval Academy. Our efforts are producing measurable results. Last year's incoming class, the Class of 2012, the classes that just graduated from both Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) and the foundation program (which utilizes civilian preparatory schools), and Summer Seminar this year were all the most diverse we have ever admitted. We believe the Class of 2013 will represent even greater diversity than last year with nearly 35% of new midshipmen representing diverse backgrounds, breaking new records and again being the most diverse class in Naval Academy History. The attached graphs represent the Naval Academy's current diversity trends.

The Naval Academy's efforts to diversify the Brigade of Midshipmen have been ongoing for a number of years. The hiring of an outreach coordinator and establishment of a minority focused Centers of Influence (COI) program approximately eleven years ago led to increases in diversity of the incoming classes, on average, from approximately 18% to 23%. The Centers of Influence program is an orientation program conducted at the Naval Academy for influencers of minority youth in local communities. In educating local influencers of the opportunities available at the Naval Academy, it is our goal that they would return to their communities and

serve as advocates for the Naval Academy. This program has consistently proven its value in attracting new applicants who eventually become midshipmen, new volunteers for our Blue and Gold program, and new influencers for our COI program.

When I was hired as the Dean of Admissions in November 2006, I took the opportunity to analyze our own outreach programs as well as determine areas of the country where we were not attracting interest from young men and women, particularly those of diverse backgrounds. I began with a review of our application and admission trends for the city of New York from the previous year. New York is a city of over 8 million people, of which over 64% of its population is minority. I found the Naval Academy had only about 44 applicants and had admitted just six candidates for admission. Only three of those admitted from New York City were minorities. I found similar trends in analyzing applications of the other big cities in the U.S., all of which have large, diverse populations. It was apparent that we needed to improve our efforts in these areas if major improvements in minority representation in the Brigade of Midshipmen were to be made.

VADM Fowler assumed duties as Superintendent in June 2007, and immediately established diversity as his number one priority. His leadership and vision has guided the creation of a Diversity Directorate, new diversity initiatives and an institution wide commitment toward improving diversity. His efforts have spearheaded the Naval Academy's commitment to diversity and support the Navy's strategic imperative of a diverse officer corps.

As an initial effort to focus the efforts of our staff and to maximize efficiency of our limited resources, we developed a strategy to target cities and schools using a "football recruiting" approach in each school. That is, we wanted to develop strong relationships with schools, particularly those with a technical focus, that have strong performance records and large, diverse populations. The target cities approach also included targeting COIs for visits to

the Naval Academy, and building local support networks. Within each school, our staff was encouraged to look for creative, new opportunities to develop relationships in each school, and this has led to a variety of different efforts and initiatives.

The development of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) programs is one of those initiatives. We began a summer STEM camp last year that included about 100 students in grades seven to ten from across the nation with the assistance of private funding. Its initial success has led to an expansion of the program to 200 students this year. We also have hosted mini-STEM camps in which we have invited groups of high school students in grades 9-12 to visit the academy for overnight programs and have used the U.S.S. MIDWAY Museum on the west coast for similar regional STEM camps.

We recognized the value of our Summer Seminar program which targets rising seniors from across the country. Historically, nearly 66% of those who attend this program complete the application for admission, and nearly 40% of each entering class of midshipmen are Summer Seminar attendees. With VADM Fowler's leadership, we expanded the program from 1,800 to 2,250 last year. We also targeted mail outs and selections to underrepresented congressional districts and to underrepresented groups. Not surprisingly, the number of minorities attending the program jumped dramatically. This year, about 1,000 of the 2,250 attendees in Summer Seminar are minorities. Equally important, more than half of the African Americans and Hispanics who will enter in the Class of 2013 will have attended Summer Seminar.

Summer Seminar and the STEM initiatives reemphasized our belief that the Naval Academy is a strong recruiting tool in itself, and that more often than not; we are successful with young men and women of diverse backgrounds if we convince them and their parents to visit. Consequently, we have made fundamental changes to our candidate visit weekend program.

This has included greater opportunity to room and attend class with midshipmen, tours of science, and engineering facilities, and admissions briefings. We highly encourage parents to accompany candidates, and have developed parent orientation programs that include tours, and parent and midshipmen question/answer panels.

We understand parents are very involved in the college selection process in today's environment. Therefore, every initiative/program we develop is made with the idea that we need to reach the parents as well. In addition to inclusion in candidate visit weekends, parents are included in home visits and call out programs.

Under VADM Fowler's leadership, the entire Naval Academy is involved in an effort coined "Face of the Navy." We look for opportunities for visibility across the spectrum of USNA activities from sports teams on travel to musical groups and Midshipmen travel. This has included strategically scheduling of the Naval Academy's musical groups to events/venues in underrepresented areas of the country. This has included the Gospel Choir, Men's and Women's Glee Clubs, and Naval Academy Band to places like Los Angeles, St. Louis, Chicago, Tucson, and Miami. The Gospel Choir has proven to be one of our best recruiting tools and has consistently drawn large, diverse crowds in every venue. What we are also learning is that our band, which has developed repertoires oriented toward Hispanics and today's youth, is equally effective. We also leverage other Naval Academy groups including sports teams to develop venues such as Admissions Forums when they travel into local communities. Additionally, the Naval Academy has hosted and promoted a variety of diversity events designed to demonstrate commitment to diversity as well as increase awareness among minorities.

We have more closely partnered ourselves with several affinity groups and local organizations in order to promote our commitment to diversity and improve awareness.

Midshipmen have traveled the country over the past two years to represent the Naval Academy at Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO), Hispanic Engineer National Awards Association Conference (HENAAC), Latina Style Magazine, National Naval Officers Association (NNOA), National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and National Women of Color (NWOC) STEM conferences and symposiums and more.

The Superintendent has actively participated in a number of high visibility events, and was the featured guest speaker for the NNOA youth day for their 2008 conference. He also spoke to the ANSO as a member of a panel focused on discussing officer recruitment initiatives at USNA.

Members of the Naval Academy family have also been recognized over the past year by several organizations including: VADM Fowler was honored with a Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major Award, Prof Oscar Barton and MIDN Jordan Blake were presented outstanding achievements awards by the Black Engineer of the Year Awards conference, and LCDR Wesley Brown, USN (ret), was presented the Golden Torch legacy Award from NSBE.

As you can see, Midshipmen are an integral part of nearly every initiative. In addition, to involvement in the activities already discussed, midshipmen led a call out program this year in which they made personal phone calls to candidates. Midshipmen are the key players in a retooled OPINFO (Operations Information) program in which they travel to selected schools and communities in targeted areas and promote interest in the Naval Academy to local youth.

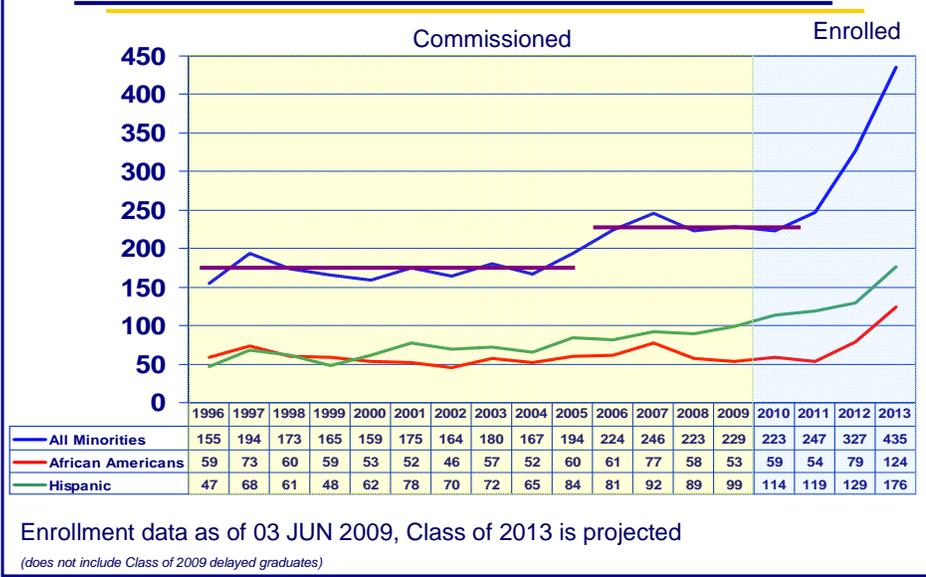
We are also exploring the use of non traditional and multi media outreach opportunities. To date, these have included development of “Fulfill Your Destiny” videos shown on ESPN and other media outlets and recent distribution of a Graphic Novel designed to target the next generation of youth.

Another critical aspect of our strategy is to use both our Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS) and Foundation Program as tools to assist us toward improving diversity. We recognized many of our minority applicants who have demonstrated strong potential to serve as leaders in our Navy are also applying from school systems that have not prepared them well for the technical curriculum offered at the Naval Academy. A year in a preparatory program has proven valuable in allowing those less prepared to succeed at USNA.

It is important to note that the initiatives discussed require both human and fiscal resources; both are always a concern of ours. My staff is relatively small and includes four officers in the Office of Admissions, five officers in the field whose sole responsibility is to improve diversity, and two outreach strategists. It is routine for these young junior officers and civilians to work long hours to produce these results. They are all committed and passionate about what they do each and every day. More importantly, the strong support we have received from our Board of Visitors and Congress to provide resources and support has allowed us to achieve the results you see here today.

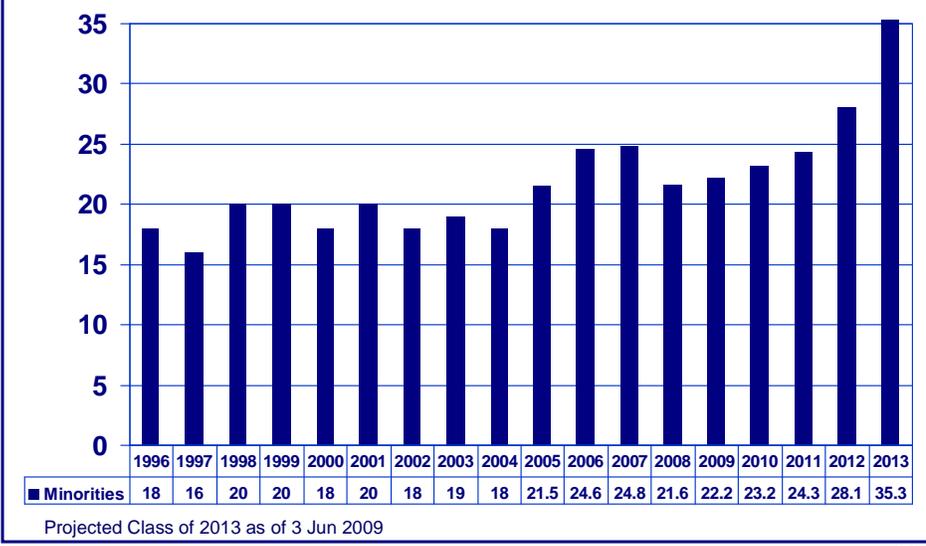
In closing, we have accomplished a lot in a relatively short period of time, but we still have a lot a work to do. Awareness is still an important issue in many communities and among many groups. However, our trends are all moving in the right direction as you can see by the enclosed graphs. We know that with your continued support and by remaining proactive, persistent and patient, we will continue to improve our efforts over time. Thank you for all you've done to support us in these efforts, and thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Naval Academy's progress to date.

# Minorities Commissioned



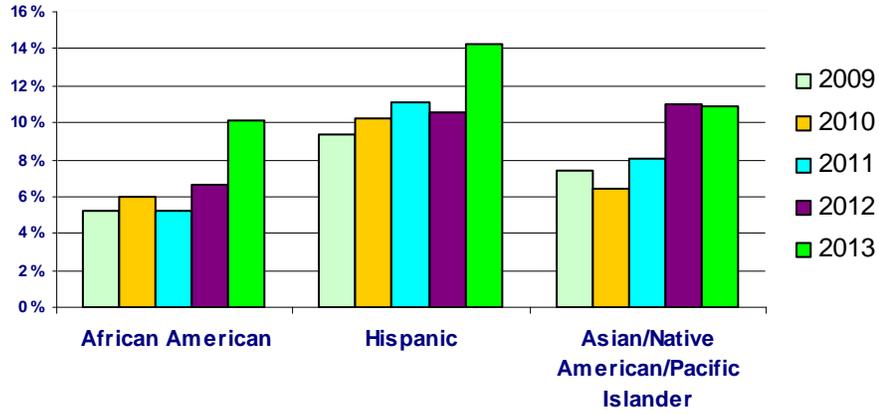
Slide 1

# Minority Admission Percentages



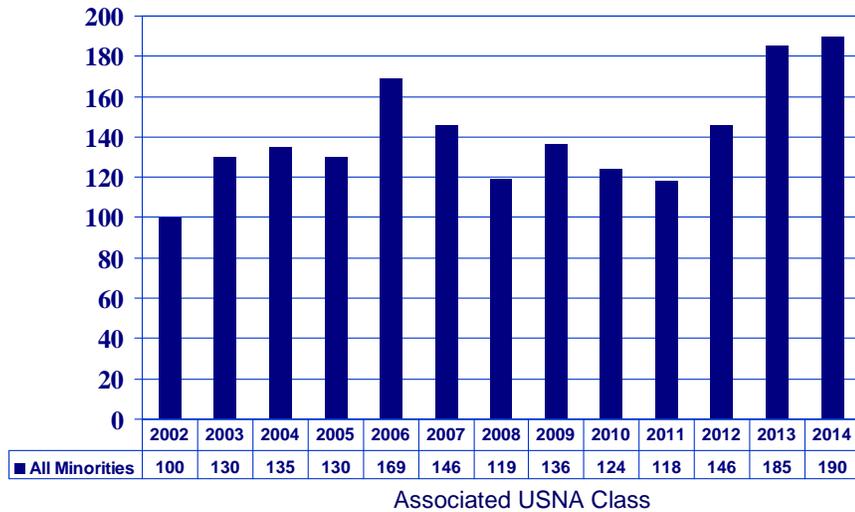
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## Minority Admissions Trends



Slide 3

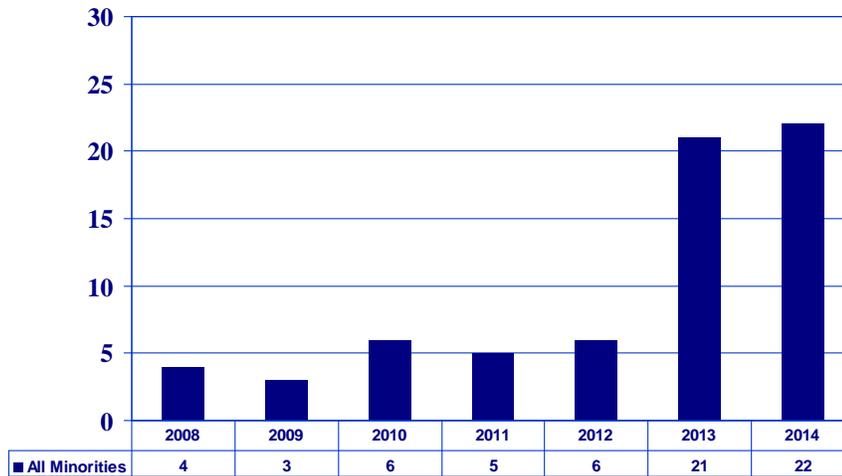
## Minorities Admitted to NAPS



Class of 2014 as of 3 Jun 2009, projecting 200

Slide 4

## Minorities Admitted to Foundation

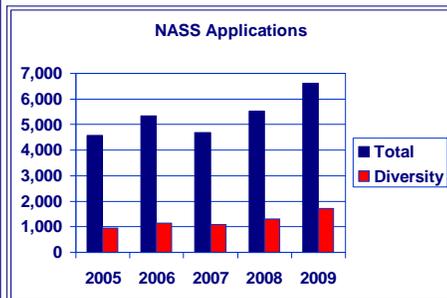


Average Foundation Class size is 76 students

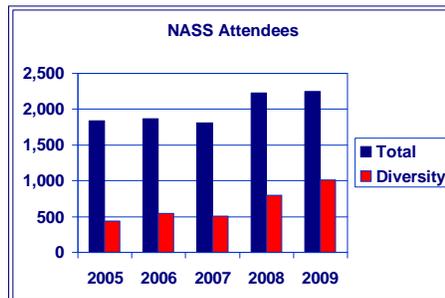
Class of 2014 is current projection

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## Summer Seminar 2009



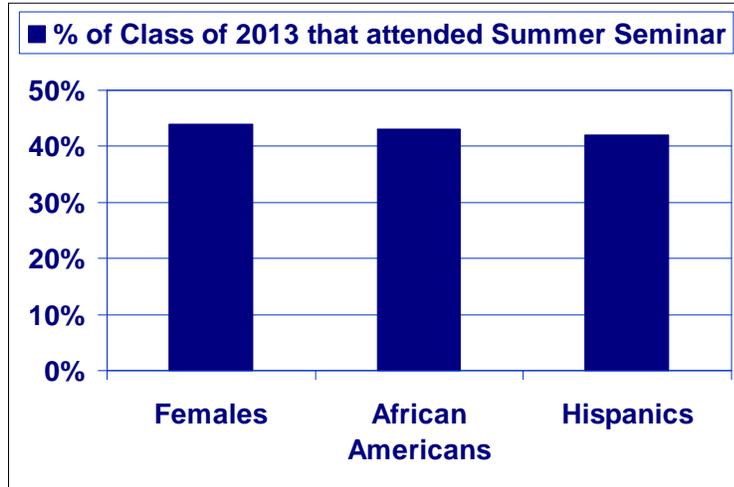
\*2009 applications to date.



\*2009 anticipated

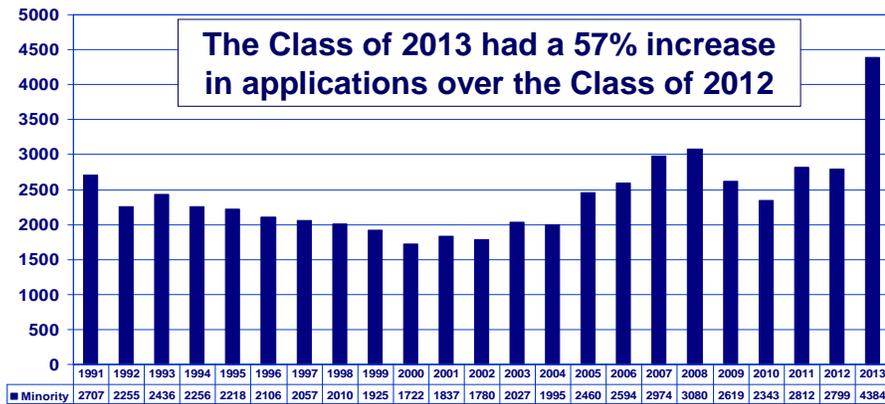
Slide 6

## Summer Seminar → Actual Applications



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## Most minority applications ever



Source: USNA Institutional Research

2013 as of 3 June 2009

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