



Dear Cal Maritime Community,

As many of you are aware, in November 2021 Cal Maritime senior leaders commissioned an independent civil rights investigator to do a review of the 2021 Sea Training during the second cruise. This investigation was in response to an egregious incident of vandalism that occurred aboard the training ship in August 2021. As the initial incident was being investigated in the fall 2021 semester, it became clear that there were additional concerns about behavior and incidents aboard the Training Ship *Golden Bear* (TSGB). Inclusive excellence is a core value at Cal Maritime and, given the incidents on cruise, some campus colleagues felt we were falling short in this area.

The independent investigator came to campus and individuals were invited to provide feedback on their cruise experience. Forty-six individuals (cadets, faculty, and staff) shared their feedback and perspectives on cruise and the attached report, with a summary of findings and recommendations, was issued. In direct response to the report, President Cropper has created a Presidential Task Force that will begin its work in March 2022. The Presidential Task Force is charged with providing immediate and long-term recommendations on ways to make cruise a positive, safe, and equitable experience for every cadet.

In addition, Cal Maritime has initiated a broad series of efforts to improve campus climate in areas related to sexual assault/harassment, inclusion, and safety both on our campus and on the TSGB and commercial cruise. We have engaged in efforts to assess our environment, taken action to allocate resources, and added programming and staff to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment. The following highlights several of the actions to date. Please also visit the [Inclusion Initiatives](#) webpage, which will be updated regularly.

## **Title IX**

In December 2021, we contracted with Grand River Solutions (GRS), a Title IX consultancy organization, in response to ongoing and persistent feedback that our community did not trust our current Title IX program. GRS provides Title IX and equity law support to colleges and universities and offers guidance and support on Title IX policy and procedure development, program assessment, investigations, hearings, and Title IX training and education. We hired one of their staff to serve as our interim Title IX coordinator, and currently have a national search open for a new Title IX and Civil Rights Officer. We are also adding the role of a faculty deputy Title IX coordinator and a deputy on the TSGB.

Moreover, we have expanded the confidential advocate role through our partnership with [WEAVE](#) and have transitioned the position from part-time to a full-time, beginning in February 2022. This individual is available for cadets participating in Sea Training I/II/III (ST I/II/III).

## **Inclusion**

The campus is opening an Inclusion Center to offer a space to support education and awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The center will provide cadets a place to gather and study, help generate a sense of belonging, and hold programs focused on fostering a sense of value and empowerment for all cadets. We are hiring a Coordinator of Belonging and Engagement Initiatives to oversee the center and other inclusion efforts.

### **CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY MARITIME ACADEMY**

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During the fall semester, the Associated Students (ASCMA) adopted a resolution regarding revisions to the uniform and grooming standards. In response, we initiated a process to review the current standards with the goal of establishing inclusive uniform and grooming standards. Through the engagement and shared governance process, we were able to capture a broader set of perspectives, including feedback from cadets, faculty, staff, alumni, and external industry stakeholders to ensure equity and opportunity for expression by all cadets. The revised Uniform and Grooming Standards went into effect in January 2022. We welcome feedback throughout the 2022 spring semester and summer cruise on these revisions and will make further modifications, if warranted, based on the feedback we receive.

## **Education**

The Cal Maritime campus will be hosting a CommUNITY Day on April 5, 2022. The daylong workshop will replace the normal class schedule and will focus on key topics like communicating across differences, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH), implicit bias, bystander intervention/allyship, anti-racism, and intersectionality.

We are currently in the process of planning Safe Zone allyship trainings for the campus community. The divisions of Academic Affairs and Cadet Leadership and Development are also building a First-Year Experience (FYE) program for implementation in the fall 2022 semester. We are committed to creating FYE curriculum and programming that will establish a sense of belonging, respect, and inclusion for our cadets beginning when they join our campus community.

## **Prevention**

Along with the other state maritime academies (SMAs), we have been working closely with the United States Maritime Administration (MARAD) and representatives of the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) to ensure that all our cadets who participate in Sea Training are safe and respected. Our team has worked with the other SMAs to assist MARAD on its development of Every Mariner Builds a Respectful Climate (EMBARC) program to create universal policy standards for implementation this spring.

These improvements include:

- Mandatory in-person, in-depth SASH training for all faculty, staff and cadets going on TSGB cruise
- Safety and prevention scenario-based training for all cadets going on cruise or commercial sea time
- Distribution of cards with resources and contact information (including a safe word) for cadets prior to beginning STII
- Clear protocol for Title IX-related issues occurring while on cruise
- Designated Title IX deputy on cruise
- Introducing new safety measures as part of SMA SASH agreement for STII which include:
  - A Designated Person Ashore (DPA) on campus (risk manager) trained in SASH
  - Satellite texters – smart watches
  - Buddy system, whenever possible
  - Peer mentoring program
  - Female faculty/alum mentoring program

## **Climate**

We have implemented an anonymous survey for cadets participating in Sea Training to share their experiences of sexual assault/harassment and discrimination. This will inform both our education and prevention efforts on cruise, and our preparation and response for commercial sea time. In addition, we are committed to doing a campus-wide climate survey in 2023.

## **Moving Forward**

We realize there is more work to do, and we are committed to ongoing change to ensure a safe and welcoming environment on our campus and during Sea Training. This is part of our collective commitment to making Cal Maritime the most diverse, relevant, and inclusive maritime university. We will continue the dialogue, but we will lead with our actions, striving to create a better educational, equitable and inclusive experience for all.

In Service,

Thomas A. Cropper, President

Lori Schroeder, Provost & Vice President, Academic Affairs

Franz Lozano, Vice President, Administration and Finance

Kathleen McMahon, Vice President, Cadet Leadership and Development

Richard Ortega, Interim Vice President, University Advancement

Sam Pecota, Commanding Officer, TS *Golden Bear*

Karyn Cornell, Chief of Staff and AVP of University Affairs

Mark Goodrich, AVP, Enterprise Services

Michael Martin, AVP, Human Resources Safety and Risk Management and Diversity & Inclusion

Karen Yoder, Director of Athletics

# **Feedback and Perspectives on 2021 Training Cruises**

# Executive Summary

## Background

Cal Maritime's administrative leadership engaged a civil rights investigator from another CSU campus to conduct confidential interviews regarding the experience of cadets, faculty, and staff who participated in Cruise II, which occurred from July 14 to August 27, 2021. The investigator's scope was later expanded to include interviews with participants on Cruise I, which occurred earlier in the year (May 31 to July 14) to provide a broader perspective about training cruise climates and individual experiences.

A total of 46 confidential interviews – either in person on campus or virtual – were conducted between November 16 and December 1 (24 cadets, 15 faculty and 7 staff). Fourteen (14) of those interviewed sailed on Cruise II, 11 sailed on Cruise I, 12 sailed on both Cruise I and II, and nine sailed on neither but wished to share their perspectives about cruises or the campus climate. Participation was voluntary: those who were interviewed asked to speak with the investigator.

The interviews did not constitute a formal investigation of any complaint under Title IX; however, the investigator informed participants that she was obligated to report any specific incidents raised during an interview that could give rise to a Title IX complaint. In addition, the interviews were not structured around specific incidents; participants were invited to discuss any topic they wished about Cruise. For these reasons and because participation in this process was voluntary, the report is not intended to represent a comprehensive or quantitative survey of the more than 400 participants in 2021 training cruises. This is not to discount or downplay the concerns raised by the interview participants.

Cal Maritime deeply appreciates the participation of the 46 individuals who asked to be interviewed. The administrative leadership takes their perspectives and concerns seriously.

## Key Findings

Interview participants raised concerns over specific incidents or the general climate aboard training cruises in four areas: Safety, Professionalism, Misconduct and Response.

### Safety

- Participants raised safety concerns over four incidents on Cruise II. These included a discovery that the Starboard side pilot door was left open, failure to turn off a pump that resulted in a ballast tank filling with water, a sewage spill from the classroom deck into the gymnasium, and the safety of swim call.
- Participants perceived a lack of response or resolution to the pilot door issue, a breakdown of communication in the sewage spill incident, and an inconsistent approach to how swim call was conducted between Cruise I and II.

### Professionalism

- Some participants perceived a lack of professionalism as their primary concern over cruise culture and Cal Maritime generally.
- Participants raised concerns over arbitrary and inconsistent enforcement of grooming standards, particularly regarding facial hair by male cadets.
- Participants noted there as confusion over whether tobacco use on Cruise I was permitted. These participants noted a discrepancy in adherence and enforcement of policy.
- Participants raised concerns about how female staff were addressed (by first name instead of title) and concern that female cadets were not provided the same feedback and instruction as male cadets during and after training exercises.
- Interview participants who were on Cruise II said there was a “breakdown in communication” and some participants stated that leaders were “inaccessible” or “largely absent.”

- Some participants raised concerns over insensitive jokes or offensive language and inappropriate songs being performed during karaoke night.

## Misconduct

- Interview participants described several incidents of misconduct aboard Cruise I or Cruise II and inconsistent responses to these incidents (both lacking responses and perceived overreactions).
- Participants raised concerns over several instances of inappropriate, discriminatory, vulgar or offensive writings or other imagery, especially toward female cadets, during both Cruise I and Cruise II. These writings or imagery were drawn on the ship bow, on doors in the lower berthing area, and on a whiteboard in the control room.
- Participants raised concerns over a cadet locked in a closet for several hours as a “prank.”
- Participants raised concerns over anti-LGBTQIA+ behavior and language used frequently aboard cruises and on campus. Participants said the language used and games played by many cadets were offensive and demeaning to LGBTQIA+ community members.
- Participants also raised concerns over offensive language and other treatment toward female cadets and shared the perception that there was an expectation of sexual harassment in the maritime industry and distrust in the Title IX function at Cal Maritime.

## Response

- Participants raised concerns over the perception that acts of misconduct or other incidents are handled inconsistently or arbitrarily. For example, a much more severe response was perceived to the offensive writings on Cruise II than those on Cruise I, which participants viewed as similar acts of misconduct. In addition, participants perceived that the on-ship reaction to the offensive writings on Cruise II were materially different (“nonchalant”) from the subsequent investigation launched by campus leadership.
- Participants perceived that no response from leadership at all was made to other incidents of misconduct; nor did participants believe that reporting offensive language or behaviors would result in a response from leadership.
- Participants perceived that Cal Maritime did not have systems or functions to address discriminatory language or behavior impacting LGBTQIA+ students, and that the enforcement of grooming standards would require strict adherence to gender roles.
- Participants expressed that there was a lack of concern and support for the experience of female cadets and cadets of color, both on cruises and on campus.

## Recommendations

1. When infractions occur, an investigation should be done into the specific conduct of the individual or individuals accused. If an investigation finds a violation of policy or community standard, the respondent should be sanctioned accordingly.
2. Investigations should follow a consistent set of reporting and response protocols to ensure accountability and equity in handling all reports of misconduct. Managers and supervisors should be trained to promote consistency in the application of university policies addressing misconduct, harassment or discrimination.
3. The campus should make efforts to increase female and minority representation on cruise and on campus.
4. Leadership should conduct a larger, more comprehensive survey of the climate at CSUM.
5. The campus should deputize a Title IX professional with the necessary skills and experience to navigate unique Title IX situations (e.g. addressing claims made on a training vessel in the middle of the ocean).
6. Cadets, faculty, and staff should undergo extensive mandatory training on sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination and hazing prior to embarking on cruise.
7. More training should be required in order to improve the community’s understanding of what type of conduct violates community standards and CSU Executive Orders addressing Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation.

## Introduction

California State University Maritime Academy (“CSUM”) is a public university in Vallejo, California. It is one of 23 campuses in the California State University system and the only maritime academy on the United States West Coast. As of Fall 2021, there were 925 cadets enrolled at CSUM. CSUM enrollment contained 80.5% male cadets and 19.5% female cadets in Fall 2021. Cadets utilize Merchant Marine Navy-style uniforms, customs, and traditions. Based on academic majors, cadets are organized into Squads, Sections, Divisions and Companies.

CSUM conducts two training cruises for cadets each summer onboard Training Ship Golden Bear (“TSGB”). In 2021, Cruise I took place from May 31, 2021 to July 14, 2021. Cruise II took place from July 14, 2021 to August 27, 2021. Faculty, staff, and cadets participate in the cruises and live and work onboard the ship for several weeks.

In the summer of 2021, following the completion of Cruise II, concern regarding incidents that allegedly took place on Cruise II prompted CSUM to undertake an examination of cruise culture as a whole.

## Methodology

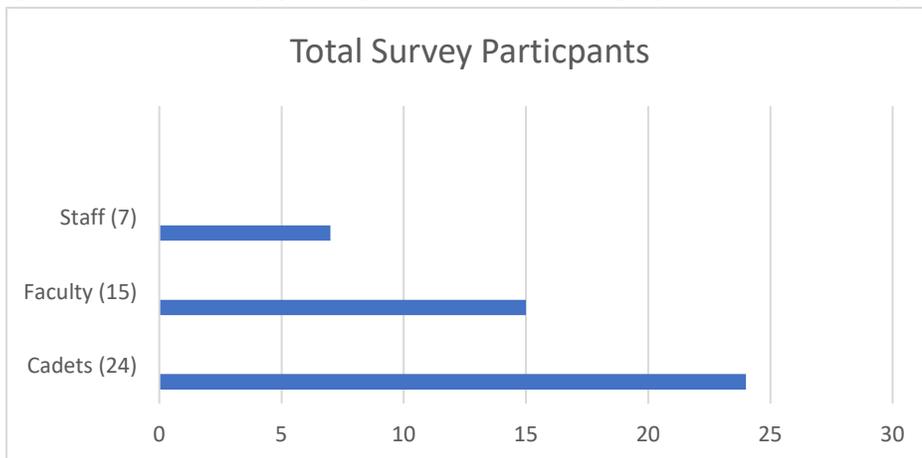
CSUM engaged an independent investigator<sup>1</sup> to survey cruise participants regarding their experiences and perspectives of cruise culture.<sup>2</sup> CSUM sent an email to the entire campus community inviting faculty, staff, and cadets to participate in the survey. Participants were invited to speak with the investigator privately.<sup>3</sup> Between November 16 – 18, 2021, the investigator conducted on-campus interviews with 37 participants. The investigator then offered additional time for virtual interviews to accommodate individuals who had not yet had an opportunity to speak with the investigator. Between November 30 and December 1, 2021, the investigator conducted 9 additional interviews via Zoom.

During each interview, the investigator asked specific questions as well as open-ended questions regarding cruise culture, and allowed time for participants to share the reasons they had chosen to meet with the investigator.

Here, the investigator summarizes the experiences and perspectives shared by the survey participants.

## Demographics

The investigator spoke with 46 survey participants. See the demographic breakdown of participants below:



<sup>1</sup> The investigator is a civil rights investigator at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, and will be referred to throughout this document as “the investigator.” The investigator committed several hours of study in preparation for this project, but does not have a maritime background and, for this reason, may utilize layman’s terms.

<sup>2</sup> The survey was not a fact-finding investigation regarding any specific incident; while some statements by participants were corroborated, the investigator made no determinations with respect to credibility and/or policy violations.

<sup>3</sup> This Executive Summary does not identify the survey participants by name. The investigator advised participants, however, of the investigator’s mandatory reporting obligation pursuant to CSU Systemwide Executive Orders 1096/1097, Revised August 14, 2020.

As depicted below, the majority of cadets who spoke with the investigator sailed **on Cruise II only**. The seven cadets who sailed on both Cruise I and Cruise II offered a unique and valuable perspective regarding the similarities and differences between Cruise I and Cruise II.

	CRUISE I ONLY	CRUISE II ONLY	BOTH	NEITHER <sup>4</sup>
CADETS	6	10	7	1
FACULTY	5	2	2	7
STAFF	0	2	3	1

## Background

Cruise I took place from May 31, 2021 to July 14, 2021. Cruise II took place from July 14, 2021 to August 27, 2021. Approximately 200 people sail on the TSGB for each cruise. Between 40-50 people onboard the ship are staff or faculty, and cadets constitute the remaining population. Some cadets hold special leadership titles and responsibilities. For example, a Cadet First Mate serves in a leadership capacity which mimics the role of Chief Mate on the ship. Adhering to the hierarchy, or “chain of command,” is paramount onboard the TSGB as it is meant to reflect the reality of working in the maritime industry.

Several Cruise II participants noted the larger than usual number of first year cadets onboard Cruise II. Those interviewed referred to these cadets as “fresh out of high school” and “very young and immature.” By contrast, the youngest cadets onboard Cruise I were older, junior year cadets. Both cruises were cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so cadets who needed to satisfy their cruise requirement to get their license had to wait until Cruise I, 2021. Several interview participants pointed to this factor as an explanation for the age and experience of the cadets on Cruise I.

## Summary

In reviewing the specific incidents of bias and concern shared with the investigator, certain themes emerged - some directly related to cruise, some tangentially related to cruise, and some entirely unrelated to cruise, but nonetheless part of a larger commentary on CSUM culture as a whole. To honor the intention and scope of the survey, this Executive Summary focuses primarily on incidents of bias and concern related to: Safety; Professionalism; Misconduct; and Response. The Executive Summary also describes specific subcategories for each theme. Further, experiences related to each of these areas often intersected to contribute to the perspectives of cruise culture shared by the majority of interview participants.

At times, interview participants raised specific experiences as standalone problems or concerns. They also described certain experiences, however, for the express purpose of drawing a contrast with an experience on a different cruise under a different captain. For example, some of the specific incidents of bias and concern summarized here suggest that unsafe, uncouth, and concerning behavior took place on both cruises, but survey participants perceived that tolerance or intolerance for the conduct, and who ultimately was held responsible, was inconsistent.

## Safety

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<sup>4</sup> Some individuals with general information regarding the climate at CSUM – not specific to Cruise I or II – spoke with the investigator. For this reason, a column titled “neither” relates to the 7 faculty members, one staff member, and one student who did not participate in either cruise, but chose to speak with the investigator.

Interview participants raised concerns about safety on both Cruise I and Cruise II, with particular emphasis on safety concerns aboard Cruise II. Participants mentioned safety in a variety of contexts, with some interview participants identifying safety as their primary concern, and some interview participants raising safety as a secondary or lesser concern, but a concern nonetheless. Accordingly, the level of detail participants shared regarding the experiences summarized below varied. Nonetheless, multiple survey participants referenced each safety item described.

### **Cruise II - Starboard side pilot door**

Multiple cadets onboard Cruise II described the discovery that the Starboard side pilot door was wide open in the middle of the night. The cadets stated they were completing inspections and were surprised to find the door open. The cadets described the potentially enormous danger of someone falling overboard through the open door, especially at night. The cadets who described this to the investigator stated that they identified a potential solution for keeping the pilot door shut, even going so far as to gather the materials (nuts, bolts, etc.) needed to make an adjustment. However, the cadets stated that when they reported the concern and proposed a solution, no adjustment was made.

### **Cruise II - Ballast tank**

Two cadets onboard Cruise II described finding a pump left on which resulted in a ballast tank filling with approximately four inches of water.

### **Cruise II - Blackwater incident**

Several interview participants referred to the “Blackwater Incident” during interviews with the investigator. According to interview participants, sewage spilled from the classroom deck, which is located two decks below main deck. One deck below the classroom deck is the gymnasium, which became filled with sewage, soaking several life jackets and mattresses and other items and resulting in a hazmat/toxic waste situation. The interview participants who described this to the investigator all shared the perspective that a breakdown in communication contributed to the delay in addressing the spill in a satisfactorily prompt manner.

### **Swim Call**

Interview participants had different perspectives with respect to the safety of the swim calls for Cruise I and Cruise II. One of the twelve people who were on both Cruise I and Cruise II stated that the swim call on Cruise II was uniquely “unsafe.” This participant also reported that the swim call on Cruise II differed materially from the swim call on Cruise I, (apart from the fact that the swim calls took place in different locations in Hawaii). According to this participant, the swim call on Cruise II “felt rushed” in the anchoring process and deviated from the itinerary of the voyage.

## **Professionalism**

As with safety, professionalism was discussed with the investigator in a variety of contexts. Some individuals identified professionalism, and the perceived lack thereof, as their primary concern related to cruise culture, and more broadly CSUM culture. Others mentioned professionalism as an aside. Each of the professionalism concerns listed below were raised by at least two interview participants.

### **Enforcement of Grooming Standards**

Confusion and arbitrary enforcement of grooming standards was an oft-repeated topic in interviews. Every interview participant mentioned it and the vast majority expressed confusion regarding what is allowed and what is not allowed, and the reasons for such enforcement. In particular, the topic of facial hair for men was referenced by both male and female interview participants. Several female faculty referenced the topic because of concern for their male colleagues.

Specifically, interview participants stated to the investigator that during Cruise I, male faculty and cadets were permitted to have facial hair without reprimand. In contrast, during Cruise II, male faculty and cadets were also permitted to have facial hair, but were later reprimanded for it. The vast majority of individuals interviewed identified the disparity between the alleged grooming standard enforcement on Cruise I and Cruise II, and also expressed support for the more relaxed attitudes towards grooming standards, especially with regard to facial hair. Out of the 26 interview participants who were either on both cruises or Cruise II only, only two agreed that

refusing to require male identified people aboard the ship to shave their facial hair created a “culture of insubordination.” Regardless, the majority of interview participants perceived a discrepancy between the campus response to the respective grooming enforcement onboard Cruise I and Cruise II.

### **Tobacco Use**

Several interview participants reported witnessing shipmates smoking cigarettes on deck during Cruise I, and they perceived that it was done so with permission. Several interview participants reported witnessing people using tobacco on Cruise II. Some who reported seeing the tobacco use felt it was unprofessional and created a “lax” environment prime for rule breaking, while others did not care. Again, there appeared to be a discrepancy in expectation that a policy will or will not be enforced.

### **Disrespect Towards Females on TSGB**

Interview participants reported experiencing sexism on Cruise I in the way some men spoke about new mothers, however, they were hesitant to provide details about this claim and cited “fear of retribution” as their reason. Multiple interview participants who sailed on Cruise II reported overhearing female staff being referred to by the first names rather than their title. Participants stated their perception of this as a slight against the female staff and a sign of disrespect. Similarly, female cadets onboard Cruise II reported that male cadets received feedback and instruction after exercises, but female cadets did not receive similar feedback or instruction. The female cadets stated they believe this is because of their gender. Several female interview participants reported feeling as though they are “allowed” to be on cruise, but not valued or respected members of the community. The treatment of females on TSGB is discussed further under Misconduct and Response.

### **Communication**

All 26 of the interview participants who sailed on Cruise II referred to a “breakdown in communication” onboard the TSGB. The interview participants offered a variety of reasons for this breakdown in communication, ranging from insubordination to personal differences. Participants told the investigator that during Cruise II, some leaders were “largely absent” or “inaccessible.”

### **Politically Incorrect “Jokes” and Offensive Language**

Three interview participants reported hearing leaders refer to “Honolulu” as “Honoruru,” mimicking an Asian accent onboard Cruise II. One of the interview participants reported being offended by that slur, and the other two admitted to frequently using that slur themselves. Two interview participants reported hearing a leader refer to people as “swinging Richard,” which seemingly serves as a euphemism for “swinging dicks.” One female cadet reported hearing a leader say something to the effect of “I can’t piss off the side of the ship anymore because there are female cadets onboard now.” During karaoke night, there were reports of lewd and inappropriate songs being performed.

### **Misconduct**

Interview participants described misconduct in a variety of ways. Some people described incidents of misconduct and a perceived lack of response; by contrast, others described overreactions to specific incidents of misconduct. Each of the misconduct incidents discussed in the following paragraphs were identified by at least two interview participants.

#### **Bow Incident— Cruise I**

During Cruise I, cadets graffitied the bow of the TSGB with vulgar language. For example, scrawled across the bow of the ship was the question “ass or tits?” and a ranking system of the anatomy of the female cadets onboard. The graffiti was reported by a female cadet.

#### **Berthing Incident – Cruise II**

During Cruise II, the engineers living in the lower berthing area of the ship were using chalk to write and draw on each other’s doors. Many of the writings and drawings were graphic in nature, such as chalk writing that said “I love cum in my ass,” however some were simply nicknames or inside jokes that were not explicitly sexual, homophobic, or vulgar. One of the interview participants stated they were on watch when they first came across the chalked doors, and they erased the chalk and reported what they saw. According to the interview participant, approximately one week after initially reporting the chalk, the interview participant saw that the doors had been

chalked with the words “phallic symbol.” Reportedly, a door which had a window was removed from its original place and placed in front of a cadet’s room, and the words “gay sex dojo”—or something to that effect—were chalked on the door.

Interview participants attributed The Berthing Incident on Cruise II to a variety of factors. Some acknowledged that the cadets onboard Cruise II were far less experienced and less mature than the cadets on Cruise I. That said, multiple interview participants stated “if you pack a bunch of kids on a ship for months at a time, they’re going to start pranking each other.” Another interview participant said “when a bunch of engineers are together, as long as they have a screwdriver they’re going to start taking shit apart.” These statements reflect the generally blasé attitude of the majority of the cadets questioned about The Berthing Incident on Cruise II.

### **Closet Incident – Cruise I**

Multiple interview participants reported an instance that took place on Cruise I wherein a cadet was locked inside a closet for several hours with no means of escape. A faculty member eventually heard banging from inside the closet and freed the cadet. The interview participants with knowledge of this incident stated that being locked in a small space onboard a ship is very dangerous because of the possibility of not being found for many hours, if not days. The interview participants also stated that it was highly unlikely that the Closet Incident was an accident and not an act of misconduct or a “prank” on an unsuspecting cadet.

### **Whiteboard Incident – Cruise II**

On Cruise II, there was reportedly a whiteboard in a control room where male cadets had written a football-like roster of other male cadets with whom a female cadet had allegedly had sex.

### **LGBTQIA+ Experience on Cruise**

Reportedly, there is a common practice on cruise of male cadets exposing their genitals to their classmates and, if and when the classmate glances at the exposed genitals, the exposed cadet shouts something to the effect of “you looked, you’re gay!” Similarly, there is a game called “gay chicken” frequently played on cruise, which is when two ostensibly heterosexual male cadets begin touching each other in a provocative way, and the first one to flinch is the “gay chicken.” Among cadets, there is rampant use of the words “faggot,” “homo,” “dyke,” “cocksucker,” and “pussy” to refer to fellow cadets, including those in the LGBTQIA+ community. The interview participants, particularly the cadets, stressed the fact that these words are frequently used on campus, too, and not just on cruise.

### **Female Cadet Experience on Cruise**

Of the 24 cadets who participated in an interview, only nine were female. Out of those nine female cadets, five of them reported being the target of a popular refrain from male cadets. Reportedly, when working with male cadets on TSGB (and on campus), the male cadets will say to the female cadets “if I wanted your input, I would fuck it out of you.”

The female cadets who participated in an interview expressed what can only be described as an expectation for sexual harassment, if not assault, at some point in their maritime career. Several of the female cadets either disclosed a personal experience of sexual misconduct or an experience of a friend. When asked whether they reported the incident, three of the female cadets expressed doubt or distrust in the Title IX function at CSUM.<sup>5</sup>

### **Cadets of Color Experience on Cruise**

The majority of cadets who participated in an interview reported hearing the “n-word” frequently on campus as well as on cruise. Of note, several cadets reported hearing the word in “a non-hateful way,” as if to suggest that there is an acceptable way in which one can use the word.

## **Response**

As with several of the items discussed in this Executive Summary, a key concern stated was the perception that misconduct is addressed differently. For example, several interview participants—including all seven of the cadets

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<sup>5</sup> The investigator informed all interview participants of her status as a mandated reporter prior to the start of the interview. The investigator fulfilled her mandated reporter duty and notified the Title IX Coordinator of the disclosures referenced here.

who sailed on both Cruise I and Cruise II—expressed confusion and surprise that the survey was in response to the events that took place on Cruise II (e.g., “The Berthing Incident”) and that the scope of the survey was initially limited to conduct and experiences aboard Cruise II. The interview participants were confused because, according to them, what took place on Cruise II was not out of the ordinary in terms of “cruise mischief” or “pranks.” The fact that this type of conduct appears to be expected is troubling in and of itself. The majority of the cadets interviewed cited what they referred to as “The Bow Incident” on Cruise I as a comparable instance of misconduct, which, in their estimation, did not receive the same reaction as The Berthing Incident. According to the majority of interview participants, what occurred on Cruise II (e.g. The Berthing Incident) did not diverge in any meaningful way from the type of “pranks” or “mischief” that otherwise occurs on every cruise, including Cruise I.

### **Bow Incident— Cruise I**

In response to The Bow Incident, no investigation took place and all deck company cadets lost approximately four hours of liberty. When the female deck company cadets complained that they should not lose liberty for what they perceived to be an ostensibly male course of conduct, they were allegedly told that it was only fair to punish all of the cadets because there was no way of knowing who wrote the vulgar comments on the bow. With regard to announcement of the incident and public response, interview participant accounts vary. Some of the participants reported hearing that liberty was taken away at formation in a very public way, but most of them recalled receiving no explanation for the loss of liberty or public acknowledgment of the incident. None of the interview participants reported hearing about or participating in an investigation into The Bow Incident.

### **Berthing Incident—Cruise II**

The interview participants who stated they reported the chalked doors said that there was a “nonchalant” response from the leadership. However, following the discovery of the chalked doors one week later, campus leadership was contacted and an investigation into the incident began. The engineers responsible were publicly relieved of their positions at formation the next morning, which most of the interview participants perceived as a grave consequence.

Another factor reported as a potential contribution to the Berthing Incident mischief on Cruise II was the Commandant change. When the TSGB was on the way back to Vallejo from Hawaii, towards the end of cruise, the original Commandant had to leave the TSGB for personal reasons and a less experienced Commandant took over.

### **Closet Incident—Cruise I**

The interview participants who raised the Closet Incident expressed outrage at their perception that there was no investigation into the incident and “no acknowledgement of it by anyone in a leadership position.”

### **Whiteboard Incident—Cruise II**

Cadets and faculty who participated in an interview reported that “leadership passed by that board all the time and let it stay up. They didn’t seem to care.”

### **Minority Population Experience on Cruise**

The interview participants who reported hearing offensive and homophobic slurs such as “faggot” and “dyke” stated they believe “nothing will be done” if this conduct is reported. The interview participants expressed a general lack of trust in any system or function on campus to meaningfully address homophobia or violence against the LGBTQIA+ community. These interview participants stated they believe CSUM perpetuates a culture of homophobia by enforcing grooming standards that require strict adherence to gender roles, i.e. male cadets are not permitted to have long hair. Several cadets drew a comparison between the disciplinary reaction to the Berthing Incident and the group chat text message conversation between corps leadership containing violently transphobic language. The cadets perceived a swift, decisive response from the administration to The Berthing Incident—wherein those involved were publicly relieved of their duties—but perceived “no reaction” by the administration to the violently transphobic text messages.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The investigator acknowledges that the steps campus did or did not take to address the transphobic text messages are not within the scope of the survey and are only offered here to convey what she was told by the interview participants. The investigator acknowledges the gap which often exists between what is perceived on a campus (i.e. “nothing is being done”) and what is actually occurring, which is likely confidential.

Most of the female cadets attributed the problem of sexual harassment and assault to the more general nature of the maritime industry. Some of the female cadets, however, described aggravating factors at CSUM that make this problem worse. The female cadets who participated in an interview all said something to the effect of “the administration does not care about the female cadet experience at CSUM” and “there is no system in place to help us.” The female cadets relayed that they feel their male classmates “hog” the learning experience, and that there is not enough inclusion of female cadets in learning the material.

Regarding the experience of cadets of color on cruise, interview participants reported feeling unsupported by CSUM administration. However, cadets stated they felt supported by their faculty and that “faculty are the only ones who see us.” As stated above, interview participants raised the issue of frequent use of the n-word by cadets, and expressed anger that disciplinary proceedings for the use of this word reportedly do not occur.<sup>7</sup>

## Recommendations

Interview participants offered suggestions for ways in which CSUM could improve the climate on cruise as well as on campus, and which the concerns and bias incidents described suggest are likely appropriate.

### **Make a Commitment from the Top to Consistency and Inclusion**

Interview participants described multiple incidents of misconduct that received dissimilar responses. They view the discrepancy as problematic. Interview participants perceive the irregular enforcement of policies and standards as personal, unfair, and potentially related to identities and/or roles in relations on campus. Persistent expectations for consistency were stated by faculty, staff, and cadets alike. Several participants also mentioned their perception of an inadequate and opaque response from the campus leadership to items like the transphobic text messages exchanged in a group chat between members of the Corps of Cadets.<sup>8</sup> The interview participants felt that the campus leadership response to the text messages should have mirrored the swift and severe action taken against the perpetrators of The Berthing Incident (i.e. a public reprimand where they were stripped of their leadership roles).

The investigator frequently heard from interview participants that certain groups of cadets—i.e. deck company—were sanctioned as a group for the actions of one or a small group. Sanctioning groups of people without an investigation exposes the university to the unnecessary risk of violating due process. When infractions occur, an investigation should be done into the specific conduct of the individual or individuals accused. If an investigation finds a violation of policy community standard, the respondent should be sanctioned accordingly.

### **Strengthen Relationships and Reporting/Response Protocols to Ensure Accountability**

Regardless of their position at CSUM, nearly all interview participants described a lack of individual accountability, principally for misconduct and miscommunication. Participants stated a perception that which individuals avoid accountability (cadets, leadership, administration) depends largely on whether they are cadets, faculty, or staff. Cadets and faculty believe that the administration is not held accountable for the lack of response to reports of sexual assault and the non-inclusive environments for female cadets, cadets of color, and LGBTQIA+ cadets. Roles and labor relations between the administration and the faculty are evidently strained and must be taken into consideration when designing and implementing training, reporting, and response protocols. Furthermore, the campus should make efforts to increase female and minority representation on cruise and on campus.

This project shed light on the need for a larger, more comprehensive survey of the climate at CSUM. It is apparent that the concerning behavior that took place on the 2021 training cruises did not happen in a vacuum or simply on cruise, but rather it points to a more systemic problem that should be carefully assessed by climate experts.

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that none of the cadets who said they heard the n-word being used reported it to anyone in a position of authority.

<sup>8</sup> The investigator acknowledges that the steps campus did or did not take to address the transphobic text messages are not within the scope of the survey and are only offered here to convey what she was told by the interview participants. The investigator acknowledges the gap which often exists between what is perceived on a campus (i.e. “nothing is being done”) and what is actually occurring, which is likely a confidential disciplinary proceeding.

Interview participants reported a severe lack of faith or trust in the reporting mechanisms available to them to address the misconduct experienced on cruise and on campus. Deputizing a Title IX professional with the necessary skills and experience to navigate unique Title IX situations (e.g. addressing claims made on a training vessel in the middle of the ocean) is recommended for future cruises. Additionally, cadets, faculty, and staff should undergo extensive required training on sexual assault and hazing prior to embarking on cruise.

### **Build Common Understanding Through Training, Transparency, and Communication**

Interview participants expressed frustration at a perceived lack of transparency in the campus leadership's response to issues effecting the campus community as a whole. To be clear, some interview participants have an expectation of transparency that is not grounded in an understanding of the confidentiality rights afforded to individuals involved in a conduct process, and training and transparency around these rights is needed. Nevertheless, interview participants repeatedly stated their desire to have a more sincere channel of communication between the campus leadership and the community. Increased training opportunities could help address the perceptions that action is not taken when misconduct occurs, and more training could also improve the community's understanding of what type of conduct violates community standards or Executive Orders.