



## WHY CONGRESS FUNDS USMMA AND THE OTHER FEDERAL SERVICE ACADEMIES

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) is one of the five Federal Service Academies (FSAs) on which the U.S. Government (USG) relies for a steady stream of well-trained young officers dedicated to serving out the nation's national defense objectives. These five academies were created by statute and are the only undergraduate institutions of higher education that are an arm of the federal government. Like those who attend the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), U.S. Naval Academy (USNA), U.S. Coast Guard Academy (USCGA) and U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), USMMA graduates incur a five-year federal service obligation and an eight-year armed forces reserve obligation. Graduates may meet their five-year obligation by serving in the merchant marine or, upon approval, entering into active military duty.

USMMA is the only school in which 100 percent of its graduates both earn a merchant marine license and incur an obligation to the USG. The U.S. flag merchant marine—manned by U.S. merchant mariners—is essential for securing the country's commerce in peacetime and delivering our warfighters, weapons and military supplies to the fight in times of conflict. Without a fully trained—and obligated to serve—U.S. merchant force, the fight will come to the U.S. homeland or the U.S. will be forced to outsource carrying troops and materiel to foreign mariners, whose loyalties may be at odds with those of our nation.

Other sources provide merchant mariners who are obligated to serve the USG, but at a far lower rate and for a shorter period of time than USMMA. Each year, the six State Maritime Academies (SMAs) graduate a modest number of licensed, obligated mariners, but it is essential to note that this is not their primary purpose. According to the Office of Management and Budget, "USMMA graduates serve as merchant marine officers and military reservists **to meet national defense, homeland security and reserve fleet mobilization needs,**" while "the purpose of the State Maritime School program is to partner with the six State maritime academies to produce highly qualified officers to replenish the nation's supply of skilled merchant mariners [emphasis added]."

In this sense, the relationship between USMMA and the SMAs is akin to that of West Point and the six Senior Military Colleges (SMCs), which include schools such as The Citadel and Virginia Military Institute. While all West Point graduates must be commissioned into the U.S. Armed Forces, only 52.8 percent and 30 percent from the Virginia Military Institute and The Citadel, respectively, choose to incur a similar obligation in exchange for having their education subsidized by the federal government. Approximately five percent of SMA graduates incur a service obligation to the USG. Also similar is the funding structure of the schools: while the FSAs are fully funded by the USG, the SMAs and SMCs are state schools that receive a relatively minimal amount of federal funds.

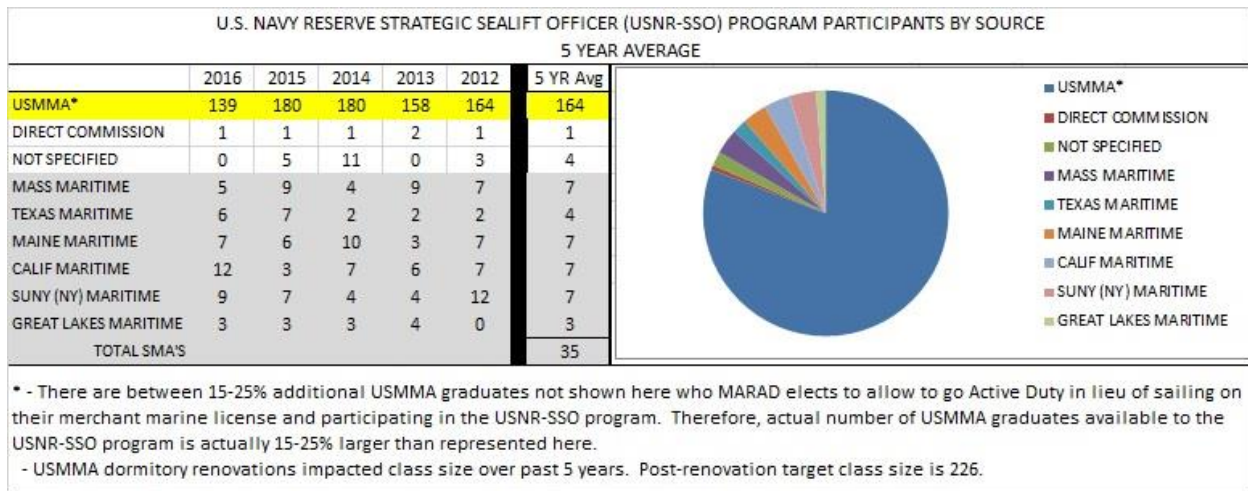
USMMA and SMA Graduate Statistics 2010 - 2014 Five Year Average								
	USMMA	State Maritime Academies						TOT SMA
		MI	TX	MA	CA	ME	NY	
Licensed grads w/ service obligation	209	2	3	9	5	8	8	35
Licensed grads w/ no service obligation	0	29	61	112	111	101	197	610
Total Licensed graduates	209	32	64	120	116	109	204	645
Non-licensed graduates	0	133	247	174	55	65	143	817
Total Graduates	209	165	311	295	171	174	347	1461
<i>% SMA Graduates with a Merchant Marine License</i>								44%
<i>% SMA Graduates without a Merchant Marine License</i>								56%
<i>% SMA Licensed Graduates trained to federal standard with a federal service obligation</i>								5%

**Figure 1**

Because of USMMA’s role in providing the USG with licensed, obligated-to-serve mariners, it is not only the most effective means, but also the most economically efficient means of manning the U.S. flag merchant fleet. As shown in Figure 1, on average 209 USMMA midshipmen graduate annually with the requisite mariner’s license and a statutory service obligation (the graduation target number, postdormitory renovations, is 226). The six SMAs combined produce an average of 35 licensed, obligated mariners per year. As previously stated, providing licensed—and obligated to serve—mariners is not their primary purpose.

The SMAs provide a valuable, but fundamentally different function than USMMA, one that is complementary to the Academy’s mission. The SMAs offer a wide variety of majors and degrees, including business, biology, environmental science, global studies and law enforcement. In compliance with its statutory mandate, however, USMMA offers only a B.S. degree and a selection of five maritime- specific majors: Marine Transportation, Logistics and Intermodal Transportation, Marine Engineering, Marine Engineering Systems, and Marine Engineering and Shipyard Management; each of these majors is U.S. Coast Guard approved as part of the merchant marine licensing requirement. In light of the fact that their sole function is national security, the FSAs—including USMMA—receive far more funding than multi-purpose colleges such as VMI, The Citadel and the six SMAs.

Based on the U.S. Department of Transportation/U.S. Maritime Administration’s FY17 budget request, operating expenses for USMMA costs the USG \$74.8M per year. The cost of the SMAs combined to the USG is \$29.2M. This means that on a pro rata basis, each licensed, obligated USMMA graduate costs the USG \$331,199, while each licensed, obligated SMA graduate costs the USG \$834,286 – over 2.5 times more than USMMA. Not included in this analysis is the fact the SMA merchant marine component of the obligation is only three years, two years shorter than that of USMMA.



**Figure 2**

Additionally, as Figure 2 shows, USMMA supplies 80% of officers in the USNR Strategic Sealift Officer program. These are commissioned officers in the U.S. Navy Reserve assigned to reserve U.S. Naval activities that support strategic sealift in times of national defense or emergency. They are obligated to merchant marine service and subject to recall by the USG. So, the \$74.8M the USG spends per year pays for not only licensed, obligated merchant mariners, but the training for a large majority of the USNR Strategic Sealift Officer program.

Because USMMA provides the USG with an essential service at an efficient rate, Congress should continue to support the Academy, just as it would the other FSAs. With a low cost per licensed, obligated graduate, USMMA assures the USG of a well-trained, well-manned U.S. merchant fleet to serve the country in times of peace and war. USMMA is vital to the nation and the only guarantor of the licensed merchant marine officers required to enable the USG's strategic sealift needs in time of war, as it has been from World War II, through Operation Iraqi Freedom, to today.

*The information in this document was obtained from several sources, including: the United States Navy Reserve Strategic Sealift Officer program office; websites of the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy; the Maritime Administration FY2017 budget request; and from the websites of The Citadel and Virginia Military Institute.*

**About the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation**

The U.S. Merchant Marine Alumni Association and Foundation exists to serve, assist and perpetuate the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, its Regiment of Midshipmen, Faculty, Staff and Alumni. It supports the Academy's mission of educating and graduating Merchant Marine officers who will become leaders in the commercial and defense transportation services of the United States. The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is a world-leader in maritime education and one of the five federal academies.