



Women of West Point PR Plan

**Cecilia Bianco
Molly Monihan
Kaileigh Cushing
Tai Locke
Meghan Shea
Kate Oliva**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	2-4
Situation Analysis	4
Core Problem & Opportunity	4
Goal	4
Key Public	5-6
Key Messages	6-7
Objective 1	7-9
O1: Strategies & Tactics	7-9
Objective 2	9
O2: Strategies & Tactics	9-10
Evaluation	10-11

BACKGROUND

History

The United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point was established on March 16, 1802. Its history dates back to the Revolutionary War when General George Washington moved his headquarters to West Point declaring it “America’s most strategic position.” Today, West Point Academy (WPA) is one of the most remarkable institutes in the country, training its cadets in education, leadership, and its core values of duty, honor and country.

WPA is located on the oldest military post in the country 50 miles north of New York City in the Hudson Valley.

In recent times, each class at WPA has held around 1,200 cadets, however, this number has steadily decreased since 1980. The total amount of cadets accepted in 1980 was 1,485 and there were only 1,193 cadets accepted for the class of 2016.

Reputation

WPA is one of the most highly respected establishments to receive an education from in the United States. The admissions process is extremely competitive and only the most qualified candidates are admitted. Each candidate is evaluated on academic performance, leadership skills, physical abilities, and a nomination letter from a member of congress.

These competitive benchmarks exist for many different reasons:

- Cadets attend WPA for free, an education and training worth over \$225,000.
- There are no more than 18 students per class at WPA, allowing cadets to receive education in a small, individualized environment.
- Professors at WPA are accessible, part of the military and live on campus for cadets to reach at all times.
- Graduates from WPA are required to serve five years of active duty.
- Graduates are required to serve for three years in a Reserve Component after active duty.

In addition to these tangible aspects of the university, WPA prides itself on accepting the top candidates in the country. The mission at WPA is to instill values of duty, honor and country to only the best applicants.

Competition

Although WPA is one of the most respected universities in the country, it competes with many other schools. Competing schools mainly include other service academies and four-year colleges with Reserve Officer Training (ROTC) programs. More than 1,400 colleges across the United States offer ROTC programs. Many students attend college and partake in ROTC programs in

order to experience the typical college lifestyle, while concurrently gearing towards a future in the military.

Competing service academies include:

- The United States Naval Academy
- The United States Air Force Academy
- The United States Merchant Marine Academy
- The United States Coast Guard Academy

These academies are competing for the same qualified applicants who excel in academics, athletics and leadership. In certain cases, applicants will receive endorsements to multiple academies, making it increasingly difficult for WPA to recruit cadets.

WPA also competes with other institutions around the United States aside from ROTC programs and service academies. Upon completion of market research, these schools were found to have overlapping admissions application criteria:

- United States Naval Academy
- United States Air Force Academy
- Virginia Military Institute
- United States Coast Guard Academy
- Texas A&M University / College Station
- Pennsylvania State University
- The Citadel
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute
- Cornell University
- United States Merchant Marine Academy

WPA has also been compared to Harvard University, Georgetown University and University of Virginia. In market research conducted, Harvard University is recognized most often for excellence among adults and teens over their competing schools including: WPA, Georgetown, the Naval Academy, and the University of Virginia.

External Environment

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 and the declaration of war on Iraq had detrimental impacts on WPA. These events created a universal sense of fear among Americans and resulted in an all-time low for applications to WPA that year.

Conversely, between 2002 and 2009, the economy of the United States hit a recession. Because of the financial benefits that the WPA offers, an increase in applications materialized once again.

Both of these examples indicate the effect world politics can have on the admissions process at WPA.

Women's Acceptance

Historically, recruiting women has always been a struggle in the military industry. WPA competitively seeks out potential female cadets around the United States. According to admissions data at WPA, the largest number of female cadets accepted in a class since 1980 was 198, compared to over 1,000 male cadets accepted each year. While WPA could focus efforts on other audiences, the unimpressive number of female cadets enrolled at WPA is considered a serious issue the establishment would like to overcome.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

West Point Academy (WPA) is an outstanding academy that offers affordable and excellent education. It also trains world-class leaders to enter the military of the United States, only accepting the best applicants to teach its values of duty, honor and country. Unfortunately, WPA attracts a large male audience and not as many females. Today, WPA has the opportunity to increase the amount of female cadets attending the academy.

Obstacles to overcome while recruiting women to apply to WPA need to be taken into consideration. Many women are intimidated by the eight-year commitment to the military after graduation. Additionally, parents and guardians of women ages 17 to 23 are afraid of their children entering the military. Therefore, as large influencers in young women's lives, they will be less motivated to send their children there. Finally, women tend to have a tough time in the military because of the rough environment. They are less likely to want to join the military over young men.

CORE PROBLEM & OPPORTUNITY

West Point's current student population is predominantly male, creating an opportunity to increase the number of women cadets.

GOAL

For West Point Academy to be seen as a leading institution for young females by increasing the number of women enrolled at West Point Academy.

KEY PUBLIC

Potential Female Applicants

Our key public consists of 14-18 year old females attending high academic performing public or private schools in the Northeast. We have defined the following states as the Northeastern region: Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware. These women want to attend a university that is relatively close to home and are looking primarily at schools in the Northeastern region of the United States.

This group meets the following standard WPA admissions' criteria:

- Potential female cadets are unmarried.
- They are not pregnant, do not have a child and do not have a legal obligation to support a child.
- They are U.S. Citizens.

These young females are targeted as potential WPA applicants because they possess the following characteristics:

- They have an above average high school academic record.
- Their SAT or ACT scores exceed the average scores of their peer group.
- They want to obtain a Bachelor of Science Degree with an interest in studying the fields of physical science, engineering, humanities and/or social sciences.
- They hold or have held a leadership role either in their school or extracurricular activities.
- They meet all WPA physical requirements.

Additionally, these students may have taken Honors, AP or IB courses. They also may have held after-school or summer jobs. If they participated in a team sport, they were most likely the team captains.

By meeting these criteria, these students show they have the ability to live a structured lifestyle and demonstrate responsibility in their everyday life. These women like a challenge and aren't afraid to take on initially daunting tasks.

This group also has a strong sense of duty to their country. These potential female cadets want to spend at least eight years in the army after graduation. They hold the same core values as emphasized at the WPA and duty, honor and respect are emphasized in their everyday actions.

Motivating Self-Interests

Prospective female applicants are looking for the academic university that is the best fit for them. West Point has a number of enticing benefits that would motivate students to enroll at the academy:

- Cadets receive an individualized education, which includes classrooms with less than 18 students and easily accessible professors.
- WPA provides tuition, room, board, and medical and dental care.
- Cadets receive a monthly stipend of \$895 for spending needs.
- Upon graduation, applicant will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army.
- WPA reputation for academic excellence, physical education, and unsurpassed preparation for military leadership allows cadets to receive advanced leadership placement opportunities in their community.

Current Relationship

This public has a peaked interest in attending WPA, knows of it by name or may not be aware of it at all. However, they all need more information about the academy before they can make the educated decision to apply and/or attend.

Influentials

Influentials include: friends, family, celebrities, prominent army officials, academic advisors, athletic coaches, club advisors, religious leaders and bosses.

KEY MESSAGES

Primary Message

1. WPA is committed to providing an affordable and distinguished education to its cadets.

Secondary Messages:

- Classroom sizes are never larger than 18 students creating a more personalized experience.
- Cadets graduate without any tuition loans to repay.
- Majority of professors at WPA live on campus and have an invested interest in their students.
- WPA cadets consistently have an average GPA above the national average.
- WPA cadets have more than 40 majors to choose from.

Primary Message

2. West Point instills life lessons, values and discipline in their graduates.

Secondary Messages:

- West Point graduates receive world-class training to be an effective leader in their community.

- West Point offers students a desirable career path upon graduation.
- At West Point duty is what we do, honor is how we do it and country is why we do it.

OBJECTIVE 1: RAISING AWARENESS

To raise awareness among potential qualified female applicants to 75 percent by Feb. 28, 2014: the application deadline for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Strategy 1: Facilitate a “Women of West Point” event that celebrates the strong women who have or will attend West Point on March 30, 2013.

Tactics:

- Book the venue with in-house catering by March 1, 2013.
- Contact the speakers of the event by January 30, 2013.
- Top choices for speakers include:
 - Andrea Lee Hollen (class of 1980) - Rhodes Scholar. First woman graduate of USMA.
 - Kristin Baker (class of 1990) - First woman Brigade Commander, U.S. Corps of Cadets.
 - Anita Allen (class of 2000) - Placed 18th in the modern pentathlon in the 2004 Summer Olympics.
- Confirm the speakers participation by February 15, 2013.
- Create promotional event flyers by March 15, 2013.
- Distribute event flyers in the New York City area at grocery stores, coffee shops, high schools, community centers, and athletic facilities during the two weeks leading up to the day of the event.

Strategy 2: Facilitate monthly informational and Q&A sessions between potential female applicants and WPA students and alumni.

Tactics:

- Hold one session on the first of the month between April 2013 and November 2013.
- Book the high school venue one month prior to the event.
- Hold sessions in each of the following seven major cities:
 - Portland, Maine
 - Burlington, Vt.
 - Boston
 - Bridgeport, Conn.

- New York City
- Providence, R.I.
- Pittsburgh
- Have two WPA female alumni and two current WPA students deliver key messages and field questions from attendees.
- Distribute event flyers in each city at grocery stores, coffee shops, high schools, community centers, and athletic facilities during the one week leading up to the day of the session

Strategy 3: Build a strong online presence that potential female cadets, advisors, parents, coaches and other key influencers can use as a resource.

Tactics:

- Create a Facebook fan page, Twitter, YouTube channel, and blog for the current website titled “Women of West Point” by March 2013.
- Promote online channels through any materials distributed by WPA throughout the duration of the campaign by including links to each channel.
- Cross-link all online channels to increase search engine optimization.
- Update Facebook fan page, Twitter and Blog about current Women of West Point throughout the duration of the campaign including the following:
 - Events
 - Fun facts and relevant pictures
 - Updates about campus, application process, and other relevant information
 - Personal experiences and pictures of current women attending WPA
 - Online question and answer opportunity
- Encourage followers to participate in two-way communication through posting questions, contests and polls consistently throughout the campaign.
- Create a space on the online blog for potential WPA parents to reference and interact with other potential parents in March 2013.
- Create monthly blog posts directed toward parents and potential parents of female cadets starting in May 2013.
- Provide promotional videos on YouTube including:
 - Personal testimony of current Woman of West Point
 - Personal experience of current West Point female athletes
 - Alumni experience after graduation
 - Virtual tour of campus from the viewpoint of a female cadet
 - Interviews of parents whose students are either in their first or last year at West Point
- Clips of each female athletic team

- Highlights academic performance of West Point cadets along with facts and statistics

OBJECTIVE 2: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

To build relationships with main influencers to raise positive perception of West Point among qualified female applicants to 30 percent by Feb. 28, 2014: the application deadline for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Strategy 1: Provide information to high school academic advisors of all programs offered for potential female applicants.

Tactics:

- WPA female representatives will be assigned to every high school in the Northeast to personally answer questions advisors have in April 2013.
- Provide training sessions for advisors to learn important messages and information about WPA in April 2013.
- Provide brochures and pamphlets to leave with each advisor following the training sessions.
- Hand out additional brochures and pamphlets for advisors to distribute to potential female applicants.
- West Point representatives will personally contact each advisor one month after the visit to follow-up the training sessions in May 2013.
- Send informational and promotional e-mails to advisors highlighting the academic advantages of attending West Point by September 2013.
- Contact advisors once a month between October 2013 to February 2014 to answer any questions and continue a strong relationship.

Strategy 2: Provide information to the parent's of qualified female applicants of all programs.

Tactics:

- Develop a list of parents of potential WPA cadets by June 2013. This list includes parents whose daughters meet the following criteria:
 - High SAT/ACT scores
 - Above average GPA
 - Involvement in athletics
 - Hold leadership positions
 - Already requested additional information about WPA

- Highlight the unique experience of a woman at WPA by creating and distributing informational kits by June 2013. These informational kits include information on the following:
 - Traditional values and principles
 - Opportunities following graduation
 - Eight entities that make West Point women well-rounded
 - Financial benefits of attending West Point
- In September 2013, a WPA Parents' Club representative will personally contact potential parents via e-mail to inform them about the club.
- Potential parents will be personally invited by phone to WPA Parents' Club community meetings in October 2013 to address any questions or concerns they may have about the academy.

Strategy 3: Provide information to high school varsity women coaches regarding the high performing athletic programs offered at WPA.

Tactics

- Send brochures and pamphlets to all varsity women coaches in the various sports offered at WPA (basketball, cross country, rifle, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track, volleyball) in September 2013.
- WPA coaches in each athletic department will personally contact corresponding coaches of the highest performing female athletes and teams across the Northeast region by phone in October 2013.

EVALUATION

Objective 1: To raise awareness among potential qualified female applicants to 75 percent by Feb. 28, 2014: the application deadline for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Criteria: Awareness among potential qualified female applicants rose to 75 percent by Feb. 28, 2014.

Tools: A Survey will be given to all females at high academic performing schools in the North East. The Survey will ask them to rate a short list of colleges. Based on the results, it will be determined whether 75 percent of the sample public know enough about West Point to be able to rate it.

Objective 2: To build relationships with main influencers to raise positive perception of West Point among qualified female applicants to 30 percent by Feb. 28, 2014: the application deadline for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Criteria: 30 percent of qualified female applicants indicate having a positive perception of West Point by Feb. 28, 2014.

Tools: A Survey will be given to all females at high academic performing schools in the North East. In the survey, it will ask them to rate their perception of West Point versus other schools. From the survey we will determine if 30 percent of the sample public indicate having a positive perception of West Point.