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**NAVAL  
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SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS AND HOW  
IS IT WORKING AT THE NAVAL HOSPITAL CORPS  
SCHOOL?**

by

Sonia I. Adams and Timothy B. Worley

June 2004

Thesis Advisors: Alice M. Crawford  
Susan P. Hocevar  
Philip J. Candreva

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WHAT IS THE ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS AND HOW IS IT WORKING  
AT THE NAVAL HOSPITAL CORPS SCHOOL?

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis analyzes the Academic Review Process (ARP) at the Hospital Corps "A" School, specifically focusing on how it is working and the criteria of the Academic Review Board. This was accomplished by analyzing a data spreadsheet of students that went through the ARP in 2003 and a survey randomly administered to a general student sample in January 2004. The study identified and analyzed the perceptions of students, instructor staff, and headquarters staff in the evaluation of the processes; analyzed a student data set by cross-referencing the recommendation and final disposition results of those that entered the ARP; and developed a cost framework for the command and future researchers to help determine the effectiveness of the process. The report includes recommendations for improving the ARP process.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE	Academic Council on Education
AFQT	Armed Forces Qualification Test
ARB	Academic Review Board
ARP	Academic Review Process
ASVAB	Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery
BLS	Basic Life Support
CNA	Center for Naval Analysis
CNET	Chief, Naval Education and Training Command
CNRC	Commander, Navy-recruiting Command
CO	Commanding Officer
DAD	Director of Academics
DIVO	Division Officer
ESSO	Education Support Services Officer
GS	General Science
HM1	Hospital Corpsman, First Class Petty Officer
HM2	Hospital Corpsman, Second Class Petty Officer
HMC	Hospital Corpsman, Chief Petty Officer
HSDG	High School Diploma Graduates
IM	Intramuscular
ISSO	Instructional Services Support Officer
IST	Initial Skills Training
MK	Mathematics Knowledge
MPT	Navy Manpower, Personnel and Training System
NEC	Navy Enlisted Classification Code
RTC	Recruit Training Command
SC	Subcutaneous
SSO	Support Services Officer
VE	Paragraph Comprehension
XO	Executive Officer



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## I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### A. INTRODUCTION

The capacity to sustain readiness is one of the most important challenges facing the Navy today. Readiness is continually affected by personnel shortages, increased operational commitments, diminishing budgets and advanced technology, all of which affect the quantity and quality of people the Navy will need. Determining the appropriate quality and the quantity mix is very important in today's military environment. Attracting people with the right skills is a crucial element to the success of readiness.

The system responsible for sustaining fleet and shore personnel readiness is the Navy Manpower, Personnel and Training (MPT) System. The MPT system is divided into four processes: Manpower Requirements, Manpower Programming, Personnel Distribution, and Personnel Planning (BUPERS Web page). Manpower Requirements and Manpower Programming processes concentrate primarily on what is vital for each ship, squadron and shore command to operate efficiently. Personnel Planning and Personnel Distribution processes focus on who will fill shore and fleet personnel requirements. Recruiting and training facilitate the process of putting "the right person in the right place at the right time" (BUPERS Web page).

The recruiting and training processes are vital to meeting mission requirements and sustaining readiness. Commander, Navy Recruiting Command (CNRC), Millington, Tennessee recruits over 40,000 men and women each year. Chief, Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) is

responsible for training Sailors. It is estimated that over 43,800 students are in training each day (BUPERS Web page).

The process of transforming a citizen into a Sailor can be broken down into two phases: the recruitment phase and the training phase. The recruitment phase begins when a recruiter makes contact with a potential recruit. After contact is made and interest is exhibited, the recruiter conducts background, moral, financial, and educational checks, and the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test is administered.

During the last stage of the recruitment phase, individuals receive their ship dates to Recruit Training Command (RTC). Many individuals ship directly to recruit training, while others enter the Delayed Entry Program. The final aspect of recruiting occurs when recruits are sworn in (or when recruits take the enlistment oath).

Military occupation training begins with assignment to Initial Skills Training (IST). This usually occurs at RTC. The goal of IST is to introduce Sailors to military-specific skills. Each student must meet the minimum entrance requirements established by Congress and the Department of Defense.

To predict quality in training and job performance, personnel planners use education levels and Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores. Recruiters make every effort to enlist AFQT Category I-III A (50<sup>th</sup> percentile and above on the AFQT) test-takers (Cymrot, 2001). Research suggests that high school diploma graduates are more likely to complete their enlistment, and that higher AFQT-scoring

recruits perform better in training and on the job (Moore and Reese, 2001). Thus, "the overall process of putting the right person in the right place at the right time is not complete until Sailors are assigned to jobs that fully utilize their acquired occupational skills" (BUPERS Web page).

## **B. BACKGROUND**

Upon entering Naval Service, most enlisted personnel do not possess the necessary skills to perform their assigned jobs effectively. The reason for this is two-fold: 1) in most cases members are coming directly from high school, and 2) most have never been exposed to specific job training. To combat this problem, the Navy provides IST. The goal of this training is to introduce and prepare Sailors for their initial military jobs.

To meet operational requirements, policy makers must predict: 1) the number of qualified Sailors in the pipeline, and 2) the length of time required for Sailors to successfully complete IST. Thus, various processes are in place at training commands to manage remediation and, if necessary, attrition.

This research focuses on the Academic Review Process (ARP) at the Basic Hospital Corps School. Located in Great Lakes, Illinois, the mission of the Basic Hospital Corps School is "to provide leadership, education and training, to prepare and qualify enlisted personnel to perform as Basic Navy Hospital Corpsmen in support of the mission of the United States Navy and Marine Corps" (NHCSGLAKES Web page). As shown in Figure 1, the average yearly throughput for the past five years has been 3,100 students; of those

students, approximately six percent each year attrite while in Basic Hospital Corps School.

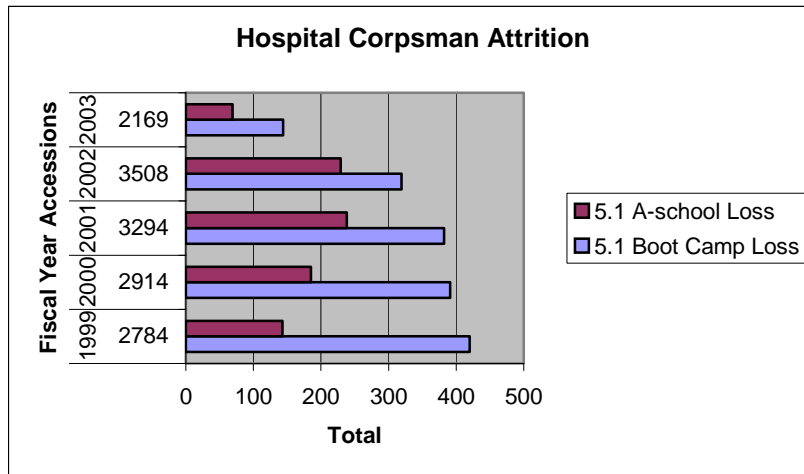


Figure 1. **Hospital Corpsman Attrition.**

From Grefer, J., *Wartime Medical Requirements*, CNA, 2001.

Upon completion of school most students are assigned to hospitals or clinics. Others work aboard ships or submarines, air squadrons, or special operational environments (e.g., Seabee Units and Deep Sea Diving). Duties assigned are service-oriented, repetitive, and require good judgment. Hospital Corpsmen may work alone or with supervision by other healthcare professionals, depending on their assignments.

The Hospital Corps School receives guidance from NETC regarding training-related issues. The school's executive chain of command is the Commanding Officer (CO), the Executive Officer (XO), and the Director of Academics (DAD). The DAD is responsible for the administration and performance of the school.

## **1. Student Qualifications**

Students must meet the minimum Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) score of: Sum of Word Knowledge and Paragraph Comprehension (VE) + Mathematics Knowledge (MK) + General Science (GS) = 149, out of a possible total score of 320. The average AFQT for HM recruits is 74, and 82.8 percent are in AFQT Categories I-III A (MILPERSMAN, 2003). Further, students must demonstrate high standards of behavior before accession into the HM community. For instance, a student may not have a history of drug abuse or have committed any offenses involving the abuse of alcohol, narcotics, or other controlled substances.

## **2. Curriculum**

Group and modular instruction are used to teach students the fundamentals of the HM rating, including basic principles and techniques of patient care and first aid procedures. Students receive 560 hours of classroom instruction and 80 hours of clinical time. Fourteen written exams and 16 comprehensive skill laboratories cover the following areas: basic life support (BLS), vital signs, airway management, patient assessment, cardiac emergencies, bleeding and soft tissue injury, muscular and skeletal injuries, head and spine, surgical asepsis, oral medications, intramuscular (IM) subcutaneous (SC) injections, venipuncture, patient lifting and moving, urinary catheterization, mass casualties, and IV therapy. In addition, the curriculum is recommended for 15 hours of undergraduate credit through the Academic Council on Education (ACE) and is accredited by the Commission of the Council on Occupational Education (NHCSGLAKES Web page).



### **3. Academic Review Process**

The Academic Review Process (ARP) was established to monitor students who may experience academic and non-academic problems. The first test failure requires students to be counseled by a member of the instructional team. The instructional team consists of a Chief Hospital Corpsman (HMC), a Hospital Corpsman First Class Petty Officer (HM1), and a Hospital Corpsman Second Class Petty Officer (HM2). After a second test failure a student is counseled by the instructional team leader and automatically assigned to night study. The instructional team leader is the division officer (DIVO). After the third test failure the student must appear before an Academic Review Board (ARB). The function of the ARB is to make a recommendation to retain and reclassify, setback, or remove the Sailor from training.

At the Hospital Corps School, the ARB is convened under the authority of the CO (NAVHOSPCORPSCOLINST, 2002). The ARB membership consists of three members. The Chair can be a Division Officer (DIVO), an Educational Support Services Officer (ESSO), a Support Services Officer (SSO), an Instructional Services Support Officer (ISSO), or another officer designated by the DAD. The other two members must have instructional experience and must be senior to the student being reviewed. For example, a Petty Officer Third Class cannot sit as a member of the board if the student being reviewed is the same rank (NAVHOSPCORPSCOLINST, 2002). Members cannot sit on a board if they are part of the advisory team, or if they are responsible for completing student reclassification actions.

Students are interviewed by board members to determine their motivation, desire, and commitment to complete the training. To receive a recommendation of retention and setback, board members must feel the student has both the ability to successfully complete the school program and the determination to do so. Regulations state that if the ARB recommends disenrollment it must further recommend that the student be either transferred directly to the fleet (GENDET), reclassified for another rating, or separated from the service (NAVHOSPCORPSCOLINST, 2002). The CO makes the final decision based on the contents of the ARB package (e.g., interview notes, test scores) and the recommendations of the ARB, DAD, and XO.

### **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This thesis explores the ARP at the Basic Hospital Corps School, including the effectiveness of the process in helping students successfully complete IST. The following research questions are addressed:

#### **Primary research questions**

- What is the Academic Review Process (ARP) and how is the Academic Review Process working?
- What are the criteria of the Academic Review Board?

#### **Secondary research questions**

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the ARP?
- What is done to promote student success?
- What is helping students the most?
- Are there ways to improve the process?
- How are decisions made?
- Which level of the decision-making process is most accurate in predicting student success?

- What are the economic costs and benefits of the ARP?

#### **D. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

Data for this thesis were limited to students and staff who were involved in the academic review process in Fiscal Year 2003. The data do not capture students who were involved in the process but then were subsequently disenrolled.

#### **E. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

Chapter II reviews the literature applicable to understanding IST attrition. Chapter III describes the research methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter IV provides the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the structured interviews and questionnaire data gathered for this study. In addition, this chapter presents the results of the analysis of a database of students who were involved in the ARB during 2003. Finally, chapter IV provides the framework for computing the cost of setbacks and disenrollments, and presents how errors based on the CO's decision increases the cost of student throughput. Chapter V presents overall conclusions of the study and recommendations for improving the academic review process.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. DEFINING ATTRITION

The Collins English Dictionary defines attrition as the "wearing down of something" (World Reference Web page). In the context of personnel management, attrition wears down the quantity and quality of personnel in the fleet. For the past decade, attrition rates for all services have remained within a broad band, ranging from around 25 percent to 40 percent (Gebicke, 1997). From a service-specific perspective, in general the Army's attrition rate has been the highest and the Air Force's the lowest. CNA's 1999 study reported findings of increased pre-fleet and first-term attrition in the Navy (Belcher, Reese, and Lewis, 1999). Since that finding was published, the Navy has focused much of its attention on implementing initiatives that will improve delivery of recruits to the fleet (Lien and Reese, 2002).

Attrition occurs when an enlistee leaves military service before the end of his or her contracted enlistment term. Pre-fleet attrition occurs when an enlistee fails to successfully complete recruit training or initial skills training; first-term attrition occurs when a Sailor makes it to a full-duty billet in the fleet but separates before the end of his or her contract.

Attrition can occur in several different ways. It can occur through involuntary separation at the convenience of the Navy or through voluntary separation at the convenience of the individual. There are three major categories of attrition: (1) separations for medical/physical problems,

either for medical conditions that existed prior to service, or for physical problems that develop while enlistees are in training; (2) separations for fraudulent or erroneous enlistment, indicating either that the service did not detect the disqualifying conditions prior to their enlistments or the enlistees deliberately withheld disqualifying information; and (3) separations for performance problems, such as failure of the physical training test, misconduct, exceeding weight and body fat standards, character and behavior disorders, alcoholism, drug use, homosexuality, loss of motivation, or inability to adapt to military life (Cymrot, Golding, & Parcel, 2001). Figure 2 shows that of 52,000 recruits, over 10,000 potential Sailors attrited during their pre-fleet training, and over 7,000 suffered first-term attrition (Alderton, 2002). Pre-fleet and first-term attrition have far-reaching consequences, such as wasted investment in training, time, and equipment. More importantly, attrition reduces the number of trained Sailors who enter the fleet.

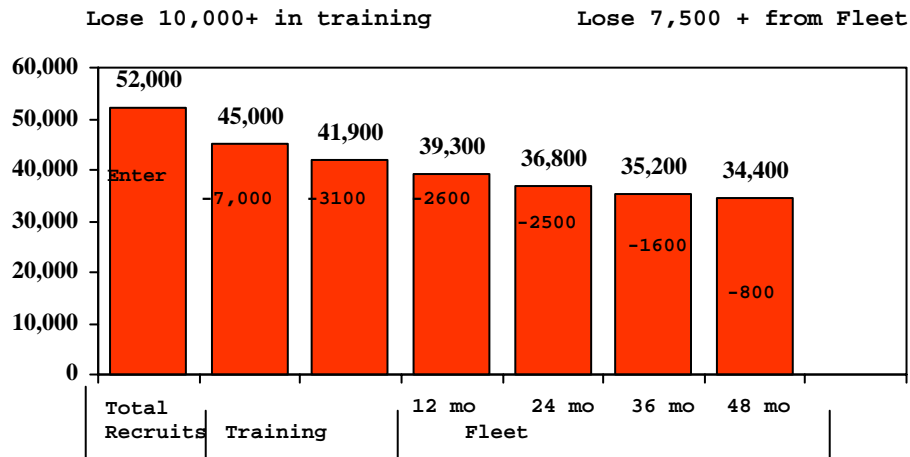


Figure 2. **Accession Pipeline: Pre-Fleet and First-Term Attrition.**

From Alderton, D., Selection and Classification for Enlisted Service, 2002). The original source is CNA [[hces.bus.olemiss.edu/mas\\_v\\_2002.html](http://hces.bus.olemiss.edu/mas_v_2002.html)], March 2004.

## **B. PRE-FLEET ATTRITION**

The results of numerous studies suggest that the predicted rate of first-term attrition is significantly affected by education, race, age, gender, and AFQT score. Many of these studies conclude that education level and AFQT score are most effective in predicting military job performance and attrition. An analysis of Army accession data from 1974-1983 revealed the first-term survival of high school graduates exceeded that of non-graduates by 15 percent (Warner & Solon, 1991). This seems to be a consistent finding among services.

Quester and Olsen (1988) examined all non-prior Navy service accessions (those with less than 180 consecutive days of active prior service) during 1978-1986. They found that the most important recruit characteristic for predicting attrition, performance, and retention beyond the first term is high school graduation. In Figure 3, the data collected on FY 95-98 accessions provide a further example that recruit quality matters. High school diploma graduates (HSDG) have significantly lower attrition rates than do non-HSDG throughout their initial terms of enlistment (Alderton, 2002). Attrition rates for HSDG range from 10.5 percentage points lower at the beginning of RTC to 25.6 percentage points lower at the end of three years of enlistment.

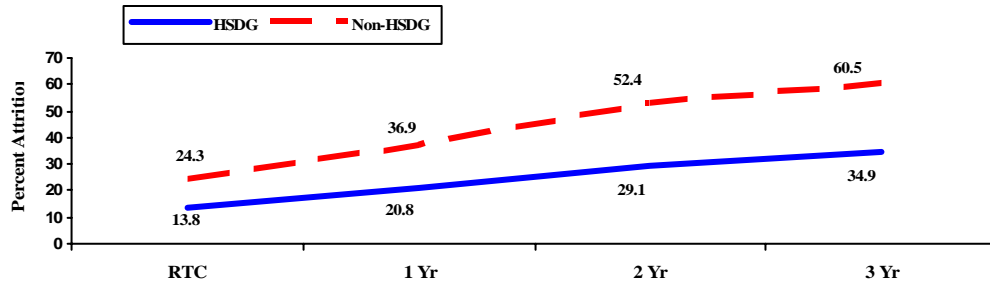


Figure 3. **Cumulative Attrition by Educational Credential.**  
 From Alderton, D., *Selection and Classification for Enlisted Service*, 2002).  
 The original source is CNA [hces.bus.olemiss.edu/mas\_v\_2002.html], March 2004.

### 1. Boot-Camp Attrition

Studies of boot-camp attrition focus on recruit characteristics and successful adaptation to military life. The results of these studies suggest the most important characteristics for successful outcomes are: (1) educational credential; (2) A-cell (graduates who screen in top half of AFQT); and (3) entrance through the delayed entry program (DEP) (Quester, MacIlvaine, Barfield, Parker, & Reese, 1998).

To study accession quality, Quester et al., developed seven recruit quality cells based on the Navy's historical success rates of recruits who attended boot camp during FY 1994 through FY 1996 (Quester et al., 1998). As shown in Table 1, decreases in accession quality are related to increases in attrition. The historic boot-camp attrition rates were then used as a baseline to evaluate current boot camp attrition trends. The outcome supported findings in previous studies, with the largest attrition rates occurring for category 6 and 7 recruits - non-HSDG graduates with low AFQT scores.

<b>Factors Predicting Attrition</b>		<b>Attrition Rate Percentages</b>
<b>Category 1</b>	AFQT I-II; HSDG; DEP	9.4
<b>Category 2</b>	AFQT IIIA; HSDG, DEP	11.9
<b>Category 3</b>	AFQT IIIB; HSDG; Direct Ship	14.4
<b>Category 4</b>	AFQT I-IIIA HSDG; Direct Ship	13.9
<b>Category 5</b>	AFQT IIIB; HSDG; Direct Ship	17.9
<b>Category 6</b>	All AFQT; NHSDG; DEP	20.3
<b>Category 7</b>	All NHSDG; Direct Ship	24.1

Table 1. Factors Predicting Attrition.

Using the attrition data from their previous study, these authors calculated the number of days that it took for recruits to attrite from boot camp. They found that three percent of recruits attrited after one to ten days in the Navy; 37% attrited after 11-20 days; 27% attrited after 21 to 30 days; and ten percent attrited after 60 or more days in the Navy. The researchers described two implications of the findings: (1) there are procedures in place at boot camp that can promptly identify future attrites; or (2) current screening procedures are not effective. The researcher also raised an important question: In the cases where attrition occurred within a few days, was enough time spent with recruits to fully evaluate their potential? (Quester et al., 1998).

Some less prevalent factors impacting boot-camp attrition include misconduct, inability to maintain weight standards, character and behavior disorders, alcoholism, and homosexuality. (Gebicke, 1997). In addition, studies have found that while recruits with waivers have a somewhat higher attrition rate than those recruits without waivers,



they are not among those considered to be a very high attrition risk (i.e., NHSDG and low aptitude scores).

Few studies have been conducted that examine recruits who successfully survive recruit training but attrite while in their initial training pipeline. In fact, this issue was not fully considered until the 1990s, when the Navy lost approximately 18 percent of its recruits to pre-fleet attrition (Cymrot, 2001). The focus of this research is to identify factors that may contribute to IST attrition by looking into the initial skills training program at the Naval Hospital Corps School.

## **2. Initial Skills Training Attrition**

It could be said that the process of selection and classification for A-school has some problems. The rate of attrition from A-school has exceeded twenty percent from 1993 to present (Moore & Reese, 2001). The Department of Defense spends between \$9,400 and \$13,500 to recruit and train an active-duty enlistee through basic training, with an additional \$6,100 to \$16,300 spent on initial skills training (GAO, 1997). In today's military, this high level of attrition has the potential to be a significant detriment to fleet readiness.

To gain a better understanding of the contributory factors leading to attrition of recruits who successfully complete boot camp, but subsequently attrite out of A-school, CNA conducted a study of 77,724 recruits who entered the Navy between FY 1993 and FY1998. The results of this study were similar to the results reported for previous boot-camp attrition studies in that education, waivers, and DEP were found to be important predictors of

IST completion(Moore & Reese, 2001). The study also found that rating assignment and student perception of rating, as well as school management and A-school curricula, were significant factors in explaining attrition.

A recruit's rating options are determined by matching available positions with the recruit's projected success based on his or her aptitude. With no prior knowledge of the duties or responsibilities of the rating, the recruit, once introduced to the rating, may perceive it as unsuitable. This perception could lead to attrition. Changes related to school policy and curricula were found to have a negative impact on attrition (i.e., changes in weight control standards, disciplinary procedures, quality of trainers, difficulty of course work, or testing and grading criteria). The study also found a small but negative correlation between training time and attrition. The correlation could not be isolated to a specific reason. However, the study found that for each one-point increase in the percentage of time not under instruction (i.e., time spent awaiting training, awaiting transfer, and interrupted instruction) there is a corresponding 0.54 increase in attrition. There is speculation that longer training pipelines may have simply shifted attrition that was destined to occur in the fleet to a pre-fleet period (Moore & Reese, 2001).

Another study of particular relevance to attrition examined what happens to the Sailors who fail an A-school course, but are allowed to continue in a different rating (Quester, MacIlvaine, Barfield, Parker, and Reese, 1998). Sailors who were academic course failures, yet were allowed

to continue in a different A-school, experienced no further A-school attrition and were subsequently rated. In FY 1993, 119 academic failures were reassigned and rated; 81 percent completed 42 months of service. In comparison, 203 non-academic failures were sent to the fleet as GENDETS (non-designated) and 57 percent completed 42 months of service.

In FY 1994, 121 academic failures were reassigned and rated and 57 percent completed 42 months of service. In comparison, 262 nonacademic failures were sent to the fleet as GENDETS, and 56 percent completed 30 months of service. The results show that academic failures do better in the fleet than non-academic failures. The researchers noted in their study that they strongly support initiatives to provide a second chance at school.

**a. *Managing Attrition***

Getting a second chance in military academic institutions is determined by the guidelines set forth in the Navy School Management Manual (NAVEDTRA 135A, 2000). The manual outlines informal measures to be taken for student pipeline management, such as preventative student counseling, remediation programs, retesting procedures, and initial academic setback. The manual also provides guidance and procedures for the Academic Review Board, which is a formal student pipeline management tool. The Academic Review Board is conducted within formalized procedures in handling non-disciplinary problems related to a student's academic progress. The ARB is based on the philosophy "that decisions concerning a student's drop from training are better arrived at by a group acting together

as a board rather than an individual acting alone" (NAVEDTRA 135A, 2000). This process requires the board to make assessments of a student beyond academic ability. Additional relevant factors include character, leadership ability, motivation, and other possible factors that could affect a student's ability to complete training.

A thesis study conducted in 1990 examined the ARB decision and reporting process of seven "A" schools. The study surveyed 91 ARB members and found the following inconsistencies in the ARB procedure: 1) inconsistencies in judgment as to what factors should be considered in the decision process; 2) lack of standardized criteria; 3) a difference in ARB procedures across schools, including differing setback policies governing how many times a student can recycle through training; and 4) a decision-making bias of board members based on the school's attrition rate (Firehammer, 1990).

These inconsistencies in policies or standards can affect A-school attrition in such a way that the true nature of the problem is not revealed. If the ARB cannot be used to adequately assess the reasons that enlistees attrite, then it may be ineffective at reducing attrition. Thus, leaders may implement arbitrary procedures that might result in greater enlistee attrition. The implementation of standardized procedures, set criteria, evaluation tools, and reporting and tracking mechanisms will aid leaders in making assessments and capture historical data for future studies.

Most of the research on school attrition has looked at the effects that student characteristics such as

ability and level of education have on academic attrition. As illustrated in Table 2, there have been several studies that have found other plausible factors that may lead to first-term attrition, such as leadership practices, differences in institutional policies, and better job opportunities. The focus of this research is to identify factors that may contribute to IST attrition by looking into the initial skills training program at the Naval Hospital Corps School.

To conclude, there is obviously a problem with pre-fleet attrition in the military services. Studies referenced in this section have examined many different factors to identify those that have a causal effect on pre-fleet and first-term attrition. Common to all of the studies are aptitude and education factors. All of the studies found that recruits with a high school diploma and a high AFQT score were more likely to successfully complete their pre-fleet training and their first-term. Studies also found that there are other variables that influence pre-fleet attrition, including rating assignment, recruit perceptions, and schoolhouse management (to include the academic review process). A study examining pre-fleet attrition found that Sailors who were academic course failures, yet allowed to continue in a different A-school, experienced no further A-school attrition, and were subsequently rated. Further, the results show that academic failures do better in the fleet than non-academic failures. The study noted that initiatives that provide a second chance at school should be strongly supported. Understanding the causal factors associated with pre-fleet

attrition is vital to understanding the policies and changes needed to reduce pre-fleet attrition.

Finding	Reference
Probability of quitting the service is higher among non-high school graduates, those with dependents, younger recruits, and those with a history of trouble.	Stolzenberg and Winkler (1990)
High school graduation is the best predictor of first-term attrition. Female recruits, especially those in non-traditional Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) have higher attrition rates.	Ross, Nogami, and Eaton (1994)
Psychological screening may be important in reducing attrition.	Mael and Ashforth (1995)
The affect of AFQT on first-term attrition varies by MOS, suggesting that better matching might help reduce attrition.	Manganaris and Schmitz (1985)
Women have higher attrition than men.	Quester and Steadman (1990)
Recruiting high quality recruits may add less to the productivity cost.	Congressional Budget Office (1986)
Along with educational attainment, pre-enlistment work history, and temporal variables, attrition is strongly influenced by institutional policies.	Doering and Gissmer (1985)
High school graduates have a lower probability of first-term attrition; minorities have lower attrition rates.	Warner and Solon (1991)
Recruit characteristics have an important effect on attrition. Thus initial screening can help reduce attrition.	Buddin (1988)
Service policies and practices have an important effect on attrition.	Buddin (1985)
Better screening of enlisted personnel could result in large savings.	GAO (1997)
Pre-basic instruction in basic verbal literacy skills will reduce first-term attrition.	Thomlison (1996)
A new series of experimental tests, measures, and non-cognitive characteristics could be useful in screening individuals for occupations.	Manganaris and Schmitz (1996)

Table 2. First-Term Enlistment, Attrition, and Performance Studies.

From Kirby and Naftel, *Enlisted Management Policies and Practices: A Review of the Literature*, RAND 2001.

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### **III. METHODOLOGY**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the data collected from the Basic Hospital Corps School, and discusses the analytic tools used to examine the data. The research questions were explored through: 1) focus group interviews; 2) a survey administered to a sample of students who experienced Academic Review Boards in Fiscal Year 2003; 3) a survey administered to a sample of staff who served as Academic Review Board members in Fiscal Year 2003; and 4) analysis of a school database that contains demographic and academic information on the ARB students.

#### **B. FOCUS GROUPS**

Thirteen active duty Sailors and five staff members assigned to Basic Hospital Corps School in Great Lakes, Illinois, were selected by availability for the focus group component of this study. Students who were selected had experienced three or more test failures and had appeared before an ARB in Fiscal Year 2003. Staff members who were selected had served as ARB members in Fiscal Year 2003.

Before beginning each focus group interview session, the researchers introduced themselves and stated the purpose of the interview and the intent of the research. To ensure anonymity, the researchers stated that the collected data would be presented in terms of general themes and not individual statements. Researchers allotted time for brief introductions by participants in an effort to make all participants feel relaxed and at ease with the interviewing process. Researchers conducted interview



sessions in a private room. No staff members were present during the student focus group interviews, and no administrators were present during the staff focus group interviews. Focus group interviews were recorded on videotape. Students and staff members were interviewed separately.

The interview questions were open-ended to allow interviewees the opportunity to elaborate and openly discuss concerns and experiences related to the academic review process. To facilitate more dialogue and openness, probing questions were used to help interviewees give further details about their experiences. An example of a question and probe:

What are the Strengths and Weaknesses of the academic review process?

- Does the academic review process foster interventions leading to enhanced student learning? (See Appendix A for a complete listing of the interview questions)

The videotape was studied to identify recurring themes and concerns expressed by students and staff members. Insights gained from the interviews were used to develop a survey for distribution to a large sample of students and staff.

### **C. SURVEYS**

A 48-question student survey (Appendix B) and a 30-question staff survey (Appendix C) were developed to measure the factors of the academic review process that have contributed to either IST success or IST attrition. The survey was also designed to gain better insight into student and staff perceptions about the strengths and

weaknesses of the academic review process. The questions were based on information gathered from focus group interviews with students and staff members.

Both questionnaires were divided into five categories: individual characteristics; military information; strengths and weaknesses of the ARP; factors that influence ARB recommendations; and how decisions are made. The Individual Characteristics section consisted of multiple choice and yes/no questions that provided data on student demographics and current school status. The remaining sections consisted of Likert-scaled responses, categorical responses, and open-ended questions to determine the perceived effectiveness and perceptions of the academic review process. The values for the scaled responses ranged from 1 (not at all useful), to 4 (very useful).

There were approximately 1100 students enrolled in Corps School when the survey was administered. Two groups were randomly selected from among these students and administered the survey: 1) 99 students (9 percent of those enrolled) who had not been involved with the ARB process, and 2) 35 students who had been involved with the ARB process. The 35 students represent three percent of those enrolled, and ten percent of those students who have been through an ARB. In addition, 20 staff members (12 percent of the staff) who had been involved in the ARB process were randomly selected and administered the survey. The surveys were administered to students and staff in separate groups. The respondents received a briefing on the purpose of the study.

The survey was administered on site by the researchers. After completion, subjects returned the completed survey to the researchers. No time limit was placed on completing the survey; however, all respondents had to finish the survey before leaving the room. The researchers were available for any questions.

The researchers entered the survey data into QuestionPro, a data intelligence collection, analysis, and report-generation engine. The data were analyzed using statistical analysis features of QuestionPro and Microsoft Excel.

#### **D. SCHOOL DATABASE**

A database that includes information on students involved in the ARB process is maintained at the Naval Hospital Corps School and was analyzed as part of this study. This database contains eight fields of information on 323 students who had experienced an academic review board in Fiscal Year 2003. The database includes information on the students' level of education, age, ASVAB scores, reading levels, number of tests failed, modules failed (e.g., test 2, 6, 10), recommendations of the academic review board (ARB) chain, and the final disposition of the students (e.g., disenrolled or graduated). The database was analyzed to gain better insight into the consensus or lack of consensus when recommending setback or disenrollment of a student. The Microsoft Access database was analyzed through queries and cross-tabulation.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the results of surveys administered to three samples: (1) 99 (Non-ARB) students in varying weeks of training, with the majority in training week eleven or twelve; (2) 35 students who experienced three or more test failures, resulting in their appearance before an Academic Review Board, and (3) 20 staff members who served as ARB members. This study seeks to: (1) define the academic review process and determine how it works, (2) analyze which factors influence the recommendations of the academic review board members, (3) explore the degree of consensus among ARB members when determining setback or disenrollment of a student, and (4) develop a theoretical model to derive the economic costs and benefits of the ARP.

### **B. DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

The demographics are presented by sample groups: (1) Non-ARB student sample, (2) ARB student sample, and (3) staff sample.

#### **1. ARB and Non-ARB Student Demographics**

The Hospital Corps "A" school trains approximately 3,500 students a year; 1100 students were enrolled in A-school when the survey was administered. The 99 Non-ARB students who took the survey represent 9 percent of the enrolled students who had not been involved with the ARB process. The 35 ARB students who took the survey represent three percent of the enrolled students and ten percent of those students who had been through an ARB.

As shown in Table 3, the demographics (age, pay grade, and education level) for the ARB and Non-ARB groups are very similar. The majority of students are in the pay grades E2 and E3 (67 percent and 75 percent, respectively). The preponderance of students are 21 years old or younger (77 percent and 78 percent, respectively). All of the students are high school graduates, and some have additional education (43 percent and 39 percent, respectively).

## **2. Staff Demographics**

The ARB membership includes a Chair, usually the DIVO, ESSO, ISSO or any other officer so designated by the CO. Two other members must have instructional experience and must be senior to the student being reviewed. Of the staff members surveyed, thirteen (68 percent) are instructors, three (16 percent) are executive staff (DIVO, DAD), and four (16 percent) are instructional team members.

When asked about experience as ARB members, 17 staff members responded, of those four (24 percent) have participated in one to three ARBs, four (24 percent) have participated in four to six ARBs, and nine (52 percent) have participated in seven or more ARBs. Of the 17 staff members who responded, the Chiefs (53 percent), and First Class Petty Officer (29 percent) communities have the most experience as ARB members.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Non- ARB N</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>ARB N</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>GENDER</b>				
MALE	69	73	26	74
FEMALE	25	27	9	26
Responses Missing	5		0	
<b>AGE</b>				
< 21	74	79	27	77
22-26	15	16	8	23
27-30	2	2	0	0
31-36	3	3	0	0
Responses Missing	5		0	
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
HSDG	56	61	20	57
SOME COLLEGE	29	32	14	40
AA	3	3		0
BA	4	4	1	3
Responses Missing	7		0	
<b>RACE</b>				
WHITE	33	35	15	43
BLACK	29	31	6	17
HISPANIC	16	17	6	17
ASIAN	9	10	5	14
OTHER	6	6	3	9
Responses Missing	6		0	
<b>PAYGRADE</b>				
E1	23	24	11	32
E2	43	46	14	41
E3	23	30	9	26
Responses Missing	5		1	

Table 3. Demographics at Naval Hospital Corps School, as of JAN 04, for Non-ARB and ARB Students.

### **C. THE ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS**

The academic review process encompasses, but is not limited to, the following: (1) interventions available to students experiencing academic or non-academic problems (e.g., night study and student tutors); (2) communication and feedback mechanisms available to students to voice concerns and problems (e.g., course/instructor evaluations, Captain's Call, staff interactions, and peer-to-peer interactions); and (3) preparation resources (e.g., in-class test guidance from instructors, and staff assistance outside of class time).

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents of both student samples answered that the academic review process was first made known to them during orientation. Similarly, 88 percent of the staff report that this is the procedure. The following section provides an analysis of the data concerning each element of the academic review process using the data gathered from both student groups (Non-ARB and ARB).

#### **1. Interventions**

Interventions primarily help students who are experiencing academic problems; they are also used as a preventive measure by those students who are not yet experiencing problems. The interventions available to students are night study, assistance from a student tutor, test-taking tips from instructors, and assistance from a staff member. The survey asked both student groups (1) how many test failures they had experienced; (2) what interventions they had received after the first or second

test failure; and (3) what counseling they had received after the first or second test failure.

**a. Test Failures**

As shown in Table 4, 65 percent of the Non-ARB students experienced no test failures, whereas 15 percent experienced two or more failures. In comparison, 94 percent of the ARB students experienced two or more test failures.

	No Failures	One Failure	Two Failures	Three Failures	>Three Failures
<b>Non-ARB Group (N=89)</b> 10 Responses missing	65	20	15	0	0
<b>ARB Group (N=32)</b> 3 Responses missing	3	3	12	69	13

Table 4. Percentage of Test Failures by Student Group.

Note: Students who are experiencing academic problems can self-refer and request an appearance before the ARB.

As shown in Table 5, 48 percent of all of the males experienced no test failures, whereas 52 percent experienced 1 or more failures. In comparison, 56 percent of all of the females experienced no test failures, whereas 44 percent experienced 1 or more test failures.

	No Failures	One Failure	Two Failures	Three Failures	>Three Failures
<b>Males (N=92)</b> 7 Responses missing	48	15	17	18	2
<b>Females (N=34)</b> 1 Responses missing	56	18	3	18	5

Table 5. Percentage of Test Failures by Gender.

**b. Interventions Received after Test Failures**

Table 6 shows that, overall, night study and student tutoring were the two most frequently received interventions after experiencing a first or second test failure. Both groups report that help from a staff member



is the least frequently received intervention after a first or second test failure.

After your first test failure, what intervention(s) did you receive? Select all that apply.				
	Night Study	Student Tutoring	Test-Taking Tips	Help from Staff
ARB Group (N=35)	97	86	74	51
Non-ARB Group (N=99)	27	28	20	10
After your second test failure, what intervention(s) did you receive? Select all apply.				
ARB Group (N=35)	86	91	77	49
Non-ARB Group (N=99)	14	14	10	6

Table 6. Percentage of Interventions Received after Test Failures.

Note: Of the 99 Non-ARB students, only 20 percent reported having one test failure and 15 percent reported having two test failures.

***c. Counseling Topics Addressed after Test Failures***

Results presented in Table 7 show that after experiencing a first or second test failure, students from both groups were counseled most often concerning school preparation resources, study techniques, and test-taking tips. In addition, students in the ARB group were often counseled on their interest in being a hospital corpsman.

After your first or second test failure, which of the following were you counseled in? Select all that apply.	Non-ARB Group (N=99)		ARB Group (N=35)	
	N	%	N	%
What you need to know for a test	14	14	12	34
Why what you are learning is important to the rating	9	9	18	51
Other rating options (i.e., rate change)	3	3	5	14
Your interest in being a Hospital Corpsman	15	15	28	80
Stress management techniques	11	11	14	40
Study techniques	24	24	28	80
Test-taking tips	21	21	29	83
School preparation resources	27	27	33	94

Table 7. Percentage Reporting Topics Addressed In Counseling After Test Failures.

## 2. Comparison of Opinions: Interventions

The students were asked to rate the usefulness of each intervention after experiencing a first or second test failure, using a four-point Likert scale:

- 1-Not at all useful
- 2-Somewhat useful
- 3-Useful
- 4-Very Useful

Due to small sample sizes, the ratings were used to create two groups, those that rated the intervention as category 1 or 2 (not at all useful or somewhat useful) and those who rated the intervention as category 3 or 4 (useful or very useful).

Table 8 shows that a majority of the ARB group found night study, student tutoring, and test-taking tips useful or very useful after the first and second test failure. Help from staff is not as useful as the other interventions to the ARB group. The percentages for the Non-ARB group after the first test failure are very close and show that 23–32 percent rated the interventions as useful or very

useful. Note that the lower overall percentages for Non-ARB are because only a small percentage of the sample had experienced test failures.

It is important to note that the percentages of respondents on Table 6 and the percentages on Table 8 are different (e.g., on Table 6, 51 and 49 percent of ARB students received help from a staff member, while Table 8 shows that 66 and 63 percent said help from a staff member was useful). It is likely that this difference can be attributed to students having differing frames of reference related to staff helpfulness (i.e., staff members provide assistance to students during night study; and staff members also provide students with guidance for test preparation).

	Night Study	Student Tutoring	Test-Taking Tips	Help from Staff
<b>First Test Failure</b>				
<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>	91	94	89	66
<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	32	32	29	23
<b>Second Test Failure</b>				
<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>	91	89	86	63
<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	15	14	12	12

Table 8. Percentage Rating Intervention as Useful or Very Useful.

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (Not at all useful or somewhat useful) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.

**a. Strengths and Weaknesses**

To gain a better understanding of what is most helpful to students, ARB and Non-ARB survey respondents were given the opportunity to express their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the interventions made available to them. This section summarizes qualitative data provided by the students. There were numerous comments provided, with two interventions receiving the most comments: student tutoring and night study.

Fourteen of 40 (35 percent) students who responded to the open-ended question expressed satisfaction with the student tutoring program. Some examples of positive comments follow:

With the assignment of a tutor I study a lot more.

Tutors are always there to help you out.

I had one chance left, my tutor explained everything to me, and I passed my test.

Tutors provide ways to improve grades.

Twenty-six of the 40 (65 percent) students who responded to the open-ended question expressed dissatisfaction with the student tutoring program. Most responses were from the perspective of the student being tutored; however, two of the responses out of the 26 responses that were provided were from the perspective of a student tutor. Students are assigned as tutors based on their grade point average and their performance on written and practical tests. Student tutor comments follow:

When someone needs a tutor, they [the school] should use graduate hold students,

not students trying to learn their own material. It causes the tutor to fall behind.

Make being a tutor voluntary. Some students learn better without feeling like they are taking their shipmates' [tutor's] time.

The remaining 24 responses of those students who responded negatively to the open-ended question were from the perspective of the student being tutored. These comments illustrate a perceived dysfunction of the student tutor program:

Tutoring by student, the fact is, a lot of times the tutors don't even show up, but they put on the tutor sheet that they did.

Some tutors help, but most feel that it is a waste of their [tutor's] time.

Student tutoring is a waste of time, I can't learn that way.

No one really feels comfortable studying with another student.

Tutors know as much as me, so they really can't help.

My first test failure I was assigned a tutor and was lectured but nothing was really done.

Thirty of 40 (75 percent) students who provided responses to the open-ended question expressed satisfaction with the night study program. The remaining 10 (25 percent) responses described features of the Learning Resource Center (LRC), the facility where the night study program is held. It could not be determined if those responses were meant to be positive responses or negative responses (i.e.,

"the LRC has ten computers," or "the LRC closes at ten O'clock p.m.>"). Some of the positive comments follow:

In our particular night study everyone participates and makes it really fun.

Night study provides class time and practice without pressure from instructors.

Night study gives me an opportunity to learn practical labs.

Night study helps me to get caught up.

In night study, everyone has the same questions as me, so I am able to get my questions answered.

#### **b. Summary**

The data show that the interventions made available to students after experiencing a first or a second test failure are perceived by most students to be useful or very useful. Night study, student tutoring, and test-taking tips are the most frequently used interventions, and based on the qualitative comments of both groups, night study is useful. Though student tutoring is an intervention that many students use, and most think is useful, there is evidence from the qualitative comments from both students and tutors that there are potential problems in the program. The Non-ARB group's numbers for second test failure interventions are more than 50 percent lower than the first test results, but directly attributed to fewer students in the group with two test failures.

### **3. Feedback and Communication Mechanisms**

Feedback and communication mechanisms are in place to help students relay academic and non-academic concerns to

the chain of command. The primary feedback and communication mechanisms available to students are: (1) the informal communication system, and (2) the school's open-door policy.

The survey asked both student groups (1) what feedback and communication mechanisms are available to them to relay their concerns to their chain of command; and (2) which staff members have made an open-door policy known to them.

**a. *Informal Feedback and Communication Mechanisms***

Table 9 shows that, overall, class discussions with the instructional team and peer-to-peer interactions were perceived as the two most frequently reported mechanisms available; next, almost one-half of the ARB group responded that surveys, course/instructor evaluations, and informal feedback through instructors were available to them to relay academic or non-academic concerns to the chain of command. Finally, both groups responded that Captain's Call was the least frequently available mechanism to relay academic or non-academic concerns to the chain of command.

Which of the following informal feedback and communication mechanisms are available to you to relay your concerns to your chain of command concerning academic or non-academic issues? Select all that apply.	Non-ARB Group (N=99)	ARB Group (N=35)
Class discussions with instructional team	56	63
Peer-to-peer interactions	43	63
Surveys	34	54
Course/instructor evaluations	28	43
Informal feedback through instructors	23	43
Informal feedback through instructional team	18	29
Informal feedback through DIVO	17	29
Captain's Call	7	14
None	7	0

Table 9. Percentage Reporting Informal Feedback and Communication Mechanisms Available to Students.

**b. Open-Door Policy**

Results in Table 10 show that when asked who had explicitly informed students of their open door policy, both student groups (Non-ARB and ARB) responded the instructional team, the instructors, and the chaplain had made these policies known. It is noteworthy that a small percentage of students report that they were made aware of open-door policies from the Executive staff (i.e., SEL, DIVO, DAD, and the XO/CO). Conversely, 18 of 20 (90 percent) staff members (three of whom were executive staff) responded that the school has an open-door policy; only two (10 percent) staff members responded that the school does not have an open-door policy.

For the most part, both student groups are not routinely informed of open-door policies by the Executive staff; however, more of the ARB student group as compared to the Non-ARB student group received counseling on these



policies from the Executive staff. The higher percentages among the ARB student group can possibly be attributed to their appearance before the Academic Review Board.

Which of the following staff members have made an open-door policy known to you?	Non-ARB Group (N=99)	ARB Group (N=35)
Instructional Team	55	60
Instructors	51	80
Chaplain	38	57
Senior Enlisted Leader (SEL)	13	23
Division Officer (DIVO)	13	20
Director of Academics (DAD)	2	17
Deputy Director of Academics	2	6
Department Head	3	9
XO/CO	3	6

Table 10. Percentage Reporting Who Made Them Aware of an Open-Door Policy.

#### 4. Comparison of Opinions: Feedback and Communication

Both student groups and staff members were asked to rate the usefulness of each informal feedback and communication mechanism, using a four-point Likert scale:

- 1-Not at all useful
- 2-Somewhat useful
- 3-Useful
- 4-Very Useful

Due to small sample sizes the ratings were used to create two groups, those who rated the mechanism as category 1 or 2 (*not at all useful or somewhat useful*) and those who rated the intervention as category 3 or 4 (*useful or very useful*).check alignment all the way through

Table 11 shows that a majority of both student groups found class discussions with instructional team members, peer-to-peer interactions, and survey critiques to be useful or very useful mechanisms. Informal feedback through instructors was useful for about half of the ARB group but

fewer of the Non-ARB group (29 percent). Informal feedback through instructional teams and DivO, as well as Captain's Call, was perceived as least useful by both groups. Course/instructor evaluations and surveys were useful or very useful for approximately 60 percent of the ARB group but fewer of the Non-ARB group (36 percent and 42 percent, respectively).

Staff members were asked how they would rate the feedback mechanisms available to students (to relay their concerns to their chain of command). As reported in Table 11, staff members rated all of the feedback and communications mechanisms available to students as useful or very useful.

<b>On a scale of usefulness, rate the feedback and communication mechanisms that you have used to relay your concerns to the chain of command concerning academic or non-academic issues. Select all that apply</b>	<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>	<b>Staff (N=20)</b>
Class discussions with instructional team	51	60	100
Informal feedback through instructors	29	51	90
Peer-to-peer interactions	48	57	90
Course/instructor evaluations	36	63	85
Informal feedback through instructional team members	23	37	90
Informal feedback through DIVO	27	43	90
Surveys	42	60	80
Captain's Call	25	31	85

Table 11. Percentage Rating Mechanism as Useful or Very Useful.

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (Not at all useful or somewhat useful) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.

To gain additional insight into student-staff interaction, the students were then asked to rate the helpfulness of staff members and students were asked to rate the degree of ease they felt in communicating with staff members, using a four-point Likert scale:

**Staff Helpfulness**

- 1-Not at all helpful
- 2-Somewhat helpful
- 3-Helpful
- 4-Very Helpful

**Communicating with Staff**

- 1-Very Difficult
- 2-Somewhat Difficult
- 3-Easy
- 4-Very Easy

Due to small sample sizes the above ratings were used to create two groups, e.g., those who rated staff helpfulness as category 1 or 2 (not at all helpful or somewhat helpful), and those who rated staff helpfulness as category 3 or 4 (helpful or very helpful).

Table 12 shows that a majority of both student groups (Non-ARB and ARB) found the instructional team (70 percent and 89 percent, respectively) and the instructors (64 percent and 69 percent, respectively) to be helpful or very helpful. About one-half of the ARB group reported the chaplain and SEL to be helpful or very helpful.

The findings also show that a smaller percentage of both student groups reported the Executive staff (i.e., DAD, DIVO, SEL, and CO/XO) to be very helpful or helpful. The ARB student group, in comparison to the Non-ARB student group, found the Executive staff slightly more helpful.

On a scale of helpfulness, rate the following staff members.	Non-ARB Group (N=99)	ARB Group (N=35)
Instructors	64	69
Instructional team members	70	89
Chaplain	30	46
Division Officer	31	37
Senior Enlisted Leader	32	49
Director of Academics	24	40
Deputy Director of Academics	21	34
Department Head	22	29
XO/CO	22	34

Table 12. Percentage Rating Staff Members as Helpful or Very Helpful.

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (not at all helpful or somewhat helpful) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.

Table 13 shows that the trend is very different for ease of communication with these staff members. The Non-ARB group found all staff members to be easy or very easy to communicate with. The ARB group, in comparison to the Non-ARB student group, found all staff members to be easy or very easy to communicate with except the DAD, DH, and XO/CO. A substantial majority of the ARB group found the DAD, DH, and XO/CO somewhat or very difficult to communicate with, which is most likely attributed to not liking what they heard or being scared by those higher in the chain of command.

On a scale of ease of communication, rate the following staff members.	Non-ARB Group (N=99)	ARB Group (N=35)
Instructors	82	89
Instructional team members	83	86
Chaplain	70	74
Division Officer	68	66
Senior Enlisted Leader	68	69
Director of Academics	58	63
Deputy Director of Academics	60	11
Department Head	60	11
XO/CO	62	14

Table 13. Percentage Rating Staff Members By Means of Ease of Communication w/ or w/o a period

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (very difficult or somewhat difficult) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.

**a. Strengths and Weaknesses**

The survey did not ask a specific question related to the strengths and weaknesses of the feedback and communication mechanisms available to students; however, a section of the survey asked respondents to provide feedback on what was most helpful. There were numerous comments provided; however, one theme emerged that focuses on positive staff and student interactions. This section summarizes comments provided by the students.

Strength in feedback and communication exists in the interactions between students and staff members at the instructor and instructional team level (i.e., HMC, HM1, and HM2). Eighty-seven students commented on the interactions they have with, and the guidance and reviews they received from, the staff. Twenty-four of these students commented that they found the interactions with instructors and the instructional team to be helpful or very helpful. Some of the positive comments follow:

Instructors want you to do better.

I feel like my instructor understands why I am failing and tries to help me.

After my first test failure I talked to an Instructor. He told me that I could do it.

The staff tries to figure out if you have a disability. They pay attention and try to help you.

Instructors try to help you make it, even when you want to give up.

**b. Summary**

A weakness in feedback and communication is represented by the contradiction between student and staff perceptions of the utility of the feedback and communication mechanisms that are available to students. The staff responses clearly indicate that they perceive all mechanisms to be useful or very useful to the students, while student perceptions of utility are substantially lower for both ARB and Non-ARB groups. The perceived differences evidenced by both groups (students and staff) can potentially serve as a barrier to creating a feedback and communication system that meets the needs of the students. In addition, another potential barrier to an effective feedback and communication system is the lack of ease the ARB group experienced in communicating with some Executive staff members.

**5. Resources**

Resources are available to help students succeed academically. The resources include test preparation

provided by instructors, and staff assistance outside of class hours.

To gain insight into whether the resources are meeting the needs of students, the survey asked both student groups (1) if guidance is provided for test preparation and (2) if there is consistency between what instructors teach and what students are expected to know for a test.

As shown in Table 14, a high percentage of respondents in both groups answered that they were provided guidance for test preparation, and that there is consistency between what instructors teach and what they are expected to know for a test.

<b>Is guidance provided for test preparation?</b>	<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>
Yes	85	86
No	2	3
Responses missing	13	11
<b>Is there consistency between what instructors teach and what you are expected to know for a test?</b>	<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>
Yes	73	83
No	20	17
Responses missing	7	0

Table 14. Percentage Reporting Guidance Provided for Test Preparation and Consistency of Instruction.

**a. Comparison of Opinions**

To get a better estimate of whether the available resources are meeting the needs of the students, the students were asked to rate each resource, using a four-point Likert scale:

**Guidance for Test Preparation**

- 1-Not at all useful
- 2-Somewhat useful
- 3-Useful
- 4-Very Useful

**Assistance Outside of School Hours**

- 1-Not at all satisfied
- 2-Somewhat satisfied
- 3-Satisfied
- 4-Very satisfied

Due to small sample sizes the above ratings were used to create two groups, those who rated guidance provided for test preparation as category 1 or 2 (*not at all useful or somewhat useful*), and those who rated guidance provided for test preparation as category 3 or 4 (*useful or very useful*). The satisfaction data were similarly grouped.

Table 15 shows that over 90 percent of both student groups found that guidance provided for test preparation by staff members is useful or very useful. Table 16 shows that an equal or higher percentage of Non-ARB and ARB students experience satisfaction in their ability to receive staff assistance outside of class hours.

<b>On a scale of usefulness, rate the guidance provided for test preparation</b>	<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>
	93	94
Missing responses	7	6

Table 15. Percentage Rating Test Preparation as Useful or Very Useful

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (not at all useful or somewhat useful) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.

<b>On a scale of satisfaction, rate your ability to receive assistance outside of class hour.</b>	<b>Non-ARB Group (N=99)</b>	<b>ARB Group (N=35)</b>
	94	100
Missing responses	6	0

Table 16. Percentage Rating Assistance Outside of Class Hours as Satisfied or Very Satisfied

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (not at all satisfied or somewhat satisfied) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.



When asked about their ability to provide assistance outside of class hours, 19 staff members responded; one staff member did not provide a response. Of the staff members who provided a response, fifteen (78 percent) responded that sufficient time was available to provide assistance outside of class hours, and four (22 percent) members responded that sufficient time was not available to provide assistance outside of class hours.

Of the four staff members who responded sufficient time was not available to provide assistance outside of class hours, only one comment of explanation was provided. The staff member stated that there was not enough staff to handle the job, and that the majority of staff time was spent dealing with administrative issues.

***b. Strengths and Weaknesses***

To gain a better understanding of what is helpful to students, survey respondents were given the opportunity to express their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses related to the guidance provided to students for test preparation. The survey did not ask respondents an open-ended question concerning the availability of assistance from staff members outside of class hours.

Twenty-one of 35 students (60 percent) who responded expressed satisfaction with the guidance provided for test preparation. Some of the positive comments follow:

It (test preparation) gives me techniques and tips on how I am going to take a test.

It (test preparation) helps to teach me the material that I need to know.

HMC would go out of his way to prepare us for a test. I would not have passed without his help.

It (test preparation) provides many ways to get the information that I missed.

Test preparation helps by serving as a review session. It enables us to go over material that we may have found particularly hard.

It (test preparation) is good because it is another way of putting the information in your head.

During test preparation we go over everything that we need to know for the test; but not too quickly, like in class.

Approximately 14 comments (40 percent) could be interpreted as negative or mixed. The comments seemed to express concern with instructor approaches to facilitating review sessions, and concern with the commitment of instructors to student success. Some illustratives follow:

Instructors provide too much information in very little time.

Instructors sometimes give vague explanations on confusing material. They [instructors] try and rush through the material because they are ready to go home.

It really depends on the instructor providing the review. Some will actually try to teach the lesson. Others will just click the mouse and keep going without really trying to explain during the review.

Depending on the instructors, test review can be useful if the instructor actually teaches instead of talking about experiences.

Depends on the instructor doing the review. I've only met two out of ten that really care about the Sailor, more than they care for themselves.

**c. Summary**

Overall, the findings show both student groups are satisfied with the resources that are available to them. In addition, the majority of staff members and the majority of both student groups are satisfied with the assistance outside of class hours. While the ratings were very positive, some of the qualitative comments highlight areas for possible improvements.

**D. THE ACADEMIC REVIEW BOARD**

The results reported in this section are based on the responses of 35 students who had experienced three or more test failures, resulting in their appearance before an academic review board; and 20 staff who had served as ARB members in FY03. The objective of this section is to explore the ARB process through the perceptions of board members and students who had experiences with the ARB.

**1. The Decision Process**

To gain a better understanding of the factors that may influence the ARB in their decisions, the survey asked respondents:

1. Does the ARB have the right/complete information necessary for making decisions?
2. Which factors are weighed most heavily by the ARB members when making a decision?
3. Which recommendation does the ARB weigh most heavily when making their decision?

**a. Factors that Influence Decisions**

There are numerous factors that have the potential to influence recommendations of retest/retain,

setback, or disenrollment, such as, (1) number of test failures, (2) student practical performance, (3) student motivation, and (4) attrition and retention policies.

When asked if the ARB has the right/complete information necessary to make retest/retain, setback or disenrollment decisions, 19 of 20 staff members (90 percent) responded affirmatively. Conversely, 14 of 35 ARB students (57 percent) responded that the ARB does not have the necessary information. Student comments detailing this issue are presented in the discussion of qualitative data later in the chapter (Section C below). However, nothing in the qualitative data presented elaborates specifically what information the students think is missing. Further clarification about this is not available and may merit additional inquiry.

For a more accurate assessment of which factors ARB members and students think are important in the decision making process, both groups were asked to rate factors in terms of how much weight each factor is given by the ARB in determining whether to recommend setback or disenrollment of a student, using a four-point Likert scale:

- 1-Not at all considered
- 2-Somewhat considered
- 3-Considered
- 4-Very Important to the decision

Due to small sample sizes the above ratings were used to create two groups, those who rated factors considered by the ARB as category 1 or 2 (not at all considered or somewhat considered), and those who rated

factors considered by the ARB as category 3 or 4 (considered or very important to the decision).

As shown in Table 17, all the percentages are high, and differences may not be meaningful due to the small numbers of respondents. Board member and student responses show that all the factors included in the survey are perceived to be given significant consideration when making a determination to retest/retain, setback or disenroll a student.

<b>Rate each factor in terms of how much you think each is considered by the ARB in the decision to retest/retain, setback, or disenrollment of a student</b>	<b>Staff (N=20)</b>	<b>ARB Student Group (N=35)</b>
Student Motivation	100	100
Information provided by team leader	100	94
Documentation of Night Study	100	94
Class participation	95	91
Information provided by tutor	100	91
Ability to produce class notes	100	86
Test Scores	95	89
Number of tests failed	100	91
Practical Performance	85	91

Table 17. Percentage Rating Factors as Considered or Very Important to the Decision.

Note: By inference, the percent in the other category (not at all considered or somewhat considered) can be calculated by subtracting the percentages reported here from 100.

The survey asked board members the following questions: (1) Whose recommendation does the board weigh more heavily? (2) Whose recommendation does the CO weigh more heavily? (3) Does retention or attrition influence recommendation to setback or disenroll?

Twenty-five percent of board members did not answer the first two questions in Table 18. Table 18 shows that when making a determination to retest/retain, to setback, or to disenroll a student, 40 percent of the ARB

members weigh the recommendation of the instructor more heavily than the others. The members were also asked about the Commanding Officer's decision-making process. Thirty-five percent of the ARB members responded that the Commanding Officer gives the most weight to the recommendation of the ARB; however, 30 percent felt more weight was given to the recommendations of the Executive Officer. Only 10 percent felt the recommendation of the Director of Academics was weighed most heavily. The percentage differences may not be meaningful due to the small numbers of respondents. In response to whether attrition and retention influence their recommendation, ARB members responded 80 percent to 15 percent that these factors have no influence on their decision.

<b>Whose recommendation does the board weigh more heavily?</b>	<b>Frequency (N=20)</b>
Team Leaders	20
Instructors	40
Division Officer	15
Responses missing	25
<b>Whose recommendation does the CO weigh more heavily?</b>	
ARB	35
DAD	10
XO	30
Responses missing	25
<b>Do attrition and retention influence your recommendation?</b>	
Yes	15
No	80
Response missing	5

Table 18. Percentage of Board Members Reporting Factors that Influence Recommendations.

***b. Comparison of Opinions***

To gain better insight into student and staff perceptions of board representation, the effectiveness of the rebuttal process, and the overall fairness of the ARB, students and staff members were asked (1) if they see the ARB decision process as fair; (2) if students were told of their option to submit a rebuttal; and (3) if team leaders and class leaders should accompany students to the ARB.

Nineteen of 35 students (54 percent) and 18 of 20 ARB members (90 percent) expressed a belief that the ARB decision process is fair. Student comments detailing how the perceived fairness or unfairness of the ARB affects their motivation are presented in the discussion of qualitative data later in the chapter (Section C below), however nothing in the qualitative data presented elaborates specifically how the ARB decision process is seen as unfair. Further clarification about this is not available and might merit some follow-up inquiry. A follow-up question was asked of the ARB members about how students perceive the ARB. Respondents were asked to answer based on a usefulness scale, with 1 indicating not at all useful, 2 indicating somewhat useful, 3 indicating useful, and 4 indicating very useful. Eighty-five percent (17 of 20 ARB members) of the respondents expressed a belief that the students see the ARB process as somewhat useful or not at all useful.

A follow-up question was also presented to the students. They were asked to select as many responses as applicable (shown below) regarding their ARB experiences. As shown in Table 19, almost all report their ARB

experience as having both positive and negative aspects. For example, 100 percent describe the experience as providing positive reinforcement as well as a negative environment (harsh, critical, likely to fail). The data show that regardless of the experience, assistance was ultimately offered.

Indicate which of the following you have experienced regarding an ARB. Select all that apply	ARB Student Group (N=20)
Positive reinforcement (conveyed faith in you)	100
Threats/intimidation	85
Positive environment (encouraging)	90
Negative environment (harsh, critical, likely to fail)	100
Offer of assistance	100
ARB refused assistance	40

Table 19. Percentage Reporting ARB Experiences.

The ARB students and staff were asked about the student rebuttal option and the ARB membership. The questions asked if students were informed of their option to submit a rebuttal, if they used the option, and if it was useful. They were also asked if they thought class advisors and team leaders should accompany students to the board or sit on the board as a representative. As shown in Table 20, 100 percent of ARB members responded that students were made aware of their option to submit a rebuttal. However, only 46 percent of the students responded that they were told of the option. Of those who knew of the option, 88 percent used it and 75 percent expressed that it was useful.

Also shown in Table 20, ARB members and students were not in agreement regarding the ARB composition. About



half the students and staff support Class Advisors accompanying students to the ARB. Students responded similarly to Team Leaders accompanying students to the board; however, only 15 percent of the staff supports Team Leaders accompanying students. ARB students overwhelmingly support having Class Advisors or Team Leaders as ARB representatives (100 and 94 percent, respectively). The staff is against this (70 and 95 percent, respectively), probably in consideration of time constraints for classroom instruction.

<b>Are students told of their option to submit a rebuttal?</b>	<b>Staff (N=20)</b>	<b>ARB Students (N=35)</b>
Yes	100	46
No	0	54
Responses missing	0	0
<b>Did you use the rebuttal option?</b>		<b>(N=16)</b>
Yes		88
No		12
<b>Was the rebuttal option Useful?</b>		<b>(N=16)</b>
Yes		75
No		13
Responses missing		12
<b>Do you feel Class Advisors should accompany students to the board?</b>	<b>(N=20)</b>	<b>(N=35)</b>
Yes	45	49
No	50	51
Responses missing	5	0
<b>Do you feel Team Leaders should accompany student to the board?</b>	<b>(N=20)</b>	<b>(N=35)</b>
Yes	15	46
No	70	46
Responses missing	15	8
<b>Do you feel Class Advisors should be a representative on the board?</b>	<b>(N=20)</b>	<b>(N=35)</b>
Yes	25	100
No	70	0
Responses missing	5	0
<b>Do you feel Team Leaders should be a representative on the board?</b>	<b>(N=20)</b>	<b>(N=35)</b>
Yes	5	94
No	95	6
Responses missing	0	0

Table 20. Percentage Reporting on Student Rebuttal Option and Student ARB Representation.

**c. Strengths and Weaknesses**

To better understand what is really helping students, respondents were given the opportunity to express their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the Academic Review Board.

Students were asked if the ARB had the correct or complete information to make decisions about setback or disenrollment recommendations. Of the 35 responses to this question, four (11 percent) were positive and 31 (89 percent) were negative responses. Some positive comments follow:

Nothing is wrong with the ARB.

Nothing, it is good the way it is.

The ARB is accurate enough; I would not change a thing.

Start ARB process at the first test failure. The knowledge you receive is great.

There were 31 negative comments. The following selections represent the majority of these opinions:

It would be more regulated by point criteria. It would eliminate the unfairness that students feel towards it [ARB].

The counselor or chaplain should be there as well, because they make you feel worthless. Having a chaplain there might control some of that.

They should talk to you more like a person. No one should be talked to the way that I was that day.

I would try to lessen the negative impact of it [ARB]. First the waiting at parade rest made me feel like I was in trouble—was going to get yelled at or belittled. The one who failed you should not be on the board.

Just be fair all around, not just sometimes.

ARB students were asked to explain why they felt the rebuttal option was or was not useful. Of 34 responses (one ARB student did not provide comments), 19 students (54 percent) expressed that the rebuttal option was not useful because they did not know about it. Of the 14 students who used the option, 12 (86 percent) provided positive comments. The remaining two students (14 percent) did not provide comments.

Below are positive comments that best represent the majority of comments:line spacing - 1.5"

It was useful. I was kept here [in school].

The CO was the only one to help me after the ARB.

It was useful. It gave me a chance to prove myself.

It [rebuttal option] brought me where I am today.

The CO heard my side of the story.

Yes it is useful. I am still in school.

I was able to tell the CO exactly why he should let me stay. It helped me pinpoint the reasons, motivating factors for being in the Navy.

Yes it was useful. I'm still here.

It helps to show how much you really want to be here and why you think you should be here. It is your last chance to make your case

Students were asked how the perceived fairness or unfairness of the ARB affects their motivation. There were 35 responses to this question, four (11 percent) positive responses and 31 (89 percent) negative responses. Positive comments follow:

It makes you strive to do better to achieve your goals.

It makes me more motivated to achieve my goals.

The fairness affects my motivation by making me strive to work harder

It makes you want to prove to others that you can do it.

Below are examples of comments that best represent the majority of the negative comments:

They make false decisions without knowing anything about you or your type of background.

I felt pushed around by the rank and uncomfortable with them [ARB]. I have only found motivation to further proceed in school by being told, "The fleet is for me." Tell me that I can't do something.

No one learns the same way. The ARB bases your outcome with the same rules and regulations as everyone else, and it makes you feel like a number, not a student.

Before the student comes before the board, they already have their answer.

After the ARB they scared me to the point where I would vomit and lose sleep. The approach they took was way too hostile.

I felt as if my voice was not heard. My thought at the end was that I believed the decision was made before I walked in the door. I wasted my breath.

It affects my motivation a lot. My friend got disenrolled [be]cause his advisors didn't like him. He was a good person and would have made a great HM. I failed the same amount of tests and I got to stay. I don't think the ARB is fair to all people.

Fairness is setting you back and giving you another chance. Unfairness is getting to test number 14 and not getting a second chance.

#### ***d. Summary***

The results indicate agreement amongst the ARB members and students concerning what factors are considered in the ARB decision process. However, the rebuttal system is a major concern. Of the 35 students who appeared before the ARB, over 50 percent indicated that they had no knowledge of their option to submit a rebuttal. Of those who knew of the option, 86 percent found it helpful. This helpfulness is further illustrated in the student comments. The 50 percent who did not know of their option to submit a rebuttal may have benefited from a better understanding of their rights. The next section will address the ARB cases for FY 03.

## **2. Disposition of ARB Cases FY 03**

In Fiscal Year 2003, 2,169 students accessed into Corps school. Of those, 324 students (15 percent) appeared before the ARB as a result of three or more test failures.

This section analyzes the recommended action for final disposition of those 324 students. The ultimate decision is made by the CO, who receives recommendations from the instructional team, DIVO, ARB, DAD, and the XO. The objectives of this section are to analyze the degree of consensus between the recommendations of setback or disenrollment and the CO's final disposition, as well as attempt to determine which level in the decision-making process is most accurate at predicting student success.

**a. Demographics**

Of the 324 students appearing before the ARB, 230 (71 percent) were males and 94(29 percent) were females. As shown in Table 21, the ASVAB scores for the majority of students ranged from 119 to 190, which are all AFQT Category I-III A or below. Sixty-one (19 percent) of these students were previously enrolled in PLATO, a computer-based and e-learning instruction for adult learners offering curricula in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and life and job skills. Of the 61 students who were enrolled in PLATO, 14 (23 percent) successfully completed Corps school; however, the remaining 47 (77 percent) students were subsequently disenrolled.

Of the students who appeared before the ARB, 116 students (36 percent) successfully completed Corps school; 171 students (53 percent) were subsequently disenrolled. At the time of this study, 37 students (11 percent) were in week 9 of their training and their final disposition is unknown.

	ASVAB RANGES						
	119-139	140-149	150-159	160-169	170-179	180-189	190
Number of ARB students that graduated by ASVAB Range N=116	17	26	52	17	3	1	0
Number of ARB Students in ASVAB Range N=324	43	80	136	47	14	3	1
PLATO N=61	14 (23 percent) Graduated ASVAB Range: 132-155  47(77 percent) Disenrolled ASVAB Range: 124-166						

Table 21. Fiscal Year 2003: ARB Education Demographics.

***b. The Academic Review Board: The Decision Process***

The first step in the decision process begins with the recommendation of the student's chain of command, which are forwarded to the ARB. The student's instructional team makes a recommendation to the CO via the ARB, Director of Academics, and the Executive Officer. The ARB interviews the student and makes a recommendation to the Commanding Officer via the DAD and XO. After reviewing all of the recommendations, the Commanding Officer makes the final determination. The next sections look at the degree of consensus between some the chain of command and the CO recommendations regarding setback and disenrollment.

***c. Consensus of Recommendations: Setback***

Table 22 illustrates the high degree of consensus between the recommendations of setback and the CO's final determination. For example, at the Team level 211 students

received recommendations of setback; of those, the Commanding Officer concurred with the recommendations of the Team 201 times, resulting in a 95 percent consensus. Because of this high consensus, the completion percentages of setback students are almost the same for the team and the CO, as shown in the table. Overall, slightly more than 50 percent of setback students were ultimately graduated. It is important to increase the percentage of students that complete training; this will be addressed later in the cost analysis section of this chapter.

Team (N=211)	<b>CO's Decision</b>	<b>Percentage of Consensus</b>	<b>Team Completion Percentage</b>	<b>CO's Completion Percentage</b>
		(N=201/211)	(N=107/211)	(N=107/201)
	Setback (201) Retain (0) Disenroll(10)	95	51	53
ARB (N=189)	<b>CO's Decision</b>	<b>Percent of Consensus</b>	<b>ARB Completion Percentage</b>	<b>CO's Completion Percentage</b>
		(N=182/189)	(N=101/189)	(N=101/182)
	Setback (182) Retain (1) Disenroll(6)	96	53	56
DAD (N=223)	<b>CO's Decision</b>	<b>Percentage of Consensus</b>	<b>DAD Completion Percentage</b>	<b>CO's Completion Percentage</b>
		(N=208/223)	(N=111/223)	(N=111/208)
	Setback (208) Retain (0) Disenroll(15)	93	50	53

Table 22. Recommendation Consensus: Setback.

***d. Consensus of Recommendations: Disenrollment***

Table 23 illustrates the degree of consensus between the recommendations of disenrollment and the CO's final determination. The degree of consensus in recommendations of disenrollment is lower, as compared to setback recommendations. For example, as shown in Table 23, at the ARB level 133 students received a recommendation of disenrollment; of those, the Commanding Officer concurred



with their recommendations of disenrollment 88 times, resulting in a 66 percent consensus.

Table 23 also illustrates the degree of error in the recommendation process, as evidenced by the following: (1) 13 of 45, 7 of 26, and 3 of 19 students received recommendations of disenrollment (at the ARB, Team, and DAD levels, respectively) and ultimately graduated. The students from each of these subsections may not be different; they may all be subsets of the ARB 13 that graduated. The CO did not concur with the disenrollment recommendations; the students were given a second chance. Likewise, (2) there are 32 of 45, 19 of 26, and 16 of 19 students that received recommendations of disenrollment (from the ARB, Team, and DAD, respectively) but the CO did not agree and ultimately setback these students. Some of these students may be the same for each group; they were setback but did not successfully complete Corps school.

Examining the data provided in Table 23, it appears that the Director of Academics was the most accurate at predicting potential training failures. Of the 98 students recommended for disenrollment by DAD, only three students subsequently completed the training program.

In order to reach a fair assessment as to which level in the decision-making process is most accurate at predicting student success, it would be necessary to know what decision factors or criteria were used to help reach the decision by each recommending group/individual.

Assuming that the objective is to provide every qualified Sailor the opportunity to reach their full potential by providing a second chance, the results

regarding setback recommendations show that there is a high level of consensus towards this objective amongst the decision makers.

However, assuming the objective is to identify Sailors early in the training program deemed as not having the potential to be a quality HM, the results show that the ARB has the highest disenrollment recommendation rate (133), followed by the Team level with 110 disenrollment recommendations.

Team (N=110)	<b>CO's Decision</b>	<b>Percentage of Consensus</b>	<b>Completion Percentage of those who would have been disenrolled by ARB</b>	<b>CO's completion Percentage</b>
		(N=84/110)	(N=7/110)	(N=7/26)
	Setback (26) Retain (0) Disenroll(84)	76	6	27
ARB (N=133)	<b>CO's Decision</b>	<b>Percentage of Consensus</b>	<b>Completion Percentage of those who would have been disenrolled by Team</b>	<b>CO's completion Percentage</b>
		(N=88/133)	(N=13/133)	(N=13/45)
	Setback (45) Retain (0) Disenroll(88)	66	10	29
DAD (N=98)	<b>CO's Decision</b>	<b>Percentage of Consensus</b>	<b>Completion Percentage of those who would have been disenrolled by DAD</b>	<b>CO's completion Percentage</b>
		(N=79/98)	(N=3/98)	(N=3/19)
	Setback (19)) Retain (0) Disenroll(79)	81	3	16

Table 23. Recommendation Consensus: Disenrollment.

**e. Strengths and Weaknesses**

To gain a better understanding of the decision process, staff was given the opportunity to express their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the ARB process. They were asked, if one component of the process could be improved, what would it be and why. Seven of 20

(35 percent) staff members responded to the open-ended question. The comments follow:

The implementation of standardized questions so the process is more consistent

Look at the entire Sailor, not just at his/her academics.

Have students appear in person at all levels after the ARB, (i.e., student will see SEL, DAD, XO, & CO). They will get the opportunity to see what the board sees.

ARB could be better utilized earlier on maybe after the 2<sup>nd</sup> test failure. Have upper COC talk with member, show concern, and give guidance before sent to board to make a decision.

Time-ARB packages take too long to go through chain of command. Too many hands in the pot. Sometimes it [ARB packages] sits on a desk for 24 hours.

Forget numbers and give those students who have demonstrated their desire to become a Corpsman a fair chance. There are students here who have demonstrated no/little desire to becoming a HM and they get a second chance just to fail a fourth test.

Not let attrition rates dictate how many [students] stay or go.

Two follow-up questions were asked concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the decision making process. Staff members were asked: whose decision does the CO weigh more heavily and why, and how does this affect your motivation to be a board member? Eleven of 20 (55 percent) staff members responded to the open-ended question. There

was a mixture of responses, negative (46 percent), positive (27 percent) and neutral (27 percent). Some negative comments follow:

Not sure, because a lot of packages have had disenroll on them up to that level, once there [Headquarters] the recommendation changes.

The Navy [influences recommendations] because they are pushing the numbers.

None [factors CO weighs]. The recommendation is futile; the COC will give the student another chance to perform poorly.

CO accepting recommendations at face value and disenrolling poor performers instead of giving them more chances.

I think that the CO should not think of retention and money when making his decision. We are training personnel to take care of human lives. I think that we need more quality and not quantity. This is not a factory line.

Positive comments follow:

None [factors CO weighs] he looks at all the material and input and makes all decisions based on what is best for the Navy and the student.

I feel the CO knows the process.

I think the process is good. In my opinion, the recommendation of the board should weigh more heavily than that of the DAD or XO because they do a lot of face-to-face interviews of the student, see the student's material and can make the best decision. I realize that the DAD or XO do not have the time to sit on these boards and the intimidation factor for the student to great for them to do a face-to-face.

***f. Summary***

There appear to be competing objectives in the decision-making process. It seems the objective of the ARB is to identify Sailors early in the program deemed as not having the potential to be a successful HM, as evidenced by the high number of disenrollment recommendations (133) and qualitative comments provided by staff members. Conversely, it seems that the objective of the CO is to provide students every opportunity to successfully complete the training, as evidenced by the high number of non-concur of disenrollment recommendations (90), and the subsequent setback of students. Based on qualitative comments, it would appear staff members do not understand the determination process of the Commanding Officer, and apparently staff members are not provided feedback concerning the decisions that are made.

Staff comments provide evidence that standardized procedures and questions would be beneficial to the effectiveness of the process and helpful in promoting a perception of fairness among the students and staff. In addition, the ARP would be improved by implementation of the ARB prior to the third test failure.

**E. COST ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK**

A secondary objective of this thesis is to determine the economic costs and benefits of the ARP. Two questions must be answered to determine the cost-effectiveness of this process. First, the cost of operating the process must be determined. The second question must determine the costs of the effects of the process. This is answered by computing the costs of setbacks and disenrollments. The

necessary data to perform the calculations were unavailable at the time of this study, therefore, the following framework is provided as guidance for future researchers. The last cost that will be examined is how errors based on the CO's decision increases the cost of student throughput.

### **1. The Real Versus the Ideal**

In an ideal world, every student would complete Hospital Corps School in the minimum allotted time (course length). No student would be setback or disenrolled. Thus, in the ideal, the number of students required by the fleet would equal the number of students initially enrolled in the school, and each student would be enrolled precisely for the course length (ignoring travel time between the school and the gaining command) prior to the time they are needed in the fleet. This could be expressed as:

$$\text{Input}_i = \text{Output}_i$$

The ideal ( $i$ ) input equals the required or ideal output in quantity, and

$$\text{Input}_{it} = \text{Output}_{it} - \text{course length}$$

The ideal input time ( $it$ ) is the course length prior to the required or ideal output time.

However, this is not an ideal world. There will be students who do not complete the program for various reasons (e.g., disenrollment, discharge from the service, and death) and there are some students who will be delayed in their completion of the program (e.g., setbacks). Thus, the reality is such that either (1) the ideal output will not be achieved in quantity and timing, or (2) the inputs need to be adjusted to account for the quantity and timing

of outputs to meet the fleet requirement. The first situation could be expressed as:

$$\text{Output}_i < \text{Output}_r \quad \text{and} \quad \text{Output}_{it} > \text{Output}_{rt}$$

The ideal output quantity is less than the real ( $r$ ) output quantity and the required timing ( $rt$ ) of the receipt of those students in the fleet is not met (students arrive late). If this were to occur, the fleet requirement for capable Hospital Corpsmen would not be met and the cost of not having a capable Corpsman would be borne by the fleet.

The second situation could be expressed as:

$$\text{Input}_r > \text{Output}_i \quad \text{and} \quad \text{Input}_{rt} > \text{Output}_{it} - \text{course length}$$

More students need to be enrolled in school to ensure the required quantity of graduates is available to reach the fleet at their required time. This will require students to be enrolled in school sooner than the minimum time required to complete the course prior to their required arrival in the fleet. This requires that the Hospital Corps School bear the cost of process delays and process attrition to ensure the fleet requirement is fulfilled.

The purpose of the ARP is two-fold: 1) it ensures that only qualified Corpsmen reach the fleet (a gatekeeper function), and 2) it provides every Sailor the opportunity to reach his or her potential (a remedial function). The ARP is designed to minimize the difference between the real and ideal quantity of Corpsmen that reach the fleet ( $\text{Output}_r$  and  $\text{Output}_i$ ) and the timing of their arrival in the fleet ( $\text{Output}_{rt}$  and  $\text{Output}_{it}$ ). The gatekeeper effect, by the

nature of tighter controls, perpetuates  $Output_r < Output_i$  and  $Output_{rt} > Output_{it}$  unless input is increased. In that latter function, the remedial function requires more time, but it does allow a method to increase  $Output_r$ , promoting a greater likelihood that it will shrink the gap between  $Output_r$  and  $Output_i$ . To understand the cost-effectiveness of the ARP, one needs to examine the costs of managing these differences in input and output and quantity and timing.

Unfortunately, there is no control group without an ARP as a basis for comparison. It cannot be said that ARP reduces attrition since it is not known what attrition would occur if the ARP didn't exist. Thus, it cannot be said that the existing ARP process produces savings of a specific amount. The analysis in this study can only establish a baseline of the costs to administer the ARP versus the cost of quantity and timing differences from the ideal. From an understanding of those costs, the school can then consider the economics of changes to the ARP: if the school spends more on a change to the process that results in less difference between the real and ideal, the cost of which can be computed to be more than before, was that change economical? This study will now address the formulation of those costs.

## **2. Variable Indirect Cost**

In his 2001 study, Dr. Henry L. Eskew determined the cost of a Sailor is, "the money that would be saved by removing the Sailor—and his or her requisite support—from the force structure" (Eskew, 2001). Dr. Eskew's study acknowledges the difficulties with properly identifying and



measuring costs that vary with the number of students in training.

Using Dr. Eskew's study as a guide, his concepts are applied to this thesis. The thesis area of interest is how annual training costs are affected by the decisions (setback or disenroll) of the ARP. Another way to state this is to look at training cost as a function of the number of students in the school and the cost of those who have been disenrolled. In this study, the number of students that pass through the school per year is determined by the number of HMs needed in the fleet and the time it takes to get them there. As the time to train increases and decreases, so will the number of people in training, which directly correlates to the costs of training. These are the indirect variable costs that are very difficult to estimate and would require advanced modeling techniques to find.

Attrition rates determine the cost (more or less) of conducting training for a particular school, as well as the course length. Based on the variable costing model, variable cost per student should be used to compute changes. These costs do not affect the fixed costs of the school.

### **3. Understanding the Nature of Cost**

When building the model, the cost of the ARP ( $ARP_c$ ) is a function ( $f$ ) of numerous factors used to describe the output variable. These functions are changed to numerical attributes in a linear equation. This is accomplished by changing the function with the value wherever it appears in

the equation. The first output function describes the cost of the ARP.

The functions can be stated as:

$$ARP_c = f (ST_t, A_t, B_t, SM_c, UNA_c)$$

$ARP_c$  is a function of the time instructors are away from teaching ( $ST_t$ ), the administrative time of support staff members to prepare files ( $A_t$ ), the time it takes to sit the board ( $B_t$ ), and the cost on student motivation ( $SM_c$ ). Because behavior changes affect organizations,  $SM_c$  is very important in the effectiveness of the organization. The last function of the  $ARP_c$  is the user needs assessment costs ( $UNA_c$ ). The assessment costs are the CO's time and any support time provided by outside agencies (e.g., BUPERS, Medical, Family Services, etc.). These costs are based on the assessment services rendered while determining which students are able to complete training and which students are unable to complete training. The costs associated with the ARP are primarily opportunity costs and have very little to no real dollar cost.

The second cost model considers the cost of less than ideal throughput. Costs which are related to both quantity and timing of students can be explained as:

$$O_i = f (I_r, I_{rt}, C_r, C_{rt}, C_a, C_{at}, O_r, O_{rt})$$

Achieving the ideal output ( $O_i$ ) is a function of both time and quantity due to the affects of the process. Those are, the cost of bringing in more than the ideal number of students ( $I_r$ ); cost of bringing students in earlier ( $I_{rt}$ ); cost of lost work for rollbacks ( $C_r$ ); cost of time lost for rollbacks ( $C_{rt}$ ); cost of lost work from attrition ( $C_a$ ); cost

of time lost from attrition ( $C_{at}$ ); cost of failing to produce enough outputs ( $O_r$ ); and the cost of failing to produce the outputs on time ( $O_{rt}$ ).

Identification of programs or interventions that decrease  $ARP_c$  may help to increase the effectiveness of the ARP. This can be accomplished by implementing programs that help to increase student motivation, and through the utilization of models that better determine student ability.

The very nature of the ARP has a negative impact on  $O_i$ , but its functions can create incremental benefits to the output. The economic goal is to balance costs, not to strive for input ideal ( $I_i$ ) to equal throughput ideal ( $O_i$ ). At its most economically efficient point, the marginal cost of the ARP should equal the marginal cost of the throughput model. That is, the next dollar spent on the ARP should provide a dollar benefit in improvement to the throughput model. If the dollar spent provides less than a dollar benefit, the school is spending too much on the ARP. If the next dollar spent on the ARP yields more than a dollar benefit, the school should expand the ARP until they reach equilibrium.

#### **4. Disenrollment Recommendation**

The cost discussion alone is aggravated by the cost of errors in the disenrollment decision process. If the ARB, Team, or DAD recommends the student to be disenrolled, the CO may agree or disagree. If the CO agrees and disenrolls the student, it's possible the student may have been able to succeed. In this case the command incurs the cost of

disenrollment when the lower cost of setback would have been more appropriate.

Likewise, the command continues to incur costs associated with training the student (except with an erroneous disenrollment), and until the effective disenrollment date it incurs the cost of setback and disenrollment. The command also incurs additional costs associated with training a replacement to fill the billet. The disenrollment of students who are capable of completing the training program is a realized sunk cost to the command that might not be recognized.

When considering the disenrollment recommendations, the CO, as the ultimate deciding authority, must decide whether the student will complete the training. The CO commits a Type I error when he sets back a student who ultimately fails. Using Table 23, an example of this would be the 32 of 45 students recommended for disenrollment by the ARB but setback by the CO. These 32 eventually failed out of training. A Type II error occurs when the CO disenrolls a student that would have completed the training. Using the same ARB category in Table 23, this is the number of students that would have completed the training from the 88 that both the ARB and the CO agreed to be disenrolled. There is no way to determine how often this error is committed because the number of students that would have completed the training can not be ascertained.

One hint at the number of Type II errors is available by looking at the ARB. The ARB committed a Type II error at least 13 times out of 133 times; these students had been recommended for disenrollment but were setback by the CO

and ultimately graduated. This is clearly an underestimate because there may have been other disenrollees who could have succeeded among the 88 the CO agreed to disenroll.

From the cost formula perspective, the miscalculation based on the CO's decision increases the cost of student throughput:  $O_i = f(I_r, I_{rt}, C_r, C_{rt}, C_a, C_{at}, O_r, O_{rt})$ . Under a Type I error, setback students who ultimately fail, the following variables increase:  $C_r, C_{rt}, C_a, C_{at}, O_r, O_{rt}$ . A Type II error, disenrolled students who would have completed training, causes the following variables to increase:  $I_r, I_{rt}, C_a, C_{at}, O_r, O_{rt}$ . The goal of the command would be to decrease costs by finding ways to lessen the occurrence of these errors.

## **5. Conclusion**

To determine the efficiency of the process, the model should focus on the school's training throughput cost and the cost of the ARP. To improve efficiency, the school will need to achieve better results with the same costs or by lowering costs. The study anticipates the existence of a linear relationship between the two outputs. Also, a student's motivation and morale are hard variables to quantify, but they need to be acknowledged in the analysis of cost-effectiveness. In addition, future research should consider a follow-up study of all students who experienced the ARP to see if they completed their contracted length of service.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This thesis analyzed the Academic Review Process at the Hospital Corps "A" School, specifically focusing on its effectiveness and the criteria of the Academic Review Board. This was accomplished by analyzing a data spreadsheet of students who went through the ARP in 2003 and a survey randomly administered to a general student sample in January 2004. The study identified and analyzed the perceptions of students, instructor staff, and headquarters staff in the evaluation of the processes. The data set was analyzed by cross-referencing the recommendation and final disposition results of those students who entered the ARP. Finally, a cost framework was developed for the "A" School command and future researchers to help determine the effectiveness of the process.

### **A. CONCLUSIONS**

The ARP is working well but like any other process, there are areas that can be improved upon. Four broad areas have been identified to explain how well the ARP is working and to show where improvements can be made. The first area details communication issues the command has with regards to the academic review process. The next area looks at the differing perceptions between the two student groups and the staff. The third area deals with how the three groups view the ARB. The final area explains the effectiveness of the ARP. The conclusions drawn from the results follow:

## 1. Communication Issues

There is a slight difference in the perception of the effectiveness of communication between students and the ARP chain of command. All students have issues with the channels of communication up the chain of command and Non-ARB students have problems with the feedback mechanisms available to them. Specific conclusions include:

- Many students didn't feel comfortable communicating with the Headquarters chain of command. This may be because the students have not been explicitly informed that an open door policy exists at that level. (p.38) As set forth by guidelines in the Navy School Management Manual (NAVEDTRA 135A, 2000), which outlines counseling procedures to be in place at training commands for student pipeline management, it is important for students to know that communication channels are established, maintained, and available.
- Students in the non-ARB group report that only two of the eight communication mechanisms are useful or very useful (class discussions with instructional team and peer-to-peer interactions). There is no material noted in the literature review that relates to what effect feedback and communication have on academic disenrollment. However, understanding the importance of communication and feedback in any command, and finding appropriate mechanisms to meet the needs of the command are important.

## **2. Differing Perceptions**

There are differing perceptions between the Non-ARB students, ARB students and staff regarding the ARP.

Specific conclusions include:

- The staff believes that all of the feedback and communication mechanisms are useful or very useful (class discussions with instructional team, informal feedback through instructors, peer-to-peer interactions, course/instructor evaluations, informal feedback through instructional team members, informal feedback through DIVO, surveys, and Captain's Call). As reported in the communication section above (2.b.), students in the non-ARB group had a different perception. Students in the ARB group agreed with the non-ARB group but also report that an additional three mechanisms are useful or very useful (informal feedback through instructors, course/instructor evaluations, and surveys). (p.39) The differences between the student groups can probably be attributed to ARB students having more staff interactions due to the academic review process.

The differences between the student groups and the staff are not surprising. For the staff members, experience when dealing with these mechanisms and the military maturity level of the respondents can be used to explain the differences. This statement does not suggest that staff members' perceptions are totally correct, but that the



results most likely involve an advance understanding of the different mechanisms.

- There are differences between staff and students in the perceived fairness of the ARB decision process. (p.52) Reflected in the negative qualitative comments, the implications of this perception to morale and motivation demonstrated a sense of intimidation and unfairness from the ARB process. A 2001 CNA study (Moore & Reese, 2001) looks at attrition rates and identifies some predictors of initial skills training completion. The study found that students' perceptions of rating, education, waivers, delayed entry program, and rating assignment, as well as school management, were factors in explaining attrition. Standing before the ARB is not a pleasant experience, but it helps to provide motivation or to identify those students with the desire and ability to continue training. Because of the small number of students surveyed in this study, the findings do not conclusively predict training completion, but do suggest a possible relationship between school management and "A" school completion.
- There is a lack of agreement among staff regarding which recommendations carry the most weight in the CO's decision to retest/retain, setback, or disenroll. (p. 51) Clear goals and objectives of the different entities in the ARP are not established.
- There are differences between staff and students with regards to the participation of Class Advisors

and Team Leaders as representatives on the ARB (e.g., ARB students generally prefer this option, while the staff does not). (p.54) There are not enough data to draw specific conclusions about this, but it should be addressed in further research.

- There are differences between ARB and Non-ARB students in what topics are addressed during counseling after test failures, and in the interventions used, and the usefulness of those interventions. (Tables 6, 7 & 8) Although these differences are probably attributable to a much smaller percentage of Non-ARB students with one or more test failures, they are still noted. The results may indicate that students take matters seriously only during the part of the ARP where they first can be recommended for disenrollment.
- The Non-ARB student group found it easier to communicate with headquarters staff than the ARB student group. (42) Students from the ARB group maybe less likely to communicate with the chain of command because they feel intimidated by the headquarters staff, and that any communication with the headquarters staff may be unfavorable for them individually.

### **3. ARB**

Most elements and processes of the ARB are understood by the groups that come into contact with it but the application of criteria used to assist the student through the processes differ among the groups (reported in 2.b. and 2.d. above). Specific conclusions include:

- There is agreement among staff and ARB students on the factors considered by the ARB when making recommendations to retest/retain, setback, or disenroll. (p.50) All groups know what factors the ARB value when making its recommendation.
- Slightly more than half of the ARB student group did not use the rebuttal process, but of the 14 students who did use the rebuttal process, 12 of them found it useful. (p.56) Students do not know the factors that the CO's decision is based on, nor, apparently, do they understand the value of the rebuttal process.

#### **4. Effectiveness of the ARP**

The basic framework of the ARP is established and effective. Its objective is to provide those students with academic challenges the tools necessary to succeed in the training. Specific conclusions include:

- Based on the differences in final determination made by the ARB and CO, the following conclusions are inferred. The objective of the staff is to identify Sailors who do not have the potential to be successful HMs in the Fleet, while the CO's objective is to provide every opportunity for Sailors to successfully complete the training. (p. 65) This conclusion relates to the study that supports initiatives to provide a second chance at school (Quester, Macllvaine, Barfield, Parker, and Reese, 1998). The study noted that Sailors were more successful when provided a second chance, which relates to the CO providing more chances to complete

training. This suggests a contributing explanation for the CO's willingness to make a Type I error, where a setback student ultimately fails. (p.73)

- Students are satisfied with the guidance provided for test preparation and consistency of instruction. (p.44) Staff generally felt they had sufficient time available to provide assistance outside of class hours. (p.46) The CNA study by Belcher, Reese, and Lewis (1999) focused on initiatives that improve the delivery of Sailors to the fleet. Students' satisfaction with course delivery and preparation, and the time that instructors were available outside of class were noted as key correlates to improving student performance. By reference to initiatives that improve the delivery of Sailors to the fleet, the HM "A" school staff and student satisfaction with intervention procedures through the ARP suggests they are related to student success.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are based upon the analysis and conclusions of this thesis:

- Establish and communicate clear goals. These goals should acknowledge if the intent of the ARP is to provide a second chance, limit cost, or reduce the attrition rate. A few ways these specific goals may be answered is by giving more students more chances (setbacks and retentions); trying to decrease costs by finding ways to accelerate the early elimination of likely failures; or determining if more aggressive interventions prior to the third test

failure have a positive relation to the attrition rate. Ensure that the goals of the command's ARP policies and standards are applied to align with the command's mission and vision. Ensure that the goal(s) are promulgated to the staff and students so everyone will know what the ARP is designed to address, why it is so designed, and how it will meet that goal.

- Increase training between headquarters staff and instructor staff (all ARB members) and establish standard criteria for ARB members when sitting on a board. Center the training on the ARP processes and factors that influence decisions. This will help to ensure that the staff understands all policies and procedures of the process and that an equitable standard is applied to all students.
- Review quarterly (or biannually) ARP decision trend analyses (periodic reinforcement of goals). At a minimum these data should track attrition rates and review/discuss consensus recommendations for setback and disenrollment as presented in Tables 22 and 23. Promulgate these data to the command so it can see and understand the processes of the ARP and follow how it is working, and take corrective action when warranted.
- Consider having top students (volunteers) share their school experiences with incoming students. This can be done via small group meetings, lecture, or one-on-one. This will help personalize standards and may instill school pride in the students. Some

senior students currently fill this role. ARB students valued the usefulness of student tutors; therefore, this type of interaction may help bridge some of the gaps between student and staff perceptions.

- Create and have all students sign an ARP training statement during orientation training. The statement should address the specifics (e.g., what it is, test failure significance, rebuttal process, open-door policies, etc.) of the academic review process. This will help to impress the significance of the ARP on the students and may clarify understanding by facilitating communication (student questions and answers).
- Determine if feedback opportunities between students and headquarter staff need to be increased to promote dialogue. This could give headquarters staff a better feel for the pulse of the command while helping to engage and influence student interactions.
- Determine the benefit and then decide if the command should allow the student to be accompanied by his/her Team Leader or Class Advisor to the ARB when necessary. As reported in Table 20, half the ARB students and staff responded in support of this. This could be a potential benefit to the ARP by strengthening the ARB and its recommendations.
- Determine if a regular student assessment of instructional staff is of value to the command. If

decided to be valuable, impress upon students the desirability and anonymity of honest critiques. Results could then be analyzed for trends that indicate which instructors the students' rate most highly. Instructors with high ratings could then be used to give instructional briefs during staff training sessions. This could help communication and give appropriate credence to the perceptions of processes.

### **C. FUTURE RESEARCH**

During the analysis of data in this thesis, some limitations were identified. Necessary data to perform cost calculations were unavailable at the time of this study. Data for Corpsman performance, one year after "A" school, were not available that would have allowed us to compare the two student groups (ARB and Non-ARB). This thesis does not focus on which communication and feedback mechanisms are more useful than others, nor does it try to identify other mechanisms that might be useful. The following recommendations for future research are provided:

- Collect data and examine the costs of conducting the ARP and its decisions in future studies using the framework provided in Chapter IV.
- Examine the performance of Corpsmen who had three or more test failures, but ultimately graduated, after they have been out of "A" School for approximately one year. Their performance should be compared with Corpsmen with less than two test failures to determine if there are performance differences. This information would be useful in evaluating the two

potentially competing criteria to be used through the ARP; to assure quality on the job (gate-keeping) and to increase the opportunity to graduate (remedial).

- Sponsor a study that identifies the feedback and communication mechanisms that would be useful and utilized by students and staff to relay concerns up and down the chain of command.



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## APPENDIX A. STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Does the academic review process foster interventions, leading to enhanced student learning?

**Probing question:** Describe the type(s) of interventions that you have received?

2. Does the academic review process foster open communication?

**Probing question:** If you are experiencing academic or non-academic problems, how do you relay this to your chain of command?

4. How does the academic review process provide support to students dealing with non-academic issues?

**Probing question:** What resources are available to you? How and when are these resources made known to you (i.e., orientation, and counseling)?

5. How do new students learn about the academic review process?

**Probing question:** Is the ARP process explained during orientation? If not, when?

6. After your first test failure what type of intervention did you receive?

**Probing question:** What interventions did you receive at the team level? What interventions did you receive at the Division Officer level? After your second test failure what type of intervention did you receive?

7. What guidance are you provided for test preparation?

**Probing question:** Is there sufficient opportunity to receive assistance outside of class times?

8. If you could improve one component of the ARP, what would it be and why?

**Probing question:** Tell me about a time when the process worked well? Tell me about a time when the process failed?

## APPENDIX B. STUDENT SURVEY

### STUDENT SURVEY, page 1

This information in no way will be used to identify individuals. It is for statistical purposes only.

#### Individual Characteristics

1. Are you male or female?

[A] Male [B] Female

2. What is your current age?

[A] 21 or under [B] 22-26 [C] 27-30 [D] 31-36

3. As of today, what is the highest level of education you have completed and received credit?

[A] High School Diploma [B] GED [C] Some college [D] AA Degree [E] BA Degree or higher

4. What is your current marital status?

[A] Married [B] Separated [C] Divorced [D] Single

5. Do you have children? If yes, how many children do you have? Indicate by circling the number.

[A] Yes [B] No 1 2 3 4 5 or more

6. What is your race?

[A] White [B] Black [C] Hispanic [D] Asian [E] Other

---

**Military Information**

**7. What is your pay grade?**

[A] E1 [B] E2 [C] E3 [D] E4 [E] E5 or above

**8. How long have you been on active duty?**

[A] Less than 1 year  
[B] 1 or more years but fewer than 3 years  
[C] 3 years or more

**9. How long have you been a student at Corps School?**

[A] Less than 1 Month  
[B] 2-3 Months  
[C] 4-5 Months  
[D] 6 Months or longer

**10. Through which method did you receive your assignment to "A" school?**

[A] Recruiter-guaranteed "A" School  
[B] Recruit training classification  
[C] Striker

**11. Did you choose the Hospital Corps rating?**

[A] Yes [B] No

**12. How many test failures have you had?**

[A] 1 [B] 2 [C] 3 [D] more than 3

**13. Have you been before the Academic Review Board?**

[A] Yes [B] No

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process

14. (a) After your first test failure what intervention(s) did you receive?

x (all that apply)

- [A] Night study
- [B] Student tutor
- [C] Test taking tips
- [D] Help from a staff member
- [E] Other \_\_\_\_\_

(b) On a scale of usefulness, how would you rate the interventions that you used?

	Not At All Useful		Very Useful	
[A] Night study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[B] Student tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[C] Test taking tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[D] Help from a staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[E] Other_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. (a) After your second test failure what intervention(s) did you receive?

x (all that apply)

- [A] Night study
- [B] Student tutor
- [C] Test taking tips
- [D] Help from a staff member
- [E] Other\_\_\_\_\_

(b) On a scale of usefulness, how would you rate the interventions that you used?

	Not At All Useful		Very Useful	
[A] Night study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[B] Student tutor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[C] Test taking tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[D] Help from a staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
[E] Other_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process**

16. After your first or second test failure were you counseled in regard to the following items listed below?

x (all that apply)

- [A] Your interest in being a HM [ ]
- [B] What you need to know for tests [ ]
- [C] Why what you are learning is important in the rating [ ]
- [D] Other rating options [ ]
- [E] Stress Management techniques [ ]
- [F] Study techniques [ ]
- [G] Test taking tips [ ]
- [H] School resources (i.e. tutoring, night study) [ ]

17. Which of the following feedback mechanisms are available to you to relay concerns to your chain of command related to academic or non-academic issues.

x (all that apply)

- [A] Surveys [ ]
- [B] Discussions with instructional team (Members: HMC, HM1, HM2) [ ]
- [C] Course/instructor evaluations [ ]
- [D] Informal feedback thru instructional team leader (DIVO) [ ]
- [E] Informal feedback thru instructors [ ]
- [F] Informal feedback thru instructional team members [ ]
- [G] Captain's Call [ ]
- [H] Peers [ ]
- [I] None [ ]

18. On a scale of usefulness, how would you rate the feedback mechanisms that you have used? (leave blank if you have not used this feedback mechanism)

	Not At All Useful		Very Useful	
[A] Surveys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[B] Discussions with INST team members	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[C] Course/instructor evaluations	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[D] Informal feedback thru INST team leader	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[E] Informal feedback thru instructors	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[F] Informal feedback thru INST team members	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[G] Captain's Call	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[H] Peers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

STUDENT SURVEY, page 5

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process

19. (a) Which of the following staff members have made an open door policy known to you?

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
|  | <b>x (all that apply)</b> |
| [A] INST Team (Members: HMC, HM1, HM2) | [ ]                       |
| [B] Instructors                        | [ ]                       |
| [C] INST Team Leader (DIVO)            | [ ]                       |
| [D] Senior Enlisted Leader (HMCS)      | [ ]                       |
| [E] DIR of Academics                   | [ ]                       |
| [F] Deputy DIR of Academics            | [ ]                       |
| [G] DEPT Head                          | [ ]                       |
| [H] XO and CO                          | [ ]                       |
| [I] Chaplain                           | [ ]                       |

(b) How easy do you feel it is to communicate problems or concerns with each of the following:

- |   | Very Difficult |     | Very Easy |     |
|---|----------------|-----|-----------|-----|
| [A] INST Team<br>(Members: HMC, HM1, HM2) | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [B] Instructors                           | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [C] INST Team Leader(DIVO)                | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [D] Senior Enlisted Leader (HMCS)         | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [E] DIR of Academics                      | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [F] Deputy DIR of Academics               | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [G] DEPT Head                             | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [H] XO and CO                             | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |
| [I] Chaplain                              | [ ]            | [ ] | [ ]       | [ ] |

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process**

20. On a scale of helpfulness, rate the following staff that you have used. (Leave a specific resource rating blank if you haven't used it)

	Not At All helpful		Very helpful	
[A] INST Team (Members: HMC, HM1, HM2)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[B] Instructors	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[C] INST Team Leader(DIVO)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[D] Senior Enlisted Leader (HMCS)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[E] DIR of Academics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[F] Deputy DIR of Academics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[G] DEPT Head	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[H] XO and CO	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[I] Chaplain	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[J] Family Service Center	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

21. Do you understand the academic review process? The academic review process encompasses, but is not limited to the following: communications procedures (i.e., Course/instructor evaluations, Captains Call) available to students to voice concerns and problems; interventions (i.e., night study, tutors, test taking tips) available to students experiencing academic or non-academic problems; availability to receive guidance and assistance from staff outside of class hours; and student awareness and understanding of the role of the academic review board.

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

22. Rate your understanding of the academic review process.

No Understanding at All				Strong Understanding
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process**

23. (a) When was the academic review process first explained to you?

**x One Only**

- [A] Orientation
- [B] After your first test failure
- [C] After your second test failure

(b) Rate your impression of the ARP?

<b>Not At All Useful</b>			<b>Very Useful</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why?

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24. (a) Are you provided guidance for test preparation?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

(b) Rate the guidance you receive for test preparation?

<b>Not At All Useful</b>			<b>Very Useful</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why?

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Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process

25. Is there sufficient opportunity to receive assistance outside of class time?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

(b) Rate your satisfaction of the opportunity provided to you to receive assistance outside of class time?

Not At All  
Satisfied  
[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

Very Satisfied  
[ ]

Why?

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26. Do you feel that there is consistency between what instructors teach and what you are expected to know for a test?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

(b) Indicate if either or both of the following are not consistent with what you are expected to know for a test.

X the one that applies

[A] Written tests

[ ]

[B] Practical lab applications

[ ]

[C] Both

[ ]

27. When called before the ARB should your class advisor accompany you to the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

**Academic Review Board**

28. When called before the ARB should your class advisor be a representative on the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

29. When called before the ARB should your team leader accompany you to the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

30. When called before the ARB should your team leader be a representative on the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

31. Indicate which of the following you have experienced regarding an ARB?

x (all that apply)

- [A] Positive reinforcement (i.e. conveyed belief/faith in you) [ ]
- [B] Threats/Intimidation/Hostile environment [ ]
- [C] Positive (environment: encouraging) [ ]
- [D] Negative (environment: harsh, critical, likely to fail) [ ]
- [E] Offer of assistance [ ]
- [F] Refusal of assistance [ ]

32. Rate the extent to which you feel ARB members have the "right"/complete information for making decisions about retest/retain, setback or disenrollment?

To A Great Extent

To No Extent

[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

What information do you feel is missing?

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**Academic Review Board**

33. Did you know you had an option to submit a rebuttal?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

34. Did you use the rebuttal option?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

35. Was it useful?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

Why?

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36. Rate each of the factors below in terms of how much you think each is considered by the ARB determining whether to recommend setback or disenrollment of a student?

	Not At all Considered		Very Important in Decision	
[A] Student Motivation	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[B] Information provided by team leader	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[C] Documentation of night study	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[D] Class participation	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[E] Information provided by tutor	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[F] Student ability to produce class notes	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[G] Test scores	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[H] Number of tests failed	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[I] Practical performance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[J] Other _____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

**Academic Review Board**

37. Overall, do you see the ARB decision process as being fair?

[A] Yes

[B] No

38. Rate the fairness of the academic review process.

Not At All Fair

Very Fair

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

[ ]

39. How does the perceived fairness or unfairness affect your motivation?

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Student Recommendations

1. If you could improve one component of the ARP what would it be?

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Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What in the academic review process has benefited you the most?

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Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What in the academic review process has benefited you the least?

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Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPENDIX C. STAFF SURVEY

STAFF SURVEY, page 1

This information in no way will be used to identify individuals. It is for statistical purposes only.

### *Military Information*

1. What is your pay grade?

[A] E5 [B] E6 [C] E7 or above [D] O1 [E] O2 [F] O3 [G] O4 or above

2. How long have you been assigned to Hospital Corps School?

[A] Less than 6 Months [B] 7-9 Months [C] 1 Year [D] more than 1 Year

3. What is your job position?

[A] Instructor

[B] Executive Staff (i.e. DIVO, Deputy DAD, DAD, XO, CO SEL)

[C] Instructional Team Member

4. Have you been a member of an ARB?

[A] Yes

[B] No

5. How many ARBs have you been a member of?

[A] 1 [B] 2 [C] 3 [D] \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in blank)

*Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process*

6. On a scale of usefulness, how would you rate the feedback mechanisms available to students [to relay their concerns to their chain of command]? (Leave blank if never used)

	Not At All Useful			Very Useful
[A] Surveys	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[B] Class discussions with INST team members	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[C] Course/instructor evaluations	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[D] Informal feedback thru INST team leader	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[E] Informal feedback thru instructors	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[F] Informal feedback thru INST team members	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[G] Captain's Call	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]
[H] Peers	[ ]		[ ]	[ ]

7. Does the school have an open door policy?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

8. (a) When is the academic review process first made known to a student?

- |                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
|                               | <b>x One Only</b> |
| [A] Orientation               | [ ]               |
| [B] After first test failure  | [ ]               |
| [C] After second test failure | [ ]               |

(b) On a scale of usefulness, how do you think students perceive the ARP?

Not All Useful			Very Useful
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Why?

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*Strengths and Weaknesses of the Academic Review Process*

9. Do you have sufficient opportunity to provide assistance to students outside of class time?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

If sufficient time is not available, what are causal factors:

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*Academic Review Board*

10. Do you feel student class advisors should accompany students to the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

12. Do you feel student class advisors should be student representatives on the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

13. Do you feel student team leaders should accompany students to the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

14. Do you feel student team leaders should be student representatives on the board?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

*Academic Review Board*

15. (a) Do you feel the ARB is provided the "right"/complete information necessary for making decisions about retest/retain, setback or disenrollment?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

(b) If no, what information do you feel is missing?

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16. Are students told of their option to submit a rebuttal?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

17. Rate each of the factors below in terms of how much you think each is considered by the ARB in determining whether to recommend setback or disenrollment of a student?

	Not At All Considered		Very Important In Decision	
[A] Student Motivation	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[B] Information provided by team leader	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[C] Documentation of night study	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[D] Class participation	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[E] Information provided by tutor	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[F] Student ability to produce class notes	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[G] Test scores	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[H] Number of tests failed	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[I] Practical performance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
[J] Other _____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

18. Overall, do you see the ARB decision process as being fair?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

**Academic Review Board**

19. How does the perceived fairness or unfairness affect your motivation to be a board member?

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20. Whose recommendation does the ARB weigh more heavily?

- |                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
|                            | <b>X (ONE)</b> |
| [A] Team Leaders           | [ ]            |
| [B] Instructors            | [ ]            |
| [C] Division Officer       | [ ]            |
| [D] Senior Enlisted Leader | [ ]            |

Why?

---

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21. Whose recommendation do you feel the CO weighs more heavily?

- |         |                |
|---------|----------------|
|         | <b>X (ONE)</b> |
| [A] ARB | [ ]            |
| [B] DAD | [ ]            |
| [C] XO  | [ ]            |

Why:

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22. Do attrition and retention factors influence your decision?

- [A] Yes
- [B] No

(b) If yes, rate the degree to which your recommendation is influenced by these factors.

To No Degree			Very Important to Decision
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

*Staff Recommendations*

1. If you could improve one component of the Academic Review Process, what would it be?

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Why?

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2. What do you feel is missing from the academic review process?

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