

From: Mike Steele  
Sent: 4/16/2015 1:00:30 PM  
To: Caterina Porcella; wsteele@citadel.edu  
Cc: dgoff@citadel.edu; allisondeanlove@citadel.edu; pricef@citadel.edu; jsams@citadel.edu; thoooper@citadel.edu; pmccoy@citadel.edu; rnuttall@citadel.edu; lpinson@citadel.edu; glapoint@citadel.edu; myerss@citadel.edu; mharrin1@citadel.edu; Haley, Nikki; Bob Livingston; Spearman, Molly  
Subject: Re: A Concerned Parent

Mrs. Porcella: Thank you for your email, interest, support of your cadet and The Citadel.

The Citadel has established procedures for handling discipline cases that ensure Cadets are provided due process and the right to appeal punishment orders. In the case of Class I punishments for Expulsion, a cadet can appeal their punishment to the Board of Visitors if the cadet can show a failure to provide due process or the cadet can introduce new evidence that would have a material bearing on the outcome of their case. Appeals of Class I punishments of Dismissal or Suspension (which includes Violation of 4th Class System Major) can be appealed to the President of The Citadel. These procedures are outlined in the College Regulations and have been refined overtime to assure cadets are afforded due process and Citadel standards are maintained. The regulations are available online at The Citadel website. Also, in accordance with College Regulations and to maintain neutrality, appellate authorities (BOV and President) remain neutral in these cases until they are presented on appeal. If appellate authorities have prior knowledge or involvement, they must recuse themselves from the appeal process.

The BOV is continuously updated on how these cases are being processed by the administration. Presently, I am confident they are being handled in compliance with established procedures. Cases are reviewed for lessons learned. If warranted by review, lessons learned are incorporated into changes to regulations, performance standards and training with changes communicated to the Corps.

I am forwarding your email to The Citadel's General Counsel, Mark Brandenburg (843-953-5252). He is your best conduit to the administration while these cases are being processed.

Mike Steele  
BOV, Chair

On 4/16/15, 12:45 AM, "Caterina Porcella" <cporcella@pausd.org> wrote:

Dear LTG Steele,

I am the mother of a current Citadel cadet very concerned with what I see happening at the Citadel this year. I begin to write this letter with some trepidation. I am afraid that by my speaking out my son may face retaliation.

However, the concerns I have are so great that I have decided to put this fear aside and write to you.

First let me state that I do not in any shape or form approve of hazing. I applaud the administration's efforts to eradicate hazing from cadet life.

Hazing is a serious offense. However, this year it appears that offenses that are clearly not hazing have been relabeled as hazing despite what is specifically written in the "blue book."

Although my husband and I have been in contact with many different parents and have talked to many cadets from several different companies, I will limit my comments here to what has happened to Sierra Company. My son, Matthew Bungarden is currently the First Sergeant in Sierra Company.

Several cadets in Sierra Company have been charged with hazing for making knobs do pushups. Apparently this year, having fourth classmen do pushups behind closed doors has become labeled as hazing. **It is not.** It may be unauthorized PT but it is not hazing. How can the new Commandant simply redefine the meaning of words that are clearly described without telling cadets prior to doing so and presumably issuing a written rule change.

In the "blue book" nothing in the definition of hazing includes making knobs do pushups as hazing.

As I stated earlier, I applaud the administration's effort to shift the culture at the Citadel. The problem I have is with its execution. While in Charleston last week, my husband and I meet with both LTC Sberna and Captain Skardon to try and understand what was going on this year at the Citadel.

Both men were generous with their time and they provided us with a lot of information and insights to add to my husband's pages of notes gathered from both those conversations as well as conversations with other Citadel parents and cadets. What I tried to convey to LTC Sberna and I am not sure I was successful in the moment, and what I want to communicate to the Citadel Board of Visitors with this letter is that **the Citadel has failed my son and his classmates.**

I am a teacher. When I give a test and my students fail the test, I do not punish my students. I understand that I have failed to adequately teach the concept and I need to go back and reteach it. I need to go back and rework my lesson plan. As a teacher I look to the students who have good work habits and are solid students as my barometer. When I give a test and those students fail, I know I have failed them and I need to go back and retool my presentation. My son and his Sierra Company classmates are excellent cadets. My son has never served a punishment in his cadet career. The fact that so many cadets who love the Citadel, who have excelled while at the Citadel, and want only to do the right thing are being accused of wrong doing