

## Statement of Educational Philosophy

In order for any educational institution to be successful, it must have a clear and focused vision and mission.

Fork Union Military Academy's vision is to be a national leader among independent boarding schools. Our faculty, facilities, and programs will exemplify excellence, especially in the area of academic preparation for higher education. The school environment and culture will promote Christian values and cultivate strength of character, self-discipline, and critical thinking skills essential for life-long learning, leadership, and service to others.

Our mission, consistent with that vision, is to educate, develop, and inspire young men in a college preparatory, Christian, residential environment. Cadets learn confidence, responsibility, leadership and discipline in a positive atmosphere of mental, physical, and spiritual growth.

This school must have high expectations for students, teachers, and staff. These expectations must be met with support, recognition, and acknowledgment.

I believe students reach their full potential when teachers and administrators articulate and expect high standards of performance while providing an extensive network of support. It is critical in a residential setting that students receive additional support and guidance early in their experience to ensure they understand the values of the institution, learn how to establish priorities, and understand their role.

Schools must integrate student-centered learning and experiences which are active and relevant. Students need the opportunity to work together in teams supported by a high performing, well-educated, and dedicated faculty and staff who put teaching first and devote significant "out of class time" to reinforce learning.

Teachers and administrators must assess performance, provide feedback, and establish clearly marked pathways of success for every student.

Students must have the opportunity to learn about themselves. Self-awareness puts young people on the right path to becoming leaders. This knowledge of self allows students to more effectively explore human difference and better cultivate a strong community of inclusion and an appreciation for diversity.

Any school's effectiveness depends upon everyone associated with that institution being aligned with its vision and mission. This alignment occurs through candid, honest, and open conversations. Unity of effort is critical.

Young people are remarkably perceptive and keenly attuned to inconsistency and hypocrisy. Their leaders must be consistent, fair, and serve as positive role models. All aspects of a residential educational institution must be aligned...from the classroom, to the barracks, to athletics, to the chapel, and all support programs. The application of standards, expressions of concern and empathy, commitment to excellence and professionalism must be seamless.

We must "immerse cadets in a sea of professionalism." Everyone contributes to character development. My expectation is that faculty and staff look, act, and behave in a manner consistent with the mission, military culture, and heritage we represent.

Successful schools are model institutions of learning. Administrators, teachers, and staff maintain the highest possible standards of conduct, appearance, and decorum consistent with its mission. Students must have the highest possible expectations for their own learning and for their leaders, and those leaders must live up to those expectations, and engage in many quality interactions with each student.

My educational philosophy is that you cannot separate the mind from the body, or the person from the Spirit. It is through this holistic development of mind, body, and spirit that the finest leaders are educated, developed, and inspired.

I look forward to serving as President of Fork Union Military Academy, and working with everyone associated with this prestigious institution. We are indeed very fortunate that we were called to do this work, and that we may serve God in this way. If we work together we will achieve our vision, accomplish our mission, and change lives along the way.



Rear Admiral J. Scott Burhoe  
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