

## Process for Selecting Gift for 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion

The Gift Committee initiated the selection process shortly after our 45<sup>th</sup> Reunion in October 2010. We started by choosing the range of projects we would consider. Because we wanted our class gift to fulfill a priority need at the academy, we limited our examination to the 34 projects listed in the Capital Campaign. These projects had been identified by the academy as having the highest priority over the next several years.

Our next step was to narrow our focus by asking our classmates what type of projects they were most likely to support and why. From the 144 responses to this class survey, we were able to eliminate several options from further consideration. More importantly, our classmates' ratings of the projects and their comments in the survey allowed us to establish criteria by which we could evaluate the remaining projects. Those criteria were:

- **Enduring Impact:** The degree to which the project will have a lasting effect on USMA and its graduates.
- **Inspiration Potential:** The potential for the project to motivate our classmates to support it financially.
- **Margin of Excellence:** The role the project can play in improving the education and training of cadets beyond the funding provided by the government.
- **Potential Other Funding:** The likelihood the project will receive funding from the government, fees for services, or other sources.
- **Visibility & Recognition:** The extent to which the class is a primary participant in the project funding and is identified for its role.

By applying these criteria to the projects that remained, we reduced the number of projects to the following six:

**Academic Scholars:** Approximately half of the class supported this project during the initial survey. The Gift Committee thought it unlikely that it would receive government funding and it was ranked high in Margin of Excellence and the opportunity for the class to have a high impact.

**Cadet Activities:** The rationale here is similar to Academic Scholars in that the Committee did not see funding coming from the government or elsewhere and saw this area as providing a Margin of Excellence in a significant area of cadet life.

**Center for Oral History:** This project was rated high in Inspiration Potential due to (1) its being initiated under Bob Doughty's watch when he was Head of the History Department, (2) the fact that the class contributed \$25,000 early in the Center's development to give it traction, and (3) the potential for several of our classmates' interviews to be made part of the Center's archives. The project also rated high in Enduring Impact and Margin of Excellence.

**Long Gray Line Endowment:** Well over half of those responding in the initial survey supported this project. The Committee rated it high in Margin of Excellence, Enduring Impact, and Visibility and Recognition. It also will not receive government funding.

**Professional Military Ethics Education:** This project enjoyed support from over 60% of the class, which was the primary reason for its inclusion on the ballot. Its ratings in the evaluation criteria were not as high as other projects on the list, but sufficient to justify its inclusion

**West Point Leadership Center:** Similar to the Ethics Education project, the Leadership Center was included due to the strong support (almost 70%) on the initial survey. Its ratings against the evaluation criteria were also similar to Ethics Education – good, but lower than others on the ballot.

We went back out to our classmates with a ballot listing these six projects and asking them to rate their level of support for each, i.e., Strong, Strong to Medium, Medium to Weak, or Weak. Of the 170 responses, the percentages of strong ratings for the six projects are summarized below:

Center for Oral History:	37%	Academy Scholars	25%
West Point Leadership Center	32%	Cadet Activities	23%
Military Ethics Education	29%	LGL Endowment	18%

A full summary of the survey responses can be accessed by the link below:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=45v1PDOXNf\\_2b\\_2b6a\\_2fECHg5ZstLZXF694VQSCobnYcoKVY\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=45v1PDOXNf_2b_2b6a_2fECHg5ZstLZXF694VQSCobnYcoKVY_3d)

We took a closer look at the top three rated projects, giving particular attention to the sub-projects under each of the projects. We asked for additional information from Col Lance Betros, the Head of the History Department, who gave us an excellent description of several of the sub-projects under the Center for Oral History (COH). Six of the sub-projects are subject archives defined by a war or conflict in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Each subject archive required a \$1.0M sponsorship fee. We felt the most appropriate for the Class of '65 was the Viet Nam archive and the Cold War archive. We were also warm to the idea of naming the COH Director, which would require a \$2.0m gift. Finally, we looked favorably on naming the film production studio for a \$1.0M gift.

Because of their high rating of the Leadership Center and the Ethics Education, we also looked at the sub-projects under each of these options. We were not as attracted to the sub-projects of either of these projects as we were to the options under COH. We also were told that these two projects were relatively high profile and had already received funding for certain sub-projects (e.g., two of the sub-projects under the Leadership Center were fully funded).

After reviewing the options at the dollar level of gift we thought we could target for our class, the committee was unanimous in selecting the Viet Nam subject archive and the film production studio within the COH project. While we considered sponsoring a second subject archive (Cold War), we preferred funding the film production studio because our gift would touch virtually all the archives, while preserving the Viet Nam archive as the one carrying our name.

Comfortable with our selection of the COH sub-projects, we thought about including a secondary project in our recommendation for two reasons:

- to give classmates an alternative to the COH
- to identify a recipient of monies given in excess of the \$2.0M needed to fund the two COH sub-projects

The Committee felt that the Long Gray Line Endowment (LGL) would be a good secondary project given the need for the Associate of Graduates to continue to serve the USMA graduate community well in the future. As we were considering a secondary recommendation, the academy announced a new sub-project under the Long Gray Line Endowment (LGL) called the Fallen Graduates Memorial Scholarship Fund (Scholarship Fund), which will exist to benefit children of graduates killed in combat. The Scholarship Fund will be capped at \$1.0M. Although the Scholarship Fund had been approved by the academy only after the classmates' vote on the six projects, the Committee felt that it scored high on the criteria for a Class Gift. The Committee therefore chose the LGL as its secondary project with the intent of splitting contributions to the LGL – half going to the Scholarship Fund and half to the General Fund.

The last step for the Committee was to announce its decision to the class and to provide the information that our classmates might want as they considered their personal financial commitment. We drafted a letter to the class summarizing our decision and posted it on the class website. The letter contained links to the other material -- this process description, the letter from Col Betros, and the three relevant brochures published by the Capital Campaign (COH, LGL, and Scholarship Fund) – all of which were also posted to the class website. Chuck Nichols and Rick Bunn sent transmittal emails to the class with the link to our summary letter and our Gift Committee duties were completed.

Fred Laughlin – July 4, 2011