

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE),
Wilson Road, Building 621, Room 118, West Point, NY 10996

SUBJECT: Meeting between CAPE and The First Tee, 3 December 2015

1. PURPOSE: To summarize discussions regarding developing character within the context of developing competence in the sport of golf.

2. BACKGROUND:

a. CAPE initiated the Army Concept for Character Development Project, under the authority of the Army Profession and Leader Development Forum Initiative (I-14-007) on 12 November 2015. The Character Development Project mission is “to design and articulate a concept for character development that is applicable for all Soldiers and Army Civilians; the Army Profession; and the institutional and operational Army.”

b. This effort addresses Capability Needs Analysis Gap #501028, providing guidance for what should be done (institutionally, operationally, and individually) to develop and assess character – strengthening our shared identity as trusted Army professionals. This project is cited as #3P on the CSA FY16 Army Leader Development Program Priority List and supports the Army Warfighting Challenges, specifically numbers: 1, 4, 6, 8-10, 19.

c. Beginning in 1997, The First Tee, a non-profit organization, has been dedicated to developing adolescents (ages 5-19) to internalize (9) core values, supporting the organization’s mission “to impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values, and promote healthy choices through the game of golf.”

d. For a detailed discussion of The First Tee Program history and structure, and an assessment of its efficacy, see: Weiss, M.R., et. al. “More Than A Game: Impact of The First Tee Life Skills Programme on Positive Youth Development: Project Introduction and Year 1 Findings” – Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise, and Health, DOI:10.1080/2159676X.2012.712997; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2012.712997>

e. The core values of The First Tee (honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy, judgment) are similar to and consistent with Army Values (integrity, duty, honor, loyalty, service, respect, courage). Thus the mission of The First Tee and the mission of the Army Character Development Project share vision and intent. Further, The First Tee has benefitted from formal, scientific research and deliberate objective assessment to understand its impact and success in accomplishing its mission. CAPE reviewed the findings of these studies and

believes results achieved by The First Tee merit consideration of their methods for incorporation within Army education, training, and operations. In this light, CAPE requested the opportunity to meet with the senior leadership of The First Tee to learn how they operate and what they do to achieve their objectives.

3. DISCUSSIONS:

a. Attending for The First Tee were the CEO, Mr Joe Louis Barrow, Jr.; Ms Jennifer Weiler, Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer; Ms Kelly A Martin, Chief Operating Officer; and Mr Ryan Graff, Vice President, Program Development and Participant Opportunities. Participating from CAPE were SGM David L Stewart, CAPE SGM and Army NCO Representative to the DoD Senior Advisor for Military Professionalism; and Mr Patrick A Toffler, Contractor, Chief Research and Assessment Division, CAPE.

b. Following preliminary introductions, Mr Barrow provided his executive philosophy and vision for the organization (Activity, Intention, and Caring). He emphasized that character and competence are developed simultaneously. Ms Weiler and Ms Martin explained their roles in helping to achieve the organization's goals, providing some historical context, including recent association with the Department of Defense through a grant sponsored by Congressman James Clyburn, SC. While this 6 year association is expiring this year, The First Tee hopes to find a means of continuing to support DoD families and youths through association with DoD Schools. The remainder of the discussions were led/facilitated by Mr Graff.

c. The First Tee program is designed around "hands-on activities" – not classroom-based instruction. Each activity is intended to support a learning/teaching outcome. Interaction with the "student" is facilitated by a *certified* coach (counselor/mentor/instructor/teacher), who tailors the content of the instruction to the specific circumstances. Interaction can be individual or small group.

d. Standards are important and must be skill-level and age appropriate. A careful balance must be achieved between "failure" and "success." However, in all cases the goal is "mastery" – striving for excellence. Counseling must be well-thought-out and structured. It includes "golf skills, life skills, and healthy choices." Performance is assessed by observation of individual behaviors and outcomes as the student participates in program activity. The focus is on helping the individual and the group to make "right decisions and take the right action." The intent is to "map the (9) values to decisions and actions" in the sport of golf and (by transference) to all aspects of life.

e. The concept of teamwork between the students and coaches is emphasized with the intention of developing "rapport" and trust. The coach understands that the students will "not care what the coach knows until they know that the coach cares." Teamwork is also developed as the students play golf, understanding that playing golf requires the willing participation of many others to support individuals playing the game (parents, fellow students, coaches, course maintenance crews, etc.).

f. The concept of “continuous learning” underlies the strategy for accomplishing the mission of The First Tee. The approach is to understand what is “good” about a situation/performance/outcome; to determine/reflect on what could be “better” and to improve the individual’s abilities; and to show “how” the individual can improve in a positive, motivating manner.

g. As individuals progress through stages of The First Tee program (Par, Birdie, Eagle) they learn how to play the sport of golf “well” and how to play it in the “right” way. This approach is based on positive youth development theory. The idea is that lessons-learned in playing golf will have “transferability” to other aspects of life (interaction with family, friends, other sports, academics, etc.). Coaches must exercise creativity in delivering the lesson material and achieving the learning outcomes. This includes being educational (instructional), entertaining (interesting, inspiring, motivational), and accessible (approachable, observable, assessable). Both students and coaches are assessed by The First Tee to ensure quality control, foster improvement, and demonstrate the efficacy of the program.

h. To support this result, students are taught (through coaching and by example) to employ helpful (universally applicable) techniques for addressing circumstances common to both golf and to life. These include: “Meet and Greet” to establish an initial relationship; and self-management skills, such as the 4Rs (Replay, Relax, Ready, Redo), “The Three Tips for Having Fun (Be Patient, Be Positive, and Ask for Help), and STAR (Stop, Think, Anticipate, Respond).

i. Innovative (best) practices such as “Play, Practice, Play” have direct applicability to the Army Profession in education, training, and experience. The concept is similar to the Army’s traditional learning approach, colloquially referred to as, “crawl, walk, run.” However, the interesting difference is that students are asked to do a relevant task or activity (e.g., show “respect for others on the green”) without any prior instruction or example illustrating what respect “looks like.” After being observed trying to demonstrate respect, the coach discusses what was “good,” what could be “better,” and “how” the students can achieve a better (more respectful) outcome. This technique is interactive and helps the students understand “why” respect is important and “how” it is demonstrated while playing golf and in all circumstances where “consideration for others” is important.

j. Coaches understand that “instruction (e.g., lecture, “Power-Point”) by itself does not work.” Each “lesson” must be planned, rehearsed, interactive, and assessed. Improvement must be continuous. Always ask: “What went right/wrong; what could be better; and how can the activity be improved?” Coaches keep their focus on “intention, caring, and outcomes.”

k. The First Tee provides context (golf), resources (coaches, facilities, activities), and implements a strategy (positive youth development). Similarly, the Army exists to accomplish the mission (context), exercises stewardship (disciplined use of resources

entrusted by the American people), and implements a strategy for leader and professional development (education, training, and experience). The key to success for The First Tee is in the care and attention devoted to selection, preparation, certification, and continuous development of the “coaches.”

I. The First Tee Coach Philosophy reflects shared values, caring for the well-being of each student, and teaching how to transfer life-skills learned in the context of golf to all aspects of life. The philosophy is implemented through intentional, relevant activity (doing v. telling) and motivational experiences (fun and seamless). The overall strategy consists of complementary components: actions that are coordinated, integrated, sequential, and progressive; teamwork (students and coaches, families and friends, sponsors and subject-matter experts); pursuit of mastery (striving for excellence); and continuous (within The First Tee and throughout life).

4. Next Steps: The First Tee and CAPE agreed that their meeting and discussions were mutually beneficial. The practices employed by The First Tee to accomplish its mission can be introduced within the Army Profession, in education, training, and experience, to contribute to the development of character in Soldiers and Army Civilians. The key task for the Army is to explicitly integrate First Tee practices within the process of development and certification for all those who will be engaged in “teaching” (formally or informally). This will ensure that all are aware of what they can and must do to contribute to the development of character in subordinates, peers, and other leaders: teaching; coaching, counseling, mentoring; and exhibiting exemplary conduct. CAPE will share insights gained during discussions with The First Tee with the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Military Professionalism. The First Tee and CAPE will remain in contact throughout the Army Character Development Project in order to share ideas regarding integration of First Tee best practices within the Army concept for Character Development.



DAVID L. STEWART

SGM, USA

Center for the Army Profession
and Ethic