

STATEMENT OF
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SUPERINTENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
JULY 19, 2023

SUBJECT: ADMISSIONS, CURRICULUM, AND DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AT THE
MILITARY ACADEMIES

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and other distinguished members, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address this committee on behalf of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). Thanks as well to my fellow superintendents for your statements and your close partnership as we strive for success in the critical mission we all share: to develop some of the most promising young people our nation has to offer into leaders of character, ready to take on the challenges of a rapidly changing and increasingly volatile world – challenges more complex than we have ever faced in the profession of arms.

As Superintendent of the Air Force Academy, I am here on behalf of over 4,000 cadets, our Preparatory School cadet candidates and our incredible faculty and staff who are devoted to shaping the future of our national defense and reinforcing the strength and effectiveness of our Air Force and Space Force. I am also here as an Academy graduate who cares deeply about this institution that helped me find a purpose greater than myself, and I am honored to have worn this uniform for the past 37 years. I led Airmen all over the world, and saw what is required of them in modern combat. Their knowledge, skills and values are essential to defending our nation from future threats. Given this perspective, I am grateful for the opportunity to update you on some of our recent successes at the Air Force Academy, and to share some of the obstacles we are facing and anticipate in the coming years.

Our Academy is on an upward and ambitious trajectory, but we also face great challenges – some are unique to our mission, and others are shared with campuses and communities across our country. My daily interactions with our cadets leave me proud and inspired, but we still have some work to do in upholding the high standards our society rightfully expects of us. I laid out priorities intended to recognize and overcome not only the challenges we face, but also those our graduates will soon encounter as trusted decision makers in an era of rapid change and renewed strategic competition.

PRIORITIES

Since I arrived on this campus as a basic cadet, our society, the technologies we employ, and the ways we conduct warfare have changed significantly. In some ways, so too has our Academy. We will continue to embrace purposeful change and evolve to maintain relevance and effectiveness, but my first priority is one that is fundamental and unwavering even as the world changes around us: **we must develop leaders of character**. Character development is a journey, not a destination. Our Leader of Character (LoC) Framework provides a road-map for that journey, ensuring that our academic, military, athletic and culture and climate initiatives remain aligned with the moral compass that character provides. The LoC Framework defines a leader of character as one who lives honorably, lifts others to be their best possible selves and elevates our collective performance toward a common and noble purpose. These should be the hallmarks of an Air Force Academy graduate.

Previously my second priority was to defeat COVID-19 and I am happy to report that this is no longer a necessity. We returned to normal operations, and I am incredibly proud of how our cadets, faculty and staff responded throughout the pandemic. They modeled the kind of grit and determination, coupled with ingenuity and intellect, which our nation should expect of leaders in its Air Force and Space Force.

Currently my second priority is: **we must prepare leaders who will fight and win in future conflicts.** We must build warfighters. Competition is growing, and we cannot afford to fall behind in the developing domains of space and cyber warfare. The rising threats of the information age require agile, critically thinking minds, armed with both knowledge *and* skills to prepare for the unknown conflicts of tomorrow. We need to stay ahead of our aspiring adversaries by looking not just to today's conflicts, but preparing 10, 20, and 30 years into the future.

Third, **we must have a culture of dignity and respect.** Creating this kind of culture requires that we take a hard look at ourselves and have the difficult conversations needed to examine whether we have an environment that allows each member of our community to thrive. It is through this reflection that we recently introduced a culture reset for the organization. From the highest-ranking leaders to the newest appointees, we must take ownership of our culture so degrading behavior toward any one of us is considered degrading behavior toward all of us. The cadets on our campus form the most diverse classes we've ever had at our Academy in terms of gender, race and ethnicity. These classes will lead increasingly diverse Airmen and Guardians, and they must be able to thrive in partnerships with other cultures and allies in multinational combat operations. In order to outpace and outthink our adversaries, we must fully employ the diverse creative, innovative and problem-solving capabilities of our people. Enabling and empowering this uniquely American strength is a strategic imperative for our force, and one that our graduates must actively employ. This starts with building the right culture within our organizations, no matter how large or small our level of responsibility or sphere of influence. At our Academy we will foster a culture of dignity and respect, building a better place to live, work, learn, and serve, and allowing us to be more effective in our development of future leaders in an increasingly collaborative profession of arms.

PRIORITY #1: DEVELOPING LEADERS OF CHARACTER

The men and women at our Academy come from all walks of life, across all 50 states, 435 congressional districts, and a number of our allied partners around the world. The members of this committee, along with many of your colleagues in elected leadership, have nominated a great number of them. The time they spend at USAFA represents an incredible transformation from promising young cadets into the leaders our nation can count on the moment they enter our force. When they leave our Academy, our graduates will be equipped to respond to the complexity, uncertainty and asymmetry of today's world because they possess a firm and stable character that reflects the virtues embodied in our Core Values. The LoC Framework is what enables us to put our Core Values into action. When we put integrity first, we are embodying what it means to live honorably. When we are committed to service before self, it enables us to lift others to be their best possible selves. And when we demonstrate excellence in all we do, we elevate performance both as individuals and across our entire Academy community. We are all leaders at USAFA – every cadet, every coach, faculty member, Airman, Guardian, and staff member no matter our rank or position – we must all embrace the Framework and make it a part of our leadership every day.

Admissions Criteria and Processes

The USAFA Admissions criteria and processes are thorough to attract the most talented individuals seeking to attend our prestigious academy. The Admissions Office competes with

other institutions of higher learning while serving the developmental needs of the Air Force and Space Force officer corps and while operating within statutory, regulatory and policy constraints not applicable to those other institutions.

There are several requirements that determine a candidate's eligibility and qualification to be appointed to USAFA.

The eligibility requirements for appointment are:

- Age. Incoming cadets must be at least 17 years old and not past their 23rd birthday on 1 July of the year they will enter the Academy.
- Citizenship. Cadets must be U.S. citizens or nationals.
- No dependents. Cadets must be unmarried and have no legal obligations to support a child or other dependent.
- Good moral character. Cadets must have no past felony convictions or drug abuse, must not be conscientious objectors, and must otherwise be of good moral character.
- Medically qualified. Incoming cadets must be medically qualified as determined by the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board, or obtain a waiver to the medical qualification requirement from the Air Force Recruiting Service Accessions Medical Waiver Division. They must also satisfy or be waived on Air Force body fat standards.
- Fitness. Applicants must pass the Candidate Fitness Assessment, or obtain a waiver from the USAFA Athletic Department.

Application process

The application process for USAFA is divided into two phases: a pre-candidate phase and a candidate phase. The pre-candidate phase is designed to identify candidates who are ineligible for admission or likely to be unsuccessful academically. Individuals who are not competitive at this stage are informed of this fact, and those who are deemed to be academically competitive based on their pre-candidate questionnaire are designated as "candidates" and sent a Candidate Kit, thus beginning the candidate phase of the application process. Typically, 90% of applicants make it to the candidate phase.

The Candidate Kit provides detailed instructions requesting additional information about academics, extracurricular activities, test scores, teacher evaluations and writing samples. Candidates in this phase must also undergo a medical evaluation and fitness assessment. When all of this information is received by the Admissions Office, the candidate's application is considered complete.

Once a Selection Committee has completed its review of a candidate's application and submits its rating and recommendation, the candidate's file goes back before the Admissions Office, who works on building a class of cadets. In addition to assessing the qualifications and ratings of the candidates, STEM experience and pilot medical qualifications as well as aviation propensity are considered in the appointment selection stage to ensure Department of the Air Force requirements are achieved. USAFA Admissions must also comply with the statutory

nomination requirements, ensuring that only candidates with nominations from an authorized nominating source receive appointments.

Every candidate appointed to USAFA must be nominated for appointment, and all nominations must be authorized by statute. As a result, the statutory nominating authorities play a large role in the selection process.

There are several types of nominations a candidate can receive, all with varying requirements. The congressional nominating category is the largest category of nominations and the most influential in shaping the class of cadets. Each member of Congress is entitled to five spots in the cadet wing across the four class years for nominees from his or her congressional district (for a Representative) or state (for a Senator).

Additional nominations include Qualified Congressional Alternates, “Presidential” Competitive Category, Air Force Nominations (Regular Enlisted, Reserve Enlisted, Honors/ROTC), Children of Deceased or Disabled Veterans, Children of Medal of Honor Recipients and Superintendent Nominations.

USAFA Admissions Use of Diversity:

Recruitment: The USAFA Directorate of Admissions actively recruits to demographic diversity, geographic diversity, and diversity of thought and perspective. These characteristics of diversity ensure a broad applicant pool. Marketing campaigns, school visits, college fairs, Academy tours, and visitation programs all contribute to meeting the Secretary of the Air Force’s “Applicant Pool Goals.”

Selection: We are aware of the recent Supreme Court decision regarding collegiate admissions. The Department of the Air Force (DAF), including legal counsel, and USAFA are currently reviewing the decision and evaluating what implications, if any, it may have on our selection process.

The admissions criteria and processes, while extensive, ensure we are providing every opportunity to find the very best candidates to become cadets at USAFA. We are diligently seeking candidates who have a desire to serve and be part of something bigger than themselves as Leaders of Character.

National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS)

At the end of February, we held our 30th National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS). The theme for this year’s event was “Reimagine Leadership. Inspire Teamwork.” This cadet-driven theme allowed us a chance to reflect on how our leadership must adapt with advances in technology, a broader focus on inclusivity and the new challenges we face in warfighting.

Our lineup of speakers included a distinguished group of diverse people and perspectives, including senior leaders from our Air Force and Space Force, thought leaders, civic leaders, authors, astronauts, athletes and leaders in business and academia. The symposium was a unique opportunity for almost 6,500 participants from across the country to interact directly with

powerful and prominent speakers from all walks of life. Speakers shared their own experiences with the character and leadership implications of making ethical decisions, overcoming bias and promoting inclusivity, among other important topics.

We are already looking forward to next year's NCLS symposium and requesting some of the most dynamic speakers and leaders of our time. We certainly welcome the attendance of the members of this committee.

USAFA Highlights

Academic – the 2023 class graduated with a collective, cumulative GPA of 3.11. Within those ranks we had a Rhodes Scholar, a Marshall Scholar, two Truman Scholars, four Fulbright Scholars, and over 230 were selected for other graduate programs starting next year.

Military – Combat Survival Training (CST) stood up after a ten-year hiatus training 1000 cadets annually and providing an exceptional leadership training opportunity while contributing to the development of “full spectrum ready” commissioned lieutenants upon graduation from USAFA. Within this course, all rising sophomores will experience the Outdoor Leadership Complex's Leadership Challenge Tower. The 15-meter tower provides high and low ropes team-building opportunities to engage with Leader of Character Framework principles like “Lifting Others” and “Elevating Performance” in a stress-inducing, character building way. CST is an accredited Air Force program that will help shorten the formal training pipeline for rated and other required personnel and attain a mission ready status for those individuals sooner.

The Cadet Wing also established Warfighter Talks providing cadets with invaluable insights from experts in the field and brought the first-ever, top-secret briefing to the Cadet Wing. These talks instilled a mindset of accelerated change and sustained strategic depth.

Athletics – in 2023 USAFA Boxing won a national title. We won four conference championships, had 49 All-American athletes and ranked 42 out of 325 Schools in the Learfield Cup competition, which is a compilation of all NCAA sporting competitions. We placed #1 in the Mountain West Conference and #1 among service Academies while bringing home the Commander-in-Chief's trophy after beating Army and Navy.

PRIORITY #2: PREPARING LEADERS FOR FUTURE CONFLICT

The pace of change across all domains of conflict requires aggressive efforts to ensure our graduates are ready to thrive and succeed in the dynamic environments they will face as warfighters. As our Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., stated, we must “accelerate change or lose.” Preparing for the future fight is a significant challenge, but with great challenges come great opportunities. We are poised to be the drivers of change that modern combat demands. We must prepare warfighters who will fight and win in future conflicts for problems we don't even know about yet. Academically and militarily we are focused on our pacing threats to include China and making sure we are developing creative and bold thinkers ready for an era where conflict is unpredictable.

Curriculum Development, Standards and Content

We are dedicated to delivering a curriculum that will lay the foundation for intellectual development to benefit our cadets in the Air Force and Space Force. Our faculty continues to excel and educate our cadets at the very highest levels to develop and prepare our leaders for future conflict. Earlier this year, we received the authority to implement a tenure program that will allow the Dean of Faculty to recruit more world-class professors to our cadre. We also maintained the Higher Learning Commission's gold standard of accreditation. We achieved a maximum rating of "All Conditions Met" in its four-year review.

Our Dean of Faculty is committed to building warfighter scholars, ready to apply their breadth and depth of knowledge to tackling the hard problems that the future fight will bring. USAFA offers interdisciplinary and conflict-focused courses and opportunities to help build cadet's capacity to tackle complex problems like climate change and conflict or geography of international conflict. We also offer eight interdisciplinary warfighting minors with a ninth on the way. Lastly, we involve cadets in world-class and future-fight focused research. The Life Sciences Research Center received a \$14 million grant from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency to help develop a vaccine against a bio-threat agent reported to have been previously produced by Russia and possibly North Korea. Members of the Cadet Space Operations Squadron also participate in the Sprint Advanced Concept Training, which "serves as an innovation and collaboration testbed for advancing all aspects of Space Operations."

USAF AI 36-3526, *USAFA Course of Instruction and Change Control*, outlines the process for curricular changes. In general, changes to the curriculum must be sponsored by a member of the Curriculum Committee. The member (e.g., academic department head, staff agency lead, etc.) proposing the change submits the proposal to the Integrated Curriculum Committee for initial review (primarily to integrate and deconflict changes across Academy programs). Following that round of review, proposals are forwarded to the Curriculum Committee for vote. The Curriculum Committee votes for or against the proposal, which then goes as a recommendation to the Academy Board. The Academy Board receives the recommendation from the Curriculum Committee and then makes a final determination to accept or reject the proposed changes. The Academy Board, chaired by the superintendent, is the approval authority to create/modify/delete academic (and non-academic) courses, programs, and experiences.

Institute for Future Conflict (IFC)

In 2021, we stood up our Institute for Future Conflict (IFC) to embody and empower the warfighter mindset. The IFC is destined to become a centerpiece in our future officer development and was established to integrate scholarship and thought leadership, providing resources that will enable cadets, faculty and senior leaders to examine the technological and socio-cultural demands of modern conflict. The IFC focuses its efforts along three lines: learning to leverage emerging and disruptive technologies, understanding potential adversaries and allies, and educating on the foundations of warfare and conflict. The IFC is implementing the direction

of the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and is shifting the focus from anti-terrorism operations to strategic competition that concentrates on China as the “pacing threat.”

The IFC has completed a USAFA-wide curriculum review and we are implementing NDS direction across the Wing. The Dean is driving a prototype course for artificial intelligence, and one core course uses the multi-domain lab that has two air operation centers, 24 cockpit simulators, a cyber-hacking range and space capabilities that immerses cadets in future China-based scenarios. The Dean is also implementing opportunities to update course syllabi to reflect NDS direction. Under the direction of the Commandant, the IFC helps to conduct South China Sea exercises in the Fall and Spring with a culminating event for seniors that includes a classified briefing by the Pacific Air Force Commander. The IFC takes advantage of the Cadet’s access to classified material and regularly presents lectures associated with the future fight. These briefings exist within the purview of both the Dean and the Commandant, strengthening faculty and cadet research and they support many assessments across the Department of Defense. The IFC is also working with the Department of Athletics to build a human performance program that will build warriors ready for the future fight. Lastly, the IFC provides opportunities for cultural immersion travel and opportunities across industry, academia, and government. I am confident that this new institute will help us accelerate the change needed to outpace and outperform our adversaries in any future scenario.

Space

From my own years of experience across diverse operating environments, nearly all of our operations on the modern battlefield now involve space. Space is where, as many in our Air Force and Space Force like to say, we “connect sensors to shooters.” As the ultimate high ground, freedom to operate in space provides our forces with a tremendous tactical advantage – but space is no longer uncontested, and our cadets will be the ones responsible for maintaining our unfettered access to a warfighting domain that will only grow more crucial to our national security.

The space related efforts at our Academy reflect this critical, strategic need. Space has always been a part of the curriculum at USAFA, and we were one of the first institutions in the world to offer an accredited astronautical engineering major. We expanded our offerings with majors in Space Operations and Astro Systems Engineering, along with a brand-new Space Warfighting minor. We boast one of the only undergraduate programs to design, develop and fly real, operational satellites. As some in these programs have reminded me, cadets at USAFA have designed and flown more satellites than most countries.

As the United States Space Force (USSF) has taken shape, we have been proud to be a part of its historic beginnings. Our Class of 2020 included the first 86 of our graduates, and since then we have commissioned over 400 into the USSF. We anticipate an average of 96 per class over the next four years. Our expectation is that roughly 10% of each of our graduating classes will now commission into the Space Force for the foreseeable future.

Currently, we have 35 Space Force Guardians serving on USAFA faculty and staff with plans in place to convert several of those billets from USAF to USSF in Fiscal Year 24. We supported the activation of Space Force Delta 13, Detachment 1 – the first Space Force unit

authorized at our Academy - aligned under the Space Training & Readiness Command. Additionally, we proudly assisted the USSF by providing a temporary home for Delta 10 (Doctrine & War Gaming), which is already developing Space Force doctrine, tactics and conducts the USSF war game lessons-learned program. Col. Jeffrey “Cap” Greenwood, our first Space Force liaison, and now Col. Marc Sands - Delta 13 Det 1 Commander, are integral to these efforts while educating our cadets on opportunities in the USSF. Not long after these efforts began, Col. Greenwood told Air Force Magazine: “Where do you go if you want to be a pilot? I think most people would say, you go to the Air Force Academy if you want to fly in the United States Air Force. I want that same mentality of, if you want to serve in the United States Space Force, then you come to the United States Space Force’s academy, and that’s here at USAFA.” I agree wholeheartedly.

We established a new Guardianship program called Azimuth which is the only joint undergraduate, nationwide space education and training Guardianship program. Cadets from the United States Naval Academy, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and for the first time - the United States Military Academy, will join USAFA cadets for the three-week program. Last year, Azimuth was a two-week prototype and due to its success, grew to a full three-week program, occurring in each of USAFA’s summer periods. Azimuth’s overall goal is to inspire cadets to become leaders of character, motivated to lead in the Space Force and to prepare our future Guardians to prevail in competition and conflict through innovative education, training, doctrine and testing.

Cyber

Cyberspace is a critical domain for our Joint Force, and we are dedicated to leading in a rapidly expanding frontier that touches every aspect of our military operations, our national security, and our prosperity. USAFA takes a multi-disciplinary approach to training and educating our cadets on some of the toughest cyber-related problems facing our nation. We integrate cyber education across our curriculum to build cognitive diversity and prepare our cadets for the interconnected nature of the modern battlefield. Through our Multi-Domain Lab (discussed below) our cyber operations are fully integrated into a larger all-domain package (air, land, sea, space, cyber). These cadet exercises replicate future force packaging that will create multiple dilemmas for our adversaries in a future conflict. These synergistic capabilities should give pause to any potential foes as they attempt strategic competition across the spectrum of conflict. Our Academy is one of the only undergraduate institutions in the nation to be designated a National Security Agency Center for Academic Excellence for both Cyber Operations and Cyber Defense education. In fact, our Academy just passed its 5-year re-designation for Cyber Defense education. Our cadets must ensure future cyber superiority, and a number of our initiatives are ensuring they accomplish that mission.

Madera Cyber Innovation Center

The Madera Cyber Innovation Center broke ground in August 2021, and will be a game changer for our cyber capabilities. It will be an iconic, physical reminder that this Academy intends to lead the way in cyberspace, featuring modern classrooms, labs, and research and design spaces – all critical in bringing our campus into the 21st century and beyond. The Center will facilitate collaboration across the Department of Defense, with allied and coalition partners,

industry, academia, and local partners, and will allow our cadets to explore advanced computer and cyber science concepts.

We are grateful for the generosity of Paul (USAFA Class of 1978) and Joan Madera, who donated one of the largest individual gifts in Academy history to establish this center. They are a prime example of our alumni and extended network of support ensuring our graduates are well prepared to lead our nation in this critical domain. In total, more than 450 donors committed more than \$26 million to the project.

CyberWorx

Hosted at USAFA, the Air Force CyberWorx program is educating cadets while simultaneously partnering with industry to solve some of the toughest cyber problems facing our nation. CyberWorx is the Air Force's leading problem-solving unit, tackling operational problems by collaborating with government, industry and academic experts through intentional human-centered design activities. Armed with rapid prototyping capability, CyberWorx utilizes “Design Thinking,” a structured but dynamic method of problem solving, and one that enhances cognitive diversity and creativity. The program also conducts technology forecasting and exploration, experimenting with emerging technologies early to ensure that the Air Force is ready to integrate the capability when viable.

CyberWorx encourages the acceptance of significant risk knowing that failures are likely. Failing quickly and cheaply within the CyberWorx studio promotes risk tolerance and the bold thinking needed for Air Force operations in all domains. In addition to the design sprint the program facilitated with our Honor Review Committee, CyberWorx also hosted the design sprint focused on our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program which resulted in the “Let’s Be Clear” campaign. Additional design sprints were conducted on a wide variety of critical issues, including a recent examination of missile warning in support of NORAD/NORTHCOM and the Pathfinder Program office as they examine the missile warning system.

Multi-Domain Lab

In September 2021 we opened our Multi-Domain Lab, the first lab of its kind at any of the service academies. The \$9.5 million facility contains two modular suites that provide a cutting-edge learning experience, immersing cadets in a complex and realistic air, space and cyber operations environment. The lab includes 24 flight simulators, six remotely piloted aircraft simulators, 12 intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance-electronic-warfare simulators, and two operations centers comprised of more than 40 command and control work stations. The lab can be configured for learning across strategic, operational and tactical levels of war. A third modular suite, with a deep emphasis on space warfare, is planned for FY2024. The Multi-Domain Lab is used by over 1,400 cadets annually, providing nearly 24,000 contact hours of cutting-edge, experiential learning for future Air Force and Space Force leaders.

Airmanship

USAFA's #1 Airmanship and Aviation objective is to expose and motivate cadets through targeted experiences, allowing them to make informed career choices that lean toward the rated

and operational Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSC). Through numerous initiatives, we provide character and skill building opportunities that include freefall parachuting and opportunities to solo a glider or T-53 aircraft. More advanced opportunities give cadets leadership experience alongside their active-duty counterparts in Air Education and Training Command Flying Training Squadrons.

Over the past three years we developed and implemented a true four-year Airmanship continuum of learning. This initiative includes AV-100, a 10-lesson, virtual reality, simulator-based fundamentals of aviation course offered to over 90% of the freshman class. During their sophomore year, cadets have targeted opportunities for live flight in either the T-53 (powered flight) or glider program. Then, junior and senior year are capped off with advanced opportunities to serve as instructors and jumpmasters, and AV-400 introduces Undergraduate Pilot Training (UPT) Operations and the T-6.

Additionally, we provided airmanship opportunities to Cadet Candidates at the USAFA Preparatory School through the Early Path to Wings program. In our fourth year of the program, we expanded the aviation opportunity to eight private pilot certified students and an additional 20 Solo Program Preppies. This is a 100% increase over last year and the program is now part of USAFA's Airmanship Experience Model intended to create a larger more diverse population of graduates who are interested in, eligible and selected for rated (aviation) assignments.

PRIORITY #3: FOSTER A CULTURE OF DIGNITY AND RESPECT

I am honored to return to the United States Air Force Academy campus for the fourth time in my career, and I am often asked what changed over the past four decades since I first arrived as a basic cadet from Richmond, Virginia. One thing that has not changed is our purpose: we are here to develop leaders of character. But as I look at our campus, our cadets, and our community, I see an Academy that has grown and continues to evolve alongside a rapidly changing nation and world. Our society is becoming more diverse, and with it, so are our Air Force, Space Force and service academies. Change and progress does not come without challenges and there is a risk of divisiveness and indignity that can spread in our organizational culture if we allow it. Fortunately, our Academy stands ready to combat these risks because our foundation is based on developing leaders of character focused on dignity and respect for all human beings. As long as we instill these values across our institution, these fundamental principles can protect us against a culture that allows degrading behavior of any kind to proliferate.

"Let's Be Clear" Campaign and Sexual Assault and Prevention and Response (SAPR)

After receiving the results from the Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS), I directed a SAPR redesign in the Spring of 2022 to build upon recommendations of the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the military, due to the unique Military Service Academy environment. CyberWorx conducted a design sprint with 77 interviews across the Cadet Wing and permanent party, collected feedback, and analyzed data from our many programs. Additionally, in January, we brought together cadets, alumni, permanent party, our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response team and national subject matter experts as the culmination of our redesign effort. Our goal was to identify what works and what does not in our

training and our culture. I asked for bold thinking to find solutions that create an environment where everyone is safe from physical and emotional harm.

By March, the Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies for Academic Program Year 2021-2022 was released. This report provided data on the prevalence of sexual harassment and unwanted sexual contact (defined as a range of sex-related offenses prohibited by the Uniform Code of Military Justice), involving cadets and/or midshipmen at the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, and the U.S. Military Academy. There was no downplaying the results. We saw an increase in these behaviors across the Academies and we needed to take immediate action.

Using the data collected from the design sprint, we initiated a three-phase culture reset aimed at reducing the prevalence of sexual harassment and violence. USAFA's "Let's Be Clear" campaign comprises three Lines of Effort (LOEs), and each LOE includes three phases, including multiple initiatives. Phase I started in April, and we transitioned to Phase II at the end of June 2023.

Our Lines of effort are outlined below. We are focused on prevention, response and accountability.

1. Leaders of Character Use Their Power to Prevent Unhealthy Behaviors
2. Warfighters Respond to Harm Courageously
3. Effective Teams Accelerate Accountability

As a result of USAFA's efforts, we completed eight significant initiatives and are making progress on 13 more in Phase I. Of these 13, six are awaiting USAFA internal process modifications and one is awaiting results of OSD & SAF/PA guidance (related to military justice reform). Below is a brief summary of what has been completed since April:

- All rising sophomores received three hours of Healthy Relationship Training in May. Initial feedback from cadets has been overwhelmingly positive.
- The Academy Board approved a revised schedule for Academic Year 23-24 to provide cadets an additional 90-minute period, four to six times per semester for SH&V-related education and training.
- Leadership presence in the dorms will increase by standing up a cohort of Dormitory Duty Officers made up of uniformed permanent party.
- A policy was written to lock unused dorm rooms, which will be codified into a Cadet Wing Instruction for increased accountability.
- The Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Cohort Year Education, which is a pivotal point for this culture shift, will now include new elements executed this year: a survivor panel, a sitting commander panel and a fieldwork scenario-based exercise.
- We instituted the "Encourage to Report" policy, an expansion of "Safe to Report," for victims or witnesses of sexual assault or sexual harassment, bullying and hazing. The policy addresses the barriers victims may have to report unwanted sexual contact when other non-sexual infractions have occurred (e.g., underage drinking, misuse of the cadet pass system).

- In the short term, we secured \$1.1 million to execute Healthy Relationship Training and to enhance our AOC cohort. Our A1 team allocated 20 new positions to maximize our response and training capabilities. We will submit a comprehensive, long-term programming solution for the “Let’s Be Clear” Campaign initiatives in the FY26 POM.
- Received Superintendent authority to allow immediate and involuntary admin turnback for egregious offender cases. This allows the Superintendent the ability to expeditiously remove a cadet from USAFA who is pending investigation or discipline action and has demonstrated that they are a threat to health, safety or good order and discipline at the Academy.

In addition to these efforts, USAFA continues to complete the actions directed by Secretary Austin in March 2023. Congress is tracking those actions, which in some cases are different than what is in the Let’s Be Clear campaign. The issue of sexual harassment and violence and instilling a culture of dignity and respect remain top priorities as we move through the summer and prepare for our new academic year.

Parental Guardianship Rights

The issue of parental guardianship rights for cadets has been an important topic for USAFA under fostering dignity, respect, diversity and inclusion. In FY22 there was significant movement when Congress passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) legislation (Sec 559A) directing OSD to prescribe regulations that includes the option to preserve parental guardianship rights of a cadet or midshipman who becomes pregnant or fathers a child while attending a military service academy (MSA). Known as the CADET (Cadets Afforded Dignity, Equality and Training) Act, the completed policy change was due 27 December 2022, however DoD guidance has not been issued. We understand that OSD is updating formal guidance and expecting to publish within the next two to three months.

Although DoD has not issued guidance, they directed the MSAs comply with the spirit of the CADET Act and ensure cadets have an option to remain in training while maintaining parental rights. USAFA accomplished this by requiring cadets wishing to maintain parental rights and stay at USAFA to have an approved Family Care Plan (FCP) consistent with DoD and DAF guidance for enlisted and officers.

Since the passage of the CADET Act, six cadets requested FCPs – all have been approved. USAFA currently has four cadets who have dependent children or are expecting and who remain in cadet status. These cadets continue to meet quality performance standards. USAFA led the way in this initiative – one of our graduates, Maj. Melissa Hemphill, worked tirelessly over the years supporting cadets and advocating for change.

Critical Thinking and Learning at USAFA

As an academic institution and accredited college, our Academy encourages cadets to engage in critical thinking and discourse, and critical theory is one of many theoretical approaches in which USAFA uses to advance this objective. To this end, our Academy supports an instructor’s responsibility to challenge students to evaluate issues from different perspectives, and to do so in an environment of academic freedom. However, the presentation of a particular theory or viewpoint by an individual faculty member, does not imply or constitute institutional endorsement of the theory itself nor does our Academy as an institution indoctrinate its cadets in

critical theory. Ultimately, our faculty are committed to teaching future officers how to think, not what to think.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

At USAFA, our first priority is to develop leaders of character who live honorably, lift others to their best possible selves and elevate performance toward a common and noble purpose. In order to lift others and elevate performance, we must develop leaders who value diversity, lead inclusively and treat everyone with dignity and respect. According to our Air Force and Space Force doctrine, diversity and inclusion are warfighting imperatives critical to successful mission execution across the entire range of operations. By recognizing, respecting, attempting to understand and incorporating the different perspectives and experiences each Airman and Guardian brings to the fight, we are better positioned to find new and better solutions to the complex challenges we face in the 21st Century geopolitical and warfighting environments.

In order to develop leaders of character ready to lead in future conflict, our USAFA Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity Strategic Plan focuses on how we recruit, develop, retain and sustain Airmen and Guardians who value diversity and lead inclusively, ultimately designed to further promote a culture of dignity and respect. First, our Academy must recruit cadets and staff representative of the diversity of the talent pool. Our Academy, as well as our Air Force and Space Force, are in a fierce competition for talent and that talent is increasingly diverse. In order to face the challenges of the future, we must attract and recruit our nation's best and brightest talent.

Second, our Academy must develop leaders who value the diversity of those they lead, as well as unleash their potential for innovation by leading inclusively. It is undeniable that our cadets will lead diverse, highly talented teams when they graduate. In order to maximize their team's performance, they must develop the leadership skills necessary to unlock the potential of these richly diverse, talented teams.

Third, our Academy must retain and provide opportunities for success across all our Airmen and Guardians. Critical to this effort is promoting a culture of dignity and respect, where all can rise to their best possible selves and elevate the performance of their units, as well as the Academy.

Lastly, our Academy must ensure that we have structures and strategies in place to manage our efforts, measure results, and hold ourselves accountable to our priorities.

Infrastructure

The Air Force Academy campus is unique because much of its infrastructure – including the dormitories, classrooms, gymnasiums, training centers and administrative buildings – was constructed at the same time, from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. As a result, many of our facilities began to deteriorate and age out at the same time. Our campus is scenic and offers a number of advantages, but its location on the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains also means that our facilities are exposed to extreme temperature swings and high winds that exacerbate the

degradation of roofs, pavements, utilities systems, and other systems. Recognizing its unique place in American history and culture, in 2004 our Cadet Area was designated a National Historic Landmark. While this designation honors the significance of our campus and mission, it also comes with special construction limitations that can complicate enhancement projects and increase the cost of some repairs.

We continue to prioritize investment in our facilities and infrastructure in order to posture the Air Force Academy to meet its mission requirements, care for our Airmen, Guardians, and their families, and ensure that we are prepared for the future. Since 2006, we received more than \$1.1 billion for the restoration and recapitalization of facilities and infrastructure, most of which came in the form of operations and maintenance funds provided within the Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) program. In addition, we have also received substantial Military Construction (MILCON) funding for projects across our campus. These projects include:

Cadet Chapel

Renovations began in 2019 to repair multiple infrastructure issues that threatened the survivability of the most visited, man-made tourist attraction in Colorado. We are currently 70% complete with completion estimated in late 2026. The discovery of asbestos added new layers of complexity to the renovations, but abatement is now complete and the plan to restore every facet of the building to its original state remains the same. The renovations include replacing the building's aluminum siding, stiffening the steel upper structure, installing a new water barrier, removing and cleaning the building's original 24,000 pieces of stained glass and restoring the pews and the chapel's two enormous organs to their original state.

Madera Cyber Innovation Center

The Academy broke ground on the center in summer 2021. On completion, the three-story facility will present nearly 49,000 square feet of auditoriums, classrooms and collaboration space to the Department of Computer and Cyber Sciences to serve more than 1,400 cadets who attend department courses annually. The Air Force CyberWorx will also be housed in the new facility. Collaboration spaces will bring academia, industry and military cyber operators together to educate and train future officers of the Air Force and Space Force with a completion date in spring of 2024.

Coupled with traditional funding programs, we are fortunate to have partnerships with non-profit organizations like the Air Force Academy Foundation, the Association of Graduates, the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation and other smaller foundations. This support provides financial resources, goods and services and real property gifts. We use these gifts to provide a margin of excellence in the enhancements of facilities and infrastructure of the kind that are not typically provided by funds appropriated for FSRM and MILCON programs. A prominent example of this partnership is Polaris Hall, completed in 2016, which now houses our Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD). This project consisted of \$27.5 million in military construction and \$17 million in enhancements funded by donations. Other recent projects funded by donations have included:

Falcon Stadium Modernization Phase three

The East Club project broke ground in January 2023 and is by far the biggest improvement to the stadium to date and will be a great step in modernizing our home field to meet National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I standards. This project was externally funded by Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation and the Air Force Academy Foundation. The improvements include premium seat options, revenue opportunities and improving the fan experience.

Preparatory School Campus

The FY23 MILCON program provided the first large scale improvement of the Prep School with the authorization and appropriation of a \$49M project to consolidate cadet candidates from three facilities built in the early 1960s into a modern dormitory.

We are currently working through the Department of the Air Force to ensure that USAFA infrastructure requirements are addressed in the most efficient, expedient way. This includes searching for opportunities to leverage other methodologies and authorities to acquire and modernize facilities.

CONCLUSION

It is a time-honored tradition, each class that graduates from the United States Air Force Academy, including my own Class of 1986, prides itself on the quality of their cohort and the unique difficulties they overcame together in a program of academics, military training, athletics and character development that has always been among the most challenging offered on any campus across our nation.

Even in the midst of some historic hurdles, the performance of our cadets, faculty and staff coupled with the support of our extended communities have instilled in me a great level of confidence about our future. Developing leaders of character prepared for the demands of modern conflict is not without life lessons and learning from mistakes, failures and hardships. We still have much work to do, but on our campus, I see a population of cadets who are much more informed, technologically savvy, innovative and physically fit than any who have come before them. Importantly, I see an opportunity for us as senior leaders and educators to shape this next generation of officers into one of limitless potential.

The aforementioned leadership priorities I outlined represent a collective dedication to excellence and renewed mission focus throughout our campus. The events of these past three years were a case study for flexibility and adaptability, so in crafting our plans and priorities we cannot be afraid of change. As leaders we must also recognize the necessity of making decisions that may reshape our institution. This is a mission that requires constant improvement, innovation, and refinement, and I am confident that our path is one of continued success in developing the future leaders of our Air Force and Space Force. I am proud of our direction, and am fully confident in the capability of our cadets, faculty and staff to take on the daunting challenges we face.

The former Secretary of the Air Force Harold Talbott once called our Academy “a bridge to the future.” We must continue to reinforce this bridge – the people and the infrastructure that

represent a critical investment in the future of our national security – so that it remains strong enough to support the weight of our goals and ambitions. I would like to invite you to come visit our campus, see our programs first hand, and speak with faculty, staff, and cadets. I have no doubt that you would come away as inspired by them as I am lucky enough to be each day. The interest and support of this committee is greatly appreciated, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss how, together, we can ensure our mission success. Thank you.