



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY



05 February 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: HQ USAFA/DSX

SUBJECT: United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) Board of Visitors (BoV) Meeting Minutes

1. **Meeting:** Thursday, 05 February 2026 at 1204 (EST). Board members attended in-person and virtually via Zoom. Members of the public were also able to participate in the meeting as registered in-person participants or online via Zoom.

2. **Agenda:**

<b>05 Feb 26 - Board of Visitors Meeting: Agenda Summary</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Board Opening Remarks a. Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) Remarks b. Chairman’s Remarks
2	Superintendent’s Update
3	Discussion on Board Questions for Record
4	Working Group Updates and Discussion
5	Action Item Review
6	Public Comments
7	Final Board Member Remarks
8	Chairman’s Concluding Remarks

3. Designated Federal Officer Action: Dr. Raquel Rimpola, Designated Federal Officer of the U.S. Air Force Academy Board of Visitors (BoV AFA or Board), confirmed that the Board membership quorum requirement for the meeting was met.

4. Chairman’s Remarks: Congressman August Pfluger welcomed those who have traveled to Washington D.C. and those that were present [in the room and online] to convene together in advocacy for the Academy. He welcomed Honorable Troy Meink, Secretary of the Air Force, for his remarks.

5. **SECAF Remarks:** The Honorable Troy Meink, Secretary of the Air Force, thanked the BOV AFA for all the work they are doing to support USAFA and highlighted USAFA’s role in training future Air Force leaders and setting the culture of the Service through what is taught to the cadets. He focused on the leadership skills being taught and the values of integrity, mental fortitude, resilience, and flexibility being instilled at the Academy and the critical role they played in operations such as Midnight Hammer and Absolute Resolve. He stated that the role of

the Air Force officer is growing more difficult because of the dynamic nature of the world and the introduction of advanced systems with the integration of AI and other autonomous agents. He acknowledged the Academy's infrastructure challenges, and the need to have the right training environments to start teaching the cadets how to be leaders in a technical environment. He shared that the Academy has already begun building the necessary infrastructure, facilities, and training environment to allow these cadets to succeed. He emphasized that everybody that comes out of the Academy should have a solid technical background and are taught the value of integrity in the use of technology. He shared that cadets must understand what technology can and cannot do, the risks of its use, and the potential ethics associated with employing it. He shared the need for competition and appreciates the academic balance between military and technical training. He mentioned the upcoming changes in Academy leadership and thanked the Board for their service to the Academy. He then answered questions from the Board.

- 5.1. Senator Tuberville inquired about the integration of advanced technologies into the curriculum and leadership of the Academy.

The Honorable Meink confirmed that it is vital for cadets to learn how to be leaders in these new high-tech environments, as this is the future of the Air Force. He added that the Academy needs to ensure it has the appropriate infrastructure for cadets to succeed with autonomous systems and agents.

- 5.2. Mr. Nikolai shared the Board's request for approval to develop focus groups to do deep dive work on areas like infrastructure, AI, and discipline, and to consider bringing outside expertise to assist them with accomplishing their duty per the bylaws.

The Honorable Meink verbally approved the request. He commented on how he had given the Board some focus areas in his opening comments and shared his interest in seeing other areas the Board will focus on.

- 5.3. Congressman Crank commented on the unique recapitalization needed for the Academy's infrastructure. He asked that the SECAF remain open to not only traditional MILCON methods but also to inventive approaches to the problem, such as the use of foundations (i.e., Falcon Foundation), which have been utilized by other service academies.

The Honorable Meink agreed. He highlighted the ongoing issues with the Cadet Chapel and emphasized that future projects, on both existing and new infrastructure, would need a different approach requiring cooperation between the President, the Hill, and Colorado to be accomplished successfully.

**6. Opening Remarks:** Congressman August Pfluger, USAFA BoV Chairman, thanked the Secretary for speaking to the Board and expressed that the Board is here to advocate and listen. He shared that the work of the focus groups and having access to the Academy can provide the firepower on Capitol Hill to get the resources it needs. He acknowledged that the work of the Board aligns with the Secretary's focus areas. He then provided an overview for the focus of the meeting and a preview of the future schedule of the Board, which includes a meeting in Spring 2026 and the next semiannual report submission in Summer 2026. He introduced the new Board members: Senator Ted Budd of North Carolina, Senator Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma, and

Senator Kevin Cramer of North Dakota. He commended the selection of Col James Valpiani as Dean of the Faculty and expressed confidence that Col Valpiani will do great things in the position. He gave a summary of the semiannual report and highlighted the recommendations of increasing the cadet wing end strength from 4,000 to 4,400; an audit of the current faculty composition of the Academy by the Air Force Manpower Analysis Agency; the establishment of a Department of War (DoW) Military Service Academy (MSA) commission; a review of the disciplinary procedures at the Academy; and a dedicated section of the FY27 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to focus on reinvesting in the MSAs. He then listed the focus groups that have been established by the Board to work collaboratively alongside the Academy to advocate for the institution appropriately. ‘The Board wants to see the Academy succeed because air power has played the dominant role in achieving strategic effects for the Administration, and that starts with setting the tone at USAFA, as that sets the tone for all commissioning sources. The Board is the chief advocacy arm to ensure that the Academy remains the preeminent service academy for years to come.’ Congressman Pfluger stated he is proud to be an USAFA graduate and proud of the Airmen and Guardians who are defending the Nation.

**7. Superintendent’s Update:** Lieutenant General Bauernfeind, USAFA Superintendent, opened his remarks by thanking Congressman Pfluger and the Board for their advocacy and support. His briefing consisted of three main topics: USAFA 2025 year in review, a look ahead to 2026, and USAFA 2050.

- 7.1. **USAFA 2025 In Review.** Lt. Gen. Bauernfeind highlighted what the cadets and permanent party accomplished at the Academy in 2025 in their efforts to forge warfighters, leaders of character, and critical thinkers. The Academy purchased new unmanned aerial systems and added three new warfighting minors to the curriculum: Future Conflicts (heavily supported by the Institute for Future Conflict), Quantum Technologies, and Aerospace Materials. USAFA expanded its Airmanship program to empower cadet instructors to support year-round military training and weapons qualification. As a result, the Class of '29 achieved a 97% qualification rate and a 15% expert rate for the M4. The 306th Flying Training Group (306 FTG) delivered 12,700 flight hours and over 22,000 successful jumps. Lt. Gen. Bauernfeind highlighted the flying team, which won its 39th consecutive championship; the Wings of Blue, which won 35 medals and set two national collegiate records; and the cyber team's victories against West Point, Annapolis, and the NSA. The Academy integrated a "space week" and fully established its spring and fall field exercises. The Academy also had a highly successful athletic year with six individual and three team national champions.
- 7.2. **Look Ahead to 2026.** Lt. Gen. Bauernfeind outlined new programs and policies for the 2026 academic year, emphasizing the empowerment of cadets to lead and learn. As part of Operation Protect Our House, USAFA is encouraging cadets to attend and support all intercollegiate athletic events to give all cadets the feeling of the home field advantage. The incoming Class of '28 had a 98% commitment rate, and applications to the Academy have increased by 11% over the last five years. The number of rated career field slots has also grown significantly; the Class of '25 received 448 slots (16% increase), while the Class of '26 received 605 slots (35% increase). USAFA has opened the Madera Cyber Innovation Center, which cadets will utilize in their computer engineering and computer science courses. The FalconSAT program is still going strong, with three FalconSATs

currently in orbit testing the Academy's astronomical engineering capabilities. He highlighted that USAFA has planned thirteen events to celebrate America's 250th anniversary, starting with the National Character and Leadership Symposium. Finally, he explained the transition of the 306th FTG from Air Education and Training Command (AETC) back to USAFA and discussed the goal of expanding the program as part of the "Airmanship for All" initiative.

- 7.3. **USAFA 2050.** Lt. Gen. Bauernfeind shared the need for the long-term infrastructure development of the Academy that will sustain, modernize, and develop cutting-edge facilities to remain America's premier service academy. He shared the vision of USAFA 2050 to "provide sufficient resources to build and maintain modern, world-class facilities that support USAFA's mission of forging tomorrow's warfighters, leaders, and critical thinkers ready to lead the joint force on Day One." He also spoke of the Academy's infrastructure challenges, including Sijan Hall, the Cadet Chapel, and the Cadet Gym. He explained a common issue with donor dollars, that while highly appreciated, these donations represent a single influx of capital that does not account for the ongoing cost of sustainment. USAFA's unique infrastructure funding challenges have driven a discussion on whether the Academy should be funded as a DAF-funded institution or through the Installation and Mission Support Center (IMSC). As a part of modernizing the institution, USAFA has completed the Madera Cyber Innovation Center. This is the first part of an air, space, and cyber complex that will include an aero lab and a space education center, providing high-level research capacity and classified military training opportunities. USAFA is currently working with SAF/IE to develop a plan to move from vision to a program of execution for this future, should it be validated by the SECAF. Lt Gen Bauernfeind finished by stating that USAFA's priorities are USAFA 2050, growing the airmanship program to "Airmanship for All," and consideration of Cadet Wing growth.

8. **Board Questions and Answers for the Record:** Congressman Pfluger opened the floor to Board members for questions to the USAFA Superintendent and staff.

- 8.1. **Recapitalization of Training Aircraft:** Senator Budd asked what the recapitalization plans were for USAFA's training aircraft, as some are 50 years old and have up to 20,000 flight hours on them.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind explained that USAFA is developing a multiphase "Airmanship for All" approach with General Wilsbach's office. This approach would have all freshmen cadets attend an Aviation 100 course that incorporates virtual reality training and culminates with a flight with an instructor. This would also expand the Soaring Program to allow for "soaring for all" for sophomores, which would allow all cadets to experience the excitement and joy of aviation. This has sparked a discussion on moving job selection earlier for cadets to enable additional focus and developmental time for the career fields they will be entering. A recapitalization of the Academy's powered flight program is needed for this vision to have the cadets selected for rated career fields complete their initial flight training while at USAFA, so they can proceed directly to UPT and the T-6 upon graduation and commissioning.

- 8.2. **Dormitory Renovation:** Congressman Bacon expressed concern and inquired about USAFA's dormitory replacement and renovation plan.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind commented the dorm renovation is being accomplished in phases to ensure that the Academy maintains the required number of beds. This is being accomplished partially by utilizing the three-person room configuration that was common when the USAFA Cadet Wing was much larger. Additional research is being done on the development of a "swing-space dormitory" to assist in the perpetual sustainment of Sijan and Vandenberg Halls.

- 8.3. **Air Force Academy Funding and the Air Force Corporate Structure:** Congressman Pfluger asked how the Academy fits into the Air Force corporate structure and if USAFA competes with operational units for funding or if the institution has money set aside from the Air Force for its projects.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind clarified, USAFA competes with the other 183 operational wings to fund MILCON and sustainment requirements at IMSC. This competition includes any infrastructure goals the Academy wants to accomplish for USAFA 2050. West Point and Annapolis, however, receive a dedicated portion of their Service's topline budget rather than competing within their corporate structure.

- 8.4. **USAFA End Strength Increase Requirements:** Congressman Crank questioned what challenges USAFA would face in increasing the Cadet Wing end strength from 4,000 to 4,400.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind shared that an increase in the Cadet Wing end strength would need to be based on the future growth of the Air and Space Forces to match the future requirements of the two services, but the key challenge to the increase would be faculty shortfalls. The USAFA facilities were built for and have supported larger Cadet Wings over the years, but the Academy would need approximately 100 to 125 additional personnel, primarily concentrated in the Dean of Faculty and the Athletic Department, to accommodate an increase to 4,400 cadets.

- 8.5. **History Curriculum:** Congressman Crank asked what the history requirements are at USAFA.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind and Col Hasstedt expounded in the core curriculum at USAFA, History 100 covers military history, and History 300 covers world history. Constitutional history is woven through many core curriculum classes, such as political science, law, and philosophy. American history was seen to be taught at greater levels in high school; because of this, a decision was made to free up space in the core curriculum. However, USAFA will assess the Class of 2029 to determine their knowledge of American history and to ascertain if high school history classes are providing an appropriate and common level of knowledge to cadets before they enter the Academy.

- 8.6. **Cadet Chapel Renovation:** Mr. Nikolai inquired about the completion date of the Cadet Chapel. He challenged the team working on it, in the spirit of Charlie Kirk, to finish the chapel for the graduating Class of 2027.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind confirmed the current estimated completion date for the Cadet Chapel is the fall of 2028, but the project team will share the challenge with the SECAF to determine what options can be pursued.

- 8.7. **Men's Soccer Team Update:** Mr. Nikolai and Mr. Clark asked for an update on the status of the soccer cadets.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind answered that the soccer cadets are progressing well through their requirements.

- 8.8. **USAFA Visitor Center:** Congressman Crank expressed his interest in the new visitor center and stressed the need to complete it due to issues regarding its status as a bonded project.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind confirmed the visitor center is on target for a projected completion date of May 15, 2026, and is meeting all requirements for a government facility. USAFA is planning an opening ceremony for the center that will acknowledge both the completion of the facility and America's 250th and Colorado's 150th anniversaries.

9. **Working Group Updates and Discussion:** The USAFA Board of Visitors has established working groups on vital topics to foster creative thinking. This approach will enable the Board to ask the right questions and leverage industry partners and experts to assist the SECWAR and SECAF, helping the Academy perform at its maximum potential.

- 9.1. **Merit-Based Admissions:** Led by Congressman Bacon and Mr. Clark, this working group's goal is to examine the admissions process to ensure it is merit-based. Congressman Bacon highlighted that the admissions process should factor in not only points assessed from SAT scores and GPA but also from other sources, such as being an Eagle Scout or involvement in community service.
- 9.2. **Accreditation:** Led by Mr. Nikolai and Senator Hickenlooper, this working group is reviewing accreditation agencies for all MSAs to ensure they are a suitable fit for the institutions and that there is transparency in accreditation standards.
- 9.3. **Artificial Intelligence:** Led by Ms. Powell, Senator Budd and Congressman Davis, this working group is examining how AI is being integrated into the curriculum, USAFA's internships with AI companies, and the evolving landscape of AI policy.
- 9.4. **Athletics:** Led by Senator Tuberville and Mr. Clark, this working group is collaborating with the USAFA Athletic Department to examine the impact of athletics on admissions, recruitment, and retention, as well as on name, image, and likeness (NIL) issues.
- 9.5. **Infrastructure:** Led by Congressman Pfluger and Congressman Crank, this working group is exploring the recapitalization of the Academy and innovative ways to work with partners and foundations to support the institution.

9.6 **Disciplinary Issues:** Led by Mr. Nikolai, this working group is examining due process issues at USAFA. It is also coordinating with the Boards of Visitors for the Naval Academy and the United States Military Academy to review their respective processes.

10. **Action Item Review:** Lieutenant Colonel Zachariah Gonyea, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Accessions, Recruiting, and Training Division, facilitated a review of the following action items. The Board voted to keep all action items open; all members voted in the affirmative. USAFA requested that USAFA 2050 and Cadet Wing growth be added as open action items. The Board will take this request into consideration at its next meeting.

Item	Recommendation	Status	Category	Brief Explanation
1	<u>Space Education Center</u> – 2022 Provide plans/funding update	Open	Resource	USAFA requested item be added to USAFA 2050 and for USAFA 2050 to be opened as an action item.
2	<u>Military Professor Copyrights</u> – 2022 Provide status on securing copyrights by military professors	Open	Curriculum	Item was not included in FY25 NDAA.
3	<u>Update on BOS-I-USAFA</u> – 2024 Establish BOS-I-USAFA	Open	Resource	USAFA 2050 as a new framework to improve DAF's and USAFA's focus on important infrastructure issues

11. **Public Comments:** Fifteen comments were submitted and these were categorized into three topics that align with the agenda items - curriculum, resources, and climate.

**Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Administrative Note:** Pursuant to 41 CFR 102-3.140d, and as stated in the Federal Register announcement for the 8 January 2026 USAFA BoV, the committee is not obligated to allow a member of the public to speak or otherwise address the committee during the meeting. Consistent with the USAFA BoV Bylaws, the DFO and Chairman may, allotted a specific amount of time for members of the public to present their issue for BoV review and discussion. The Chairman and DFO deferred comments to USAFA for response, as needed, during the meeting.

11.1. Mr. Mark Clodfelter: Lt Col (Ret.) Clodfelter, a 1977 USAFA graduate, advocated that the Academy expand its core humanities requirement by including American, world, and military history.

Congressman Bacon expressed support for the proposal but acknowledged that a key challenge is the full course load of cadets, which must be balanced with the introduction of any new requirements.

11.2. Mr. Zach Miller: Mr. Miller, a 2004 USAFA graduate, proposed that the Board or the Superintendent's office launch a targeted recruitment effort for skilled workers with creative ideas to assist in completing the Cadet Chapel project.

Congressman Pfluger thanked Mr. Miller for his recommendation and his passion for this issue. He acknowledged that the Cadet Chapel is an important issue for the Board and noted that they have drafted recommendations for the SECWAR on this topic.

- 11.3. Dr. Thomas Bewley: Dr. Bewley expressed concerns about the 2025 USAFA Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) results and the reduction and departure of faculty from USAFA. He recommended a report on faculty experience and degrees, the reinstatement of "education" into the Academy's mission statement, and the conversion of the vice superintendent position into a long-term civilian provost. He also requested clarification on the use of NDAs at USAFA.
- 11.4. Dr. Kent Murphy: Dr. Murphy expressed concerns about the faculty loss at USAFA and the impact these losses will have on future classes. He asked the Board to investigate the DEOCS results and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) complaints and to make appropriate recommendations based on its findings.

Congressman Pfluger clarified that some of the information released regarding the DEOCS was not final but that it will be released to the public and the Board. He added that the Board will continue to investigate the composition and end strength of the Cadet Wing and Academy faculty.

## 12. Board Member Final Comments:

- 12.1. Congressman Bacon reminded the USAFA leadership team that any issues needing NDAA support can be relayed to the Board for assistance and that the Board will work hard to insert the copyright language into the NDAA and address the Academy's funding and infrastructure issues.
- 12.2. Mr. Clark assured the public that the Board is listening and taking action to make USAFA the greatest institution of higher learning in the country.
- 12.3. Mr. Nikolai congratulated Colonel Steven Hasstedt on his tenure as the longest-serving Acting Dean of Faculty in Academy history. He explained that the current model has lost its way and needs transformation, viewing the turbulence at the Academy as an opportunity to remold a problem into something greater. He proposed establishing a school of civic thought focused on the Western values of the Constitution, emphasizing history, cultural heritage, and American exceptionalism. He paraphrased Charlie Kirk: "Cadets must understand American exceptionalism because if we're asking them to give their last full measure of devotion, then they must passionately believe that our country and ideals are worth dying for." He highlighted the importance of STEM and the challenges of AI and machine learning. He recommended that instead of siloed courses, they be combined into a single, year-long multidisciplinary course, weaving AI and machine learning into every facet of the Academy. His final point was the need to enact structural reforms for enduring change. He gave the example of establishing five interdisciplinary schools at the Academy, each with its own dean, to reduce the number of permanent professors in governance and allow them to exercise their true academic prowess in the classroom. Mr. Nikolai concluded by stating, "The current strategic

environment demands transformation. However, there will be resistance, as people don't necessarily fear change, but they do fear loss—loss of power, prestige, and influence. But we must move forward together. We must do what's best for the broader Air Force and our Air Force Academy. We want to shape those officers with the wisdom and competence to lead and excel in this hyper-changing world in which they reside.”

- 12.4. Congressman Crank commented on the Academy's infrastructure crisis, stating that it will require an investment in USAFA not seen since its inception. However, he expressed confidence that the Board can help USAFA get it done. He concluded by stating that America is the most exceptional country in the world and that this belief needs to be instilled in the cadets of the Academy, so they know they are fighting for the ideals embodied in the Constitution.

**13. Chairman's Concluding Remarks:** Congressman Pfluger thanked the Board of Visitors support team for putting the meeting together and expressed appreciation for what Secretary Meink and Under Secretary Lohmeier are doing daily to ensure that our Airmen and Guardians have the resources they need to carry out the missions the Nation requires of them. He reiterated the effective use of air and space power to achieve strategic effects, stating, “Airpower was the choice, airpower met the need, airpower met the moment, and spacepower enabled it.” He praised Lt Gen Bauernfeind and USAFA's staff for preparing our Nation's warriors to meet the challenges set before them. He thanked those who submitted public comments and the stakeholders who attended the meeting. Congressman Pfluger concluded his remarks by reinforcing the Board's commitment to advocating for the Academy to ensure it has the right resources to achieve its mission.

14. **Adjournment:** The DFO declared the meeting closed at 1444 (EST).

Certified by:




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HONORABLE AUGUST L. PFLUGER  
Chairman, USAFA Board of Visitors

Prepared by:




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DANIEL B. CASSIDY, Capt, USAF  
Executive Secretary, USAFA Board of Visitors

Attachment:

1. Board of Visitors Attendance Roster, 05 February 26
2. Public Comments
3. Board of Visitor Meeting Slides

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USAFA Board of Visitors Members  
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**Attachment 1: Board of Visitors Attendance Roster – 05 February 26**

<b>Title/Rank</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>USAFA Board of Visitor Members</b>			
Congressman	August Pfluger	Chairman, USAFA Board of Visitors U.S. House of Representatives - Texas, 11th District	Present
Senator	Ted Budd	U.S. Senate, North Carolina	Present
Senator	Kevin Cramer	U.S. Senate, North Dakota	Not Present
Senator	John Hickenlooper	U.S. Senate, Colorado	Not Present
Senator	Markwayne Mullin	U.S. Senate, Oklahoma	Present
Senator	Tommy Tuberville	U.S. Senate, Alabama, Presidential Appointee	Present
Congressman	Don Bacon	U.S. House of Representatives - Nebraska, 2nd District	Present
Congressman	Jeff Crank	U.S. House of Representatives - Colorado, 5th District	Present
Congressman	Donald Davis	U.S. House of Representatives - North Carolina, 1st District	Present
Congressman	Gabe Vasquez	U.S. House of Representatives - New Mexico, 2nd District	Not Present
Colonel (Ret.)	Doug Nikolai	Vice-Chair, USAFA Board of Visitors, Presidential Appointee	Present
Mr.	Dan Clark	Board Member, Presidential Appointee	Present
Ms.	Dina Powell	Board Member, Presidential Appointee	Present
Mr.	Dave Nugent	Staff, Congressman Pfluger	Present
<b>USAFA Board of Visitor Support Team</b>			
Mr.	Brian Scarlett	Principal Deputy ASAF (SAF/MR)	Present
Dr.	Raquel Rimpola	USAFA BoV Designated Federal Officer (DFO) SAF/MR	Present
Ms.	Blaire Brush	USAFA BoV Alternate DFO, USAFA	Present
Captain	Daniel Cassidy	USAFA BoV Executive Secretary, HAF/A1	Present
Colonel	Chad Gemeinhardt	SAF/LL	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Mahogany Swanson	SAF/LL	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Joseph Tomczak	SAF/LL	Present
Major	William Harris	SAF/LL	Present
Major	Tiara Puro	SAF/LL	Present
Major	Sam Thorn	SAF/LL	Present
Mr.	Joe Piechota	SAF/LL	Present
Colonel	Kimberly Young	HAF/A1	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Zachariah Gonyea	HAF/A1	Present
Mr.	Greg Jeffers	AFDW CS/SCOP	Present
<b>USAFA Senior Leadership</b>			
Lieutenant General	Tony Bauernfeind	Superintendent, USAFA	Present
Chief Master Sergeant	John Alsvig	Command Chief, USAFA	Present
Brigadier General	Gavin Marks	Commandant of Cadets	Present
Colonel	Steven Hasstedt	Acting Dean of Faculty	Present
Ms.	Leslie Forrester	Chief of Staff, USAFA	Present
Mr.	Nate Pine	Director of Athletics	Present
Ms.	Jennifer Block	Executive Director of Athletics	Present
Colonel	Kristin Betiz	USAFA National Capital Region Office	Present
Colonel	Ahave Brown	10 ABW, Commander	Present
Ms.	Kate Russel	USAFA HQ A1	Present
Colonel	Jennifer Hall	USAFA HQ A3	Present
Colonel	Alex Liggett	USAFA HQ A4	Present

Colonel	Max Renner	USAFA HQ A5	Present
Colonel	Eric Roehrkasse	USAFA HQ A8/9	Present
Colonel	Ted Richard	USAFA, JA	Present
Colonel	Candice Pipes	USAFA, RR	Present
Colonel	Stephanie Silva	USAFA, Space Detachment	Present
Colonel	Nancy Taylor	USAFA, 306 FTG	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Leah Pound	USAFA, HQ CAG Director	Present
Ms.	Sonja Strickland	USAFA, SAPR	Present
Major	Tara Holmes	Deputy Chief of Staff, USAFA	Present
Members of the Public			
Mr.	Dennis Miller	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Zach Miller	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Donald Bishop	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Hille	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Susan Morrow	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Dan Schnepf	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Ali Frohlich	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Thomas Bewley	Public Attendee	Present
Dr.	Kent Murphy	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Stoup	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Peter Heidlauf	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Michael Babb	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Wells	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Gaulin	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Lillian Rizzo	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Connor Crookham	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John Grillo	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Dennis Cope	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	James Pellegrino	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Honi Garvin	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Cade Austin	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Matt Husemann	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mason Beckett	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Wyatt Hornsby	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Nancy Hixson	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Cindy Kwitchoff	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Ronald Scott	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tony Mayne	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Ronald Olds	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Nikki Ferrara	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Catherine Almand	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Laura Austin	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Sara Dozier	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Edward Rizzo	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Jansen	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gavin Warmbold	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Mary Elsner	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Kyle Pearson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Herndon	Public Attendee	Present

Ms.	Katherine Spessa-Scott	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Steven Edwards	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jeff Renk	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Bentley Rayburn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Bittenbinder	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Michael Rose	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	James Kuhn	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Ski Wagasky	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Loretta Seery	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Brett Forrest	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Wayne Wilson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Raymond Heinen	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Sean Murphy	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Carol Silber	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Michael Cornelius	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Mary Shinn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John Brockman	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Siobhain Kilgallen	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Haydee Luther	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gregor Guempel	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Sam Angelella	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Eric Hearnberger	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Kathryn Smith	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Megan Sturk	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jeff Troth	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Brian Tighe	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Todd Seefeldt	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Larry Jones	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Ben W.	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Estorga	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jon Davis	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Steven Horn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John J. Ferron	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Caleb Howard	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Alan Ross	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Jenny Crider	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Scott Schafer	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Richard Grasso	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Clodfelter	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Gina Ackison	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Richard Coe	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Brian Laslie	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Stephanie Strowbridge	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tom Obeirne	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Adan Garcia	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Michael Dishman	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	James Kelly	Public Attendee	Present

Mr.	Cory Middel	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Zoey Young	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Dan Siermine	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Beonee McClarin Allen	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Leah Young	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Carter R.	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Antoinette Davis	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Steven Garve	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Chase Hite	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Michael Spain	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Carol Vavra	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Charles Gill	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Paul Dunbar	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Wistaria Joseph	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Eugene Richardson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	George Weathersby	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Guy Walsh	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Stephen Wallingford	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Katherine Moorkamp	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jason Lewis	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Joseph Betts	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Powell Wilson	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Jenny Davis	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Joshua Spence	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Brian Knauss	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Shondell Reed	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Alan Parmater	Public Attendee	Present

## Tab 1

### A KEY DEFICIENCY IN USAFA'S CORE CURRICULUM: THE LACK OF THREE ESSENTIAL HISTORY COURSES

Lt Col Mark Clodfelter, USAF (Ret.) [clodfelter1977@gmail.com](mailto:clodfelter1977@gmail.com) Cell: 703-731-9297  
USAFA '77, Former DFH Associate Professor, National War College Professor Emeritus

**Bottom line up front:** If the Academy's current review of its core curriculum does not require that all cadets study three history courses—American, world, and military history, USAFA fails in its mission to produce graduates who can resolve many problems they will face as officers.

*A long-term lapse:* USAFA eliminated a core course in American history in 1986 based on the belief that high school provided a basic understanding of it. That conviction was proven incorrect as early as 2013, when then-Superintendent Lieutenant General Michael Gould required prospective cadets in the Class of 2017 to take a “trial core course” in American history, and only 115 of 1,190 (9.7 percent) placed out of it by scoring a 4 or 5 on the American History Advanced Placement (AP) test. In spring 2025, Nebraska Congressman Don Bacon, a retired Air Force brigadier general and member of the Academy's Board of Visitors, highlighted American history's absence to Academy Superintendent Lieutenant General Tony Bauernfeind, who endorsed re-instating it as a part of the core.

*Modifying the core takes time and has engendered opposition:* For the current 2025–2026 academic year, the core curriculum remains unchanged, with all freshmen taking military history and sophomores taking world history, just as in previous years. With USAFA seemingly tied to a “fixed” number of core courses, some have called for the elimination of another core history course—world history has been suggested—to make room for American history.

*Trading one error for another:* Yet a decision to remove world history as a core course would be an error of equal magnitude to omitting American history. Like both West Point and Annapolis, three one-semester history courses should be centerpieces of USAFA's core. Moreover, the number of USAFA's core courses has often fluctuated, and increasing the minimum academic semester hour graduation requirement from 128 to 131 would not seriously burden cadets.

*Three history courses are essential:* In short, the Academy fails in its mission to produce competent officers unless all graduates take three indispensable history courses—American, world, and military—providing them with a basic background in their nation's past, a fundamental knowledge of how history has shaped potential enemies and allies, and a sound comprehension of how the profession of arms has developed through the centuries. All are critical components of a future American military leader's education.

*For the curriculum review:* I applaud the fundamental review of USAFA's core curriculum now underway. That review will not succeed, however, unless it ensures the vital background that our graduates must have to be successful officers. Continuing the current trajectory with only two required core history courses is unacceptable for future Air and Space Forces officers. For a more in-depth analysis, please see my attached article in the November 2025 issue of *Air and Space Operations Review*, “[Critiquing the US Air Force Academy's Core: Does It Satisfy the Need?](#)”

Tab 2.

Donald M. Bishop • 326 Park St NE, Vienna, VA 22180 • 703-967-3457  
[donbishop99@hotmail.com](mailto:donbishop99@hotmail.com)

January 19, 2026

Members of the Board of Visitors:

As you review USAFA's deliberations on the core curriculum, I offer three quotes:

***American History:*** Venture capitalist and general partner at Andreeson Horowitz Kathleen Boyle [wrote](#), “We don’t win a war against bad ideologies unless we know who we are, what we stand for, and where we’re headed. And if we lose this silent war—the ultimate war for American ideals—it’s not because we don’t have the know-how to build missiles and hypersonics and attributable systems and drone swarms. It will be because we doubt our inheritance. Because we doubt the beauty and nobility of what we’re building. Because we doubt that American Dynamism is true and the key to a safer, more prosperous civilization.”

***World History:*** Joseph Steib of the Naval War College, in [a recent article in \*War on the Rocks\*](#), noted “history education is relevant to national security practitioners because it fosters a better understanding of how the current world came to be, why other societies think differently from the United States, the dangers of analogical reasoning, and the difficulties of real-time decision-making.”

In 2014, an Air Force officer returned from Afghanistan [wrote](#): “Educated as engineers and technicians, young officers are deployed to places like Iraq and Afghanistan and charged with negotiating the ‘human terrain’ of cultures utterly foreign to them. Lacking knowledge of their own history as well as the history of the cultures they walk among, it is hardly surprising that they make little progress, despite hard work and honorable intentions.”

I urge you all to recommend that the USAFA core curriculum include three history courses – American history, world history, and military history.

*Respectfully yours,*

**Donald M. Bishop**

Minister-Counselor, Foreign Service of the U.S., Retired

*4<sup>th</sup> Foreign Policy Advisor to the USAF Chief of Staff*

*Country Public Affairs Officer, American Embassies in Dhaka, Abuja, Beijing, and Kabul*

*Assistant Professor of History, USAFA*

*37<sup>th</sup> Security Police Squadron, Phu Cat AB, Vietnam*

January 2026

Dear Members of the Board of Visitors,

We are writing to express serious concerns regarding recent policy changes affecting cadet club sports at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). These changes appear to significantly restrict cadets' access to competitive club-level athletics, which have long been recognized as a valuable extension of military training.

As you are aware, service academies have historically emphasized the critical role of competitive sports in developing the qualities essential for military leadership and readiness. In 1964, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur captured this connection: "Upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that, upon other fields, on other days, will bear the fruits of victory." His words highlight the profound benefits of athletics, including enhanced physical fitness, grit and resiliency, rapid decision-making, leadership development, teamwork, and strengthened morale and esprit de corps.

For the majority of cadets admitted to USAFA, varsity or high-level competitive sports were integral to their pre-Academy lives. While approximately 25% are able to continue playing through intercollegiate varsity teams at USAFA, club sports have traditionally provided the remaining cadets with opportunities to maintain high-level competition—delivering comparable training benefits while fostering friendships and serving as a healthy stress outlet.

Regrettably, recent adjustments at USAFA seem to be inadvertently—or perhaps intentionally—eliminating viable club sports participation. The Holaday Athletic Center (HAC), a large indoor field facility, is indispensable for team practices during much of the academic year due to cold temperatures, high winds, and field closures. Varsity teams use the HAC until 6:30 p.m., and for some reason, it is rented to outside children's teams immediately afterward several days a week. In the past, club teams adjusted by starting their practices after the children's teams left, with determined teams getting in three to four practices a week. Under present leadership, however, **club teams have been informed that no practice can occur after 8pm**. Rental by outside groups during the very hours cadet clubs would be allowed to practice continues, leaving only Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30–8:00 p.m. available to be divided among all club teams. As a result, **club teams needing field space have been allocated as little as one 90-minute practice slot every other week**, severely limiting preparation and development.

Even more troubling is the **new guidance prohibiting cadet club sports from participating in club events during "major military events."** While this restriction appears reasonable on its face, those **approving club travel have now concluded that every Silver training weekend is a "major" event.** Silver weekends—where cadets conclude academics early on Friday and commence Friday evening and Saturday military training exercises—have increased drastically under the current leadership and now comprise more than half of all weekends. For the past two and half years, the training on these Silver weekends has consisted of some redundant combination of land navigation, practicing defense of an Entry Control Point, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), or room inspections. Essentially, Air Force cadets are repeatedly walking around with compasses and/or airsoft guns and occasionally tying tourniquets on their "injured" friends.

When combined with other mandatory weekend events such as Transition, NCLS, and Dean's Weekend, the Silver weekends leave only six free weekends this spring 2026 semester for team travel. Furthermore, even for club events that do not conflict with training, another new directive has determined that **team travel for club sports is no longer considered allowable travel; instead, any travel for non-varsity sports teams is deducted from cadets' limited pass allotments to leave the Academy, which have been significantly reduced for all classes under the current leadership** (see attached pass allotment chart). For fourth-class cadets, who now receive only two passes to leave the Academy per month, a local weekend tournament could consume their entire monthly allocation, while any Friday-night travel necessary for an away event would require three passes and preclude freshman participation entirely.

These changes have very real effects on teams and the cadets in them. For example, the Ultimate Frisbee Club (a running sport akin to soccer, distinct from frisbee golf) competes in tournaments rather than single games. These are typically all-day weekend events from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon, often requiring Friday departure for timely arrival. Success in such tournaments earns points toward qualification for regional and national tournaments. The cadet Ultimate Frisbee Club team, which self-funds all travel (unlike club sports at other academies), identified only two tournaments out of the limited options—one in Richmond, Virginia, and one right in Colorado Springs—that would fit their schedules, budget, and the constraint of avoiding what they understood to be “major” military events. After submission of their plans—which included a note indicating they could find no tournaments that avoided training entirely—for approval, both tournaments were disapproved under the new rules because they fall on Silver weekends. As a result, the team will not compete at all this semester, and any hopes of qualifying for regionals are over. The Ultimate Frisbee team is not alone in this frustration.

The Rock Climbing Club team has for years purchased memberships with their own money at a local rock-climbing gym that is frequented by professional rock climbers. On weeknights, the team carpools to the gym, where cadets train to climb at the V9 and V10 levels at which they compete. Unfortunately, the new USAFA rules which charge all team travel to cadets' pass allotments mean that every practice at the climbing gym now counts toward one of their limited monthly passes. As a result, any evening spent practicing at the gym reduces their ability to travel to a weekend competition or to simply take a Saturday away from the Academy. Their only alternative is to use the cadet gym's small and outdated climbing wall, used primarily by physical education classes. While suitable for beginners in PE, its maximum allowable wall is V7—far below the level needed to compete.

The same story could be told about nearly every club team. As one club team's Officer in Charge noted to another after unsuccessfully arguing against these changes on behalf of his team, the changes render it “nearly impossible for competitive clubs to actually compete.”

Incidentally, USAFA's premier airmanship courses are also affected. The soaring program, which trains a new class of cadets each year to become the next glider instructors, normally flies about two Saturdays per month as the instructors-in-training accumulate hours and experience under existing cadet instructors. Likewise, the free-fall program, in which cadet instructors teach others to skydive, historically trained every Saturday to help jump students complete their five good jumps and earn their wings before the end of their ten-lesson course. For both programs, Saturday operations have been necessary to make up for frequent weather cancellations. Now, both have taken a back seat to Silver weekend training, resulting in fewer students earning jump wings and fewer glider instructors fully trained to teach student cadets during the summer. As many graduates will attest, earning their jump wings or soaring wings were major milestones in their cadet lives.

In light of these impacts, I respectfully question whether the current constraints best serve our cadets' physical fitness, mental health, and overall military readiness. Why are indoor facilities like the HAC being rented to external groups during prime evening hours when cadets could otherwise utilize them? It would seem logical to prioritize cadet needs—given that the facility was constructed primarily for their benefit—before accommodating outside entities. If external use cannot be discontinued during these hours, perhaps practice restrictions after 8:00 p.m. could be applied selectively to cadets facing academic challenges, while allowing flexibility for those cadets who successfully balance academic and military responsibilities.

Furthermore, how did developing land navigation and TCCC skills, trivial to the point of being non-existent under previous superintendents/commandants, become an ultimate priority at USAFA? Why are these simulated training exercises, which struggle to engage cadets' interest, taking priority over athletic competitions and flying/skydiving instruction, which provide real challenges and active engagement? Could a team not be excused from a few training events while still achieving the training objective? If not, how can varsity athletes—who miss many such events—be prepared to lead “on day one”? And is there no concern that the cadets will further tune out the training exercises as the exercises take yet one more thing of value away from them?

Finally, why must sporting events be charged against cadets' extremely limited time off, precluding some classes from participating entirely and forcing others to choose between sports and much-needed time away?

A well-known quote attributed to General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff during World War II, underscores this priority: “I want an officer for a secret and dangerous mission. I want a West Point football player.” He sought not an expert marcher, land navigator, or SAMI prepper, but an individual embodying the grit, tenacity, and boldness forged on the playing field, along with the spirit to learn the rest. Unfortunately, intramural sports, with their wide variances in skill, knowledge, and commitment, cannot replicate the intensity of true competition, and varsity athletes are not the only leaders who will need these traits. Why should USAFA deny the other 75% of cadets the opportunity to develop them through club sports?

I urge a review of these policies to ensure club sports remain a viable avenue for developing the leadership qualities that our future officers will require as well as to ensure that our officer corps is not graduating with a spirit of bitterness toward leadership and toward a career of service.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing commitment to the Academy's mission.

Sincerely,

A Concerned Group of Alumni with close connections to USAFA

Cc.

Association of Graduates

United States Air Force Academy Superintendent

Tab 4

To: [USAFA.HQ.BOV@us.af.mil](mailto:USAFA.HQ.BOV@us.af.mil)

Subject: Regarding the Feb 5 BoV meeting: Request for transparency of ongoing RIF of the Dean of Faculty positions

Dear USAFA Board of Visitors (BoV),

I am a Maj Gen (ret) Sean Lee Murphy, class of 1981. I have been following, with great dismay, the academic dismantling of our esteemed USAFA. I am shocked to hear of the substantial decline of morale and the loss thus far of 136 (over 15%, and still climbing) of the Dean of Faculty (DF) personnel at USAFA, as quantified in the recent Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) survey. It now appears that morale is, as would be expected, decreasing following the dismantling of the previously strong military and especially the civilian faculty and overall AFA academic performance. Being a retired physician and understanding academics and education, this kind of higher education destruction will take years to recover from and will have significantly negative accreditation effects over time unless corrected quickly.

Immediate action by the BoV and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is required to clarify the precise distribution of these staggering losses within the DF personnel, to stop this downward spiral of academics, and to clarify a robust and transparent process by which academics at USAFA will “pivot and refocus” appropriately. Many of my classmates and I have been very frustrated at all of this to the point of considering stopping our significant monetary support to our school. It is very sad as we also understand this can hurt future cadets but we will use whatever leverage we have to get this broken airplane back up in the air!

Regards,

Sean Murphy

Tab 5

Dear USAFA BoV, HLC investigation board, SASC/HASC, Gen Bauernfeind, et al -

I am a 2021 USAFA graduate currently serving as a Captain and cyber officer at the National Security Agency in Maryland. Following commissioning, I attended Carnegie Mellon University, the nation's top-ranked computer science program. I write with concern about the decline in morale and staggering loss of Dean of Faculty personnel at USAFA.

According to the recent DEOCS survey, 136 personnel—over 15% of the Dean of Faculty, and still climbing—have departed the Academy. This unprecedented exodus demands immediate action by the Board of Visitors and Higher Learning Commission to clarify the distribution of these losses, halt this downward spiral, and establish a transparent process for how academics will "pivot and refocus."

### **Eroding Reputation and National Security Impact**

These cuts have severely damaged USAFA's reputation with cascading long-term consequences. When I attended Carnegie Mellon for graduate school, USAFA's academic reputation opened doors. Now that reputation is eroding, undermining our ability to attract top-tier faculty and the best cadet candidates.

As a cyber officer at NSA, I witness daily the critical need for technically competent officers. PhD-qualified faculty are not merely instructors—they are active researchers who represent emerging knowledge at the cutting edge of their fields. They bring insights from quantum computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity research, and other rapidly evolving domains critical to maintaining technological superiority. This research expertise is essential for us to compete with adversaries. Military instructors can only supplement the specialized research knowledge and academic networks that PhD faculty provide.

### **Alarming Recruitment and Morale Crisis**

The reputation erosion is already visible. According to a Registrar's office training brief, only 10 of 30 highest-rated academic candidates pre-selected for the Martinson Scholars Program actually showed up at in-processing, a 67% no-show rate among our most gifted appointees.

Morale in the Cadet Wing is very poor. STEM faculty are genuinely concerned about how many rising second-class cadets will actually return and commit. When cadets see their favorite professors and mentors forced out, it sends a clear message about institutional priorities.

### **Call to Action**

Our cadets sacrifice their youth for this education and to serve our nation. We are failing them. The Higher Learning Commission's formal review underscores that these concerns extend to fundamental accreditation questions.

I urge the Board of Visitors, HLC, and Air Force leadership to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive, transparent review of DF losses by department and specialty
2. Immediately halt further civilian faculty reductions until a thorough mission analysis is completed
3. Publicly address the Martinson Scholars recruitment crisis

4. Commit to rebuilding PhD faculty positions
5. Restore transparency in academic decision-making

Without PhD faculty who bring emerging research knowledge to cadets, we cannot prepare future officers to compete in tomorrow's technological battlespaces. USAFA's current trajectory threatens both its accreditation and its fundamental mission.

Very Respectfully,

Captain Addison R. Whitney  
USAFA Class of 2021

Tab 6

Dear Rep Pfluger and the USAFA BoV,

Mr Rucker and the HLC investigation board,

Sen Kelly and the SASC,

Gen Bauernfeind, et al -

I hereby **request to speak** at the Feb 5 USAFA BoV meeting, The notes I will speak from (time permitting, likely with some abbreviations) are given below, a (publicly available, no pay-wall) version of which has also been published online at the [Colorado Times Recorder](#).

As detailed below, the concerns that I have spoken of at the last two BoV meetings (Aug 7, Dec 8) have substantially intensified, and they have not yet (as of Jan 23) been significantly broached by the BoV. As established by Title 10 U.S. Code 9455, and according to the BoV website, "The (BoV) inquires into the morale, ..., curriculum, instruction, ..., academic methods, and other matters relating to the Academy" - exactly what this complaint has been focused on since Aug 7.

I request that, under the supervision of the SASC, the USAFA BoV recommend **decisive corrective actions** to the SecDef, SecAF, CSAF, and USAFA Superintendent, ASAP.

Further, **an HLC site visit to USAFA is now fully warranted**, to further investigate these substantial concerns, and to ensure that the recommended corrective actions are sufficient and fully implemented.

Best regards,

Prof Thomas Bewley

Tab 7.

Dear USAFA BoV, the HLC investigation board, the SASC/HASC, Gen Bauernfeind, et al -

I am a retired USAF Major General.

I am shocked to hear of the substantial decline of morale and the loss thus far of 136 (over 15%, and still climbing) of DF personnel at USAFA, as quantified in the recent DEOCS survey. Immediate action by the BoV and HLC is required to clarify the precise distribution of these staggering losses within DF, to stop this downward spiral of academics, and to clarify a robust and transparent process by which academics at USAFA will “pivot and refocus” appropriately.

Regards,

Major General Richard S. Haddad, USAF, (ret)

Tab 8.

Dear USAFA BoV, HLC investigation board, SASC/HASC, Gen Bauernfeind, et al -

I am a spouse and daughter of Air Force veterans. My dad was deployed and served in Korea, worked at NORAD.

I am shocked to hear of the substantial decline of morale and the loss thus far of 136 (over 15%, and still climbing) of DF personnel at USAFA, as quantified in the recent DEOCS survey. Immediate action by the BoV and HLC is required to clarify the precise distribution of these staggering losses within DF, to stop this downward spiral of academics, and to clarify a robust and transparent process by which academics at USAFA will "pivot and refocus" appropriately.

Regards,  
Crystal Carkhuff

Tab 9

Dear USAFA BoV, HLC investigation board, SASC/HASC, Gen Bauernfeind, et al –

I am a concerned citizen.

I am shocked to hear of the substantial decline of morale and the loss thus far of 136 (over 15%, and still climbing) of DF personnel at USAFA, as quantified in the recent DEOCS survey. Immediate action by the BoV and HLC is required to clarify the precise distribution of these staggering losses within DF, to stop this downward spiral of academics, and to clarify a robust and transparent process by which academics at USAFA will “pivot and refocus” appropriately.

Educating our officer corps should, and must be, the core mission of the USAFA, and this RIF is failing that mission.

Regards,

Ted Brassfield

Tab 10

Dear USAFA BoV, the HLC investigation board, the SASC/HASC, Gen Bauernfeind, et al -

I am a Class of 2020 grad and currently still serving.

I am shocked to hear of the substantial decline of morale and the loss thus far of 136 (over 15%, and still climbing) of DF personnel at USAFA, as quantified in the recent DEOCS survey. Immediate action by the BoV and HLC is required to clarify the precise distribution of these staggering losses within DF, to stop this downward spiral of academics, and to clarify a robust and transparent process by which academics at USAFA will “pivot and refocus” appropriately.

Regards,

Jake Whitteker

Tab 11.

On Jan 23, 2026, at 12:23, clipperflier <[clipperflier@aol.com](mailto:clipperflier@aol.com)> wrote:

In the latest ZoomieNews there is a reference by the Chairman to the Department of War (?). The only Department recognised by Congress is the Department of Defense. It is also named that way in the Board of Visitors Bylaws.

As a cadet, senior officer and Command Pilot I always use the correct terminology. It is our duty to the cadets to set a good example and not play with politics in official communications.

I have been a proud member of the Association of Graduates, and I actively support the mission and recruitment of outstanding individuals. I will resign from our Association if it continues to be used as a cheap political slogan.

Please use the correct, official terminology in future articles.

Respectfully,

LtCol "Bloke" Maurer, '81, Ret

Tab 12.

On Jan 31, 2026, at 0159, Ed DiBello <edbhiker@gmail.com> wrote:

To: USAFA Board of Visitors:

While Mr. Kirk's death was tragic, I have made my opinion very clear to the Association of Graduates, to wit: I am totally opposed to him being made an Honorary Member of the Association of Graduates (AOG). I am also opposed to having the AOG or the Board of Visitors (BOV) recommend to the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force, and/or the USAFA Superintendent to award him an Honorary Degree. Mr. Kirk served a very short time on the BOV being appointed in March, 2025 and attended one meeting. He had no specific military or academic expertise and had no long record of service to USAFA or any military service. I strongly disagree with Retired Lt. Gen. Rod Bishop characterization of Mr. Kirk: "... anyone I have ever met that better exudes all of the qualities of a candidate that we as USAFA graduates would want to count among our numbers than Charlie."

In my opinion, Mr. Kirk was not qualified to be on the BOV, and he is certainly not qualified to be an Honorary Member of the AOG or be awarded an Honorary Degree. Simply put, Mr. Kirk has not "rendered outstanding and conspicuous service" to the Air Force or USAFA.

Ed DiBello

AOG Life Member

USAFA '66 Red Tag

Tab 13.

On Jan 30, 2026, at 2219, Kent Murphy <kentmurphy1511@gmail.com> wrote:

## **Board of Visitors Statement**

**February 5**

**My name is Colonel Kent Murphy. I am a 1980 graduate of the Air Force Academy, a physician, and for the past seven years I have served as a premedical advisor to cadets. I speak today as someone who is deeply engaged with this institution and who is profoundly concerned about the current state of both academics and the cadet experience.**

**Just before the holidays, a DEOCS survey was completed by roughly 500 faculty and mission-critical support staff. The results are in. They are not public, they are deeply troubling.**

**The survey confirms that faculty morale has fallen to historic lows. It also shows that the Academy senior leadership grossly misrepresented the number of civilian faculty and support staff positions lost. While 16 positions were publicly reported, the DEOCS data documents 136 lost. That is 136 educators and mission-critical staff. Let that sink in.**

**We are already seeing the consequences: ballooning class sizes, increasing strain across STEM departments, and the loss of our first Systems Engineering major—a bellwether discipline that will be extremely difficult to rebuild. If these losses are not addressed, several other key STEM programs will be at risk within months. Recovery will take three to five years, even under favorable conditions.**

**This is not abstract. The Air Force Academy is one of the nation's premier educational institutions, producing officers who will fly advanced aircraft, manage autonomous weapon systems, and execute real-time satellite introductions to secure space dominance. National security depends on this pipeline. We have sustained real damage to it.**

**Compounding this problem, the faculty as a whole has been intimidated into silence and systematically excluded from meaningful participation in discussions about how to preserve and sustain these STEM disciplines. That must end. With a new Superintendent and a new Dean, there is great opportunity—and obligation—to reverse this immediately.**

**The damage has not been limited to academics. Cadet morale has also cratered. The outgoing Superintendent's unique personal vision of turning the four-year experience into a "Cadet AFSOC Wing" has radically altered the cadet experience. Hardships once concentrated in the freshman year now stretch across all four years, eroding pride, incentive, and growth.**

**Cadets selected for the prestigious parachute and soaring programs—a historic rite of passage—are no longer permitted to wear their flight suits on the Terrazzo. Instead, they walk to the airfield in athletic gear, flight suits stuffed into plastic grocery bags, changing in bathrooms near the runway.**

**What message does that send?**

**Instead of younger cadets looking up to these juniors and seniors with pride, a visible symbol of achievement has been quietly treated as something to be hidden. That is not discipline. That is institutional self-inflicted damage.**

**Now, the hopeful part.**

**Bringing in a new Superintendent and Dean represents a necessary reset. With engaged oversight from this Board, there is real opportunity to restore academic credibility, rebuild faculty trust, and restore the cadet experience. The Air Force Academy's 56,000 graduates care deeply about its future. This institution is not beyond repair—but the next two years will be crucial.**

**The Board of Visitors has a critical role in righting the ship and reassuring the nation and the next generation of exceptional young Americans that the Air Force Academy remains worthy of their respect and trust.**

**Thank you.**



January 19, 2026

Doug Truax  
Founder and CEO  
Restoration of America Foundation/Restoration of America  
153 Fort Wade Rd, Suite 250  
Ponte Vedra, FL 32081

Subject: USAFA BOV Public Comment—Rhodes Scholar Program

Dear USAFA Board of Visitors,

I am Doug Truax, USMA 1992 graduate and CEO of [Restoration of America Foundation/Restoration of America](#).

My organization continues to advocate for all our service academies to develop the best leaders of warfighters in the world. In past comments to the board, we have outlined our priorities and have again included them in this letter.

One area of concern we want to highlight is USAFA's ongoing participation in the Rhodes Scholar program. Our researchers have outlined the concerns with this program [in this article](#). Even the United Arab Emirates [removed funding](#) for study abroad programs at British universities over concerns their students could be radicalized by the Muslim Brotherhood.

**We are calling on the USAFA Board of Visitors to recommend the Academy cease participation in the Rhodes Scholar program immediately.**

As a reminder, I'm including the items submitted in our previous letters to the BOV. We're asking that these issues continue to be matters of importance.

**High Quality Education:**

1. Conduct an immediate, thorough, and independent review of curriculum and instruction to make sure cadets are receiving the highest quality education focused on creating the best leaders and warfighters for America.
2. Conduct a thorough assessment of all professors to make sure they align fully with the mission above and not on "social justice" agendas.
3. Eliminate the Rhodes Scholar program that seeks to indoctrinate students in Marxist ideals. [Read our report on the topic here](#).
4. Increase the percentage of professors who have a previous or current military background.



5. Evaluate and reconsider the use of the Higher Learning Commission as the accrediting agency of the Academy—specifically, if the Commission’s requirements for accreditation violate civil rights laws and executive orders. [Read our report on this topic here.](#)

**Admissions:**

1. Conduct a thorough review of the recruitment and admissions process to make sure employees are seeking candidates that align with USAFA's traditional mission without regard to non-merit factors such as race or gender.
2. Immediately remove all data tracking related to race and gender for admission and appointments.
3. Remove the requirement for photos to be submitted with applications.

**Staff:**

1. Remove any staff member with a political agenda.

It is our desire at Restoration of America Foundation/Restoration of America to be a resource and advocate for the U.S. Air Force Academy. Please reach out if we can assist in any way.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Truax". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug Truax