



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



08 December 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: HQ USAFA/DSX

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

1. **Meeting:** Monday, 08 December 2025 at 1034 (EST). Board members attended virtually via Zoom. Members of the public were also able to participate in the meeting as registered online participants via the same Zoom meeting.

2. **Agenda:**

08 Dec 25 – USAFA Board of Visitors Meeting: Agenda Summary	
Item	Description
1	Board Opening Remarks
2	Superintendent's Update
3	Discussion on Board Questions for Record
4	Special Topic: Flexible Warfare Center Concepts
5	Public Comments
6	Action Item Review
7	Final Board Member Remarks
8	Chairman's Concluding Remarks

3. **Designated Federal Officer's Remarks:** Dr. Raquel Rimpola, Designated Federal Officer of the U.S. Air Force Academy Board of Visitors (BoV AFA or Board), provided administrative remarks and opened the meeting. For the record, a quorum of the Board was present. The 8 December 2025 Board of Visitors meeting was hosted via Zoom and was open to the public.

4. **Opening Remarks:** Congressman August Pfluger, USAFA BoV Chairman, opened the meeting by welcoming attendees. He expressed that he was proud to serve as the Chairman of the Board and went on to explain that the meeting held on 8 Dec 25 was the second BoV meeting of the year and its purpose was to gain additional information to assist the Board in shaping its semiannual report, which will be submitted to the Secretary of War.

He gave a brief description of the Board's schedule for next year, with the next meeting occurring in person in Washington, D.C. in February followed by a virtual meeting in June. These next two meetings will be used to deliver the second semiannual report to Secretary Hegseth in the summer of 2026. The Chairman explained that the Board has been working diligently to ensure that the Academy continues to produce the world's finest officers, and that it is executing the President's vision to restore America's fighting force. This is being done by ensuring the Academy remains a merit-based institution that develops disciplined, innovative,

and service-minded leaders for the Air and Space Forces. He stated that the Board is continuing its comprehensive review of the Academy's curriculum, military training philosophy, and athletic programs by meeting with graduates, stakeholders, representatives from higher education associations, and other outside groups. The Chairman explained that the Board is interested in hearing about the resourcing needs that are essential to the Academy so it can advocate for them during this year's budget process as a part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

He acknowledged the Academy's high ratings in the U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings and highlighted that the Academy had multiple engineering programs ranked in the top ten for their specialties. He expressed that this was a testament to the enduring quality and rigor of the Academy's academic programs.

Next, he expressed concern with the timeliness of the Academy's responses to the Board's submitted questions for record (QFRs). He highlighted that these QFRs are essential to fulfilling the mandated responsibilities of the Board and are vital in crafting its annual report. He noted that not receiving them by the agreed-upon suspense date hindered the Board's ability to conduct its statutory duties. While he understood that the government shutdown may have caused delays; the missed suspense and the late delivery of the responses did not allow for an appropriate amount of time for Board members to consume and analyze the data to be fully prepared for the meeting's discussion. He wishes for this to be rectified going forward.

He acknowledged Senator Kevin Cramer's attendance, his role as Chair of the Subcommittee on Airland for the Senate Armed Services Committee, and his nomination for appointment to the Board.

The Chairman concluded his remarks by honoring Mr. Charlie Kirk. Mr. Kirk was a Presidential Appointee on the USAFA Board of Visitors and a cherished friend of Congressman Pfluger. The Board remembers Charlie's commitment to advancing the Air Force Academy and inspiring the next generation of service members. The entire Board was honored to serve alongside him, and all of America mourns his passing.

5. Superintendent's Update: Lieutenant General Bauernfeind, USAFA Superintendent, opened his remarks by thanking everyone for attending the meeting and Congressman Pfluger for his opening comments. He summarized the topics to be covered during the Superintendent's update, including the cadet chapel, the Academy's status on the Restoring America's Fighting Force (RAFF) initiative, USAFA personnel reductions, and the accreditation process.

5.1 Cadet Chapel Update: Brigadier General Patrick Miller of the Air Force Civil Engineering Center and Brigadier General Constance Young of the Air Force Installation Contracting Center, the leads for the Cadet Chapel restoration project, provided an update on its status. Brig Gen Miller explained that the chapel's asbestos abatement and steel structure alignment issues resulted in a 4.5-year delay in the restoration project. He described the relevance of the "big box," a large white enclosure built around the chapel, that serves as a structure that allows work to continue despite adverse weather and protects the chapel from the elements as exterior components are removed and repaired. He described the measures being taken to accelerate the project, including strengthening the project management team with a dedicated on-site Colonel, adjusting the supporting

contract team, and implementing a contract modification in December 2025 to advance project milestones. He outlined the remaining major milestones, with the next one being the water tightness testing of the building's exterior.

- 5.2. **Restoring America's Fighting Force (RAFF) Report:** Lt Gen Bauernfeind provided the update on the RAFF report. He explained that USAFA had established four task forces to ensure compliance with the SECWAR's and POTUS's guidance – curriculum under the Dean of Faculty oversight, curriculum throughout the Academy experience, facilities, and Academy surveys.

Col Hasstedt, the Acting Dean of Faculty, explained his approach to the curriculum review. This review was led by three subject-matter-expert Colonels and was designed to identify anything that might not be in compliance with the executive orders and directives. He expressed confidence that the Academy is in compliance and that any new discoveries will be incorporated into reviews to ensure continued compliance. He detailed some of the recommended changes from the fall session of the curriculum review committee, including a core curriculum review, the first in 15 years, and adapting the curriculum to AI.

Ms. Jennifer Block, Executive Director of Athletics and task force leader for the facilities review, then provided an update on her task force's efforts. Her team walked through every area of the base and scrutinized all bulletin boards, common areas, murals, and other displays to ensure strict compliance with all executive orders.

Mr. Brian Scarlett, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, shared about his validation visit to the Academy in August to assess the institution's compliance with the executive orders and to validate merit-based admissions. He confirmed that the Academy is in compliance, and he appreciated the communication the Superintendent has had with SAF/MR regarding any new items that were or may be discovered through the Academy's proactive approach. He then explained his team's review of the admissions process and confirmed that, with the changes being implemented, the Academy's admissions process is merit-based and that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) elements have been removed. The SAF/MR team will be visiting in the spring to observe the admissions process in action to monitor and confirm that it is a truly merit-based system. He also described the sensing sessions that were conducted with cadets and faculty to hear how they felt about the changes to the Academy. He highlighted that this generation of cadets is deeply interested in the "why" behind these changes and how this "why" is communicated properly to the cadet wing. He expressed his confidence in how proactive the Academy has been with the instituted changes and ongoing monitoring efforts to ensure continued compliance.

- 5.3. **USAFA Personnel Reductions:** Lt Gen Bauernfeind explained that the Academy was a part of the service-wide downsizing that occurred and that the reductions were applied across the entire institution. USAFA saw a 5.5% reduction in faculty. However, he stressed that all majors for the classes of 2026 and 2027 were protected and that no core classes have been canceled due to the reduction. The Academy saw only a 2% reduction in non-core electives, and only seven elective classes could not be supported because of

the reductions. The student-to-faculty ratio has increased slightly to the current 8.8 ratio, but this is still well below the national average of 18 students per faculty member at typical undergraduate-only institutions. He shared that military-to-civilian ratio has risen from last year's 61% military and 39% civilian to this year's 66% military and 34% civilian.

- 5.4. **Accreditation Process Primer:** Colonel Cory Cooper, USAFA Permanent Professor, Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Liaison Officer, provided an explanation of the Academy's accreditation process. USAFA has been accredited by HLC since 1959. HLC's accreditation occurs on a ten-year cycle, called the Open Pathway, that validates the quality of an institution's educational programs through four main criteria. The four main criteria are: (1) institutional mission, (2) integrity with ethical and responsible conduct, (3) teaching and learning for student success, and (4) sustainability of institutional effectiveness, resources, and planning. The ten-year accreditation cycle includes a mid-cycle update at the four-year mark and a quality initiative to be accomplished prior to the institution's comprehensive review. USAFA's comprehensive review is scheduled for 2028. He explained that the Academy also holds disciplinary accreditations for certain majors, such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for engineering and computer science majors, the American Chemical Society for chemistry majors, and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business for management majors. The Air Force Institute of Technology is also accredited by the HLC; however, the other military service academies are accredited by different regional bodies, such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the New England Commission of Higher Education.

6. **Discussion on Board Questions for the Record:** Congressman Pfluger explained the focus groups that the Board established on admissions, accreditation, and the integration of AI. He appreciated the updates from the Academy staff and stressed the need for USAFA to work with the Board, the Department of the Air Force (DAF), and necessary outside stakeholders to develop efficient recommendations and solutions on these topics. He then opened the floor to the Board members to pose questions of the USAFA subject matter experts (SMEs).

- 6.1. **USAFA End Strength:** Board Chairman Pfluger raised a question regarding the Air Force Academy's FY26 end strength of 4,000, which is lower than Annapolis's (4,350) and West Point's (4,459). The inquiry was whether USAFA is considering an increase to be more closely aligned with the other service academies and if the 1,400 admission offers are based on the 4,000-cadet target or a higher number.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind replied that this is a DAF decision, explaining that the drop from 4,400 to 4,000 cadets occurred during the 2018 sequestration and has not been increased since. He noted that Annapolis and West Point did not conduct a similar sequestration cut. Col Hasstedt added that USAFA also took a 100-faculty cut during the 2018 sequestration, a reduction the other military service academies did not experience. This allowed them to maintain their higher end strengths. He stated that there has not been a push to return USAFA to a higher end strength. Lt Gen Bauernfeind confirmed that while USAFA's facilities can support a 4,400-cadet wing, the Academy does not have the

associated manpower for that end strength. However, he stated that they can work with the DAF to establish the necessary requirements to return to that larger number. He added the caveat that Sijan Hall is scheduled for renovation in the summer of 2026, which will temporarily decrease cadet lodging capacity until the project is completed.

- 6.2. **USAFA Visitor Center:** Congressman Crank raised a question about the new USAFA visitor center. The 90-million project was originally planned to open in December 2023; however, the opening has been pushed to May 2026. Many community stakeholders—including the State of Colorado, the county, the local school district, the library, and several others—raised approximately \$322 million for the project through bonds, which also funded the Polaris Hotel. Congressman Crank expressed a desire to confirm that the original intent and commitment of the visitor center will be accomplished, including the \$6 million interactive exhibit intended for the second floor. He also voiced concerns over a potential default on the bonds that may occur because of the delayed opening.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind confirmed that the USAFA visitor center is planned to open on May 15, 2026, to align with the Academy's graduation. However, he clarified that the second floor of the center will initially serve as an event space while USAFA works with partners, such as alumni associations and other benefactors, to potentially bring interactive exhibits to the new building. He expressed appreciation for the community's support and excitement for the great opportunity the new facility will provide the Academy. Congressman Crank then asked if a meeting could be held with the initial stakeholders to alleviate some of their concerns regarding the project.

- 6.3. **USAFA Funding Priorities:** Congressman Bacon asked what the Academy's top priorities were for the upcoming defense appropriation process and the NDAA.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind replied that he would follow up for the record to provide a more detailed response and to ensure it aligned with the SECAF's intent. He added that potential topics for discussion with the SECAF included increasing the Academy's end strength, securing procurement funding to maintain high-end STEM equipment, and establishing a 50-year sustainment plan for Academy facilities. He promised to work with the DAF to provide a comprehensive answer to Congressman Bacon. USAFA is currently working with SAF to establish prioritized funding requests. Once solidified, this detailed information will be shared with the BoV.

- 6.4. **USAFA Faculty:** Board Chairman Pfluger raised a question regarding the academic faculty changes from 2016 to 2024, a period during which 50 new civilian faculty were added while the number of military faculty decreased by four. The inquiry concerned whether new requirements led to this change and whether these civilian positions were permanent or temporary.

Col Hasstedt answered that the Academy's faculty hiring process is highly dynamic, giving the example of the 80 military and 15 to 20 civilian members who were new faculty last academic year. He explained that military faculty members are hired based on their advanced academic degree (AAD) rather than their Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). This allows them to act as a surge force for the Academy, moving between

academic departments as needed. He noted that increases in civilian faculty were due to a lack of active-duty officers with the appropriate AADs to support certain disciplinary needs, such as in the English Department. He then emphasized the 66% military to 34% civilian faculty ratio among the 463 teaching positions on the USAFA Unit Manpower Document (UMD). Lt Gen Bauernfeind added that the military faculty development pipeline has been reinforced to ensure that personnel with the appropriate subject matter expertise and operational experience are brought to the Academy. He also mentioned that USAFA is working closely with the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) and the DAF to utilize academic excellence and expertise within the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard components in the future. Chairman Pfluger then asked if the Academy has enough military personnel to replace the civilian faculty who departed from the institution. This question was deferred to the DAF to assist in identifying the necessary requirements and support.

- 6.5. **Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation (AFAAC):** Mr. Clark inquired if the AFAAC was still receiving appropriated funds and if additional funding was needed for the Athletic Department to remain competitive.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind replied that the AFAAC is funded with 75% appropriated funds. Ms. Block then affirmed that the Athletic Department is properly resourced to remain competitive. It was mentioned during the meeting that USAFA lost to both USNA and USMA during the 2025 football season. While correct, USAFA's Fall 2025 NCAA athletic record against the MSAs demonstrates our enduring competitiveness across all sports.

- 6.6. **Privacy Act:** Mr. Nikolai requested a private meeting with the USAFA legal office before the end of the year to better understand the Privacy Act, which would allow him to receive more detailed information from the Academy.

The Academy agreed to the meeting and requested that SAF/MR and SAF/GC also be included. SAF/MR has requested the meeting and scheduling is pending.

- 6.7. **USAFA DEI Office:** Mr. Nikolai asked if any members of the five-person DEI office were still at the Academy.

Lt Gen Bauernfeind and Ms. Forrester confirmed that the office had been dissolved. Of the five original billets, three were unfilled. The two members who filled the remaining positions took the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP), and the data analyst who had been assigned to the office was reassigned to another role. They confirmed that Mr. Angiollo was not assigned to the HQ USAFA DEI office. Mr. Angiollo was originally hired into the Staff Judge Advocate position prior to being assigned to the Dead of Faculty (DF). The initial DF position he occupied was removed in compliance with an executive order. His current position complies with all executive orders and guidance.

7. **Special Topic: Flexible Warfare Center Concepts Briefing:** Dr. Paul Schwennesen, USAFA Class of 2000, was invited to brief the Board on the concept of developing drone strategies and global innovations, particularly those from the Eastern European theater, and how

they could be applied at the Academy. He shared the need for a return to the Air Force's roots in procuring, deploying, and training personnel and weapon systems, and reducing reliance on highly advanced, exquisite weapon systems. He discussed a framework for modernizing the USAFA Institute for Future Conflict (IFC) with USAFA's participation in the Joint-Service Drone Challenge and related operational travel and exposure for cadets, integration of technical adaptation, integration of cadets into drone leadership environments, and linking research laboratories at USAFA (RAND, DARPA, AFRI). Following the brief, Mr. Nikolai highlighted the SECWAR's Drone Dominance Program, and Lt Gen Bauernfeind invited Dr. Schwennesen to visit the Academy and see its programs firsthand.

8. Public Comments: Nine public comments were submitted, and these were categorized into three topics that align with the agenda items - curriculum, resources, and climate. Please see attached (Atch 2).

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) Administrative Note: Pursuant to 41 CFR 102-3.140d, and as stated in the Federal Register announcement for the 7 August 2025 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.

Chairman's Comments: Congressman Pfluger welcomed public comments at the BoV meeting, acknowledging the importance of hearing from individuals with an interest or stake in the Academy.

8.1. Curriculum

8.1.1. Mr. Thomas Bewley: Mr. Bewley addressed three issues at the Academy and provided recommendations to address them. The three issues were faculty intimidation from new DoD and USAFA policies that could stifle academic freedom, lack of confidence in the long-term academic vision being articulated by USAFA leadership, and the impact that faculty departures could have on the USAFA's viability as an institution of higher education.

8.2. Resources

- 8.2.1. Dr. Anthony Aretz: Dr. Aretz, a 1980 USAFA graduate and retired military professor, expressed concern about the Academy's ability to maintain its HLC accreditation due to significant current and future faculty departures. He requested additional funding to maintain current staffing levels and restructure programs to better manage the increased teaching workload.
- 8.2.2. Dr. Kent Murphy: Dr. Murphy expressed concerns about the reduction in civilian faculty at the Academy and questioned the viability of using military personnel to replace them, noting they may lack the specific academic expertise of career civilian professors. He also voiced concern about how the Academy would maintain its PhD-level academic

oversight of the STEM curriculum in light of the large-scale civilian personnel reductions.

8.3. Climate

- 8.3.1. Ms. Denise Guempel: Ms. Guempel requested a review of the due process of a case involving a cadet and advocated for their reinstatement to the Academy to allow them to complete their final year at the Academy.
- 8.3.2. Mr. Richard Coe: Mr. Coe requested a review related to the due process regarding the men's soccer team case.
- 8.3.3. Mr. Mike Rose: Mr. Rose requested a review of the cadet discipline, disenrollment, conduct, honor system, and the due process related to the men's soccer team case
- 8.3.4. Mr. Mark Stoup: Mr. Stoup requested a review related to the due process regarding the men's soccer team case.

9. Action Item Review: Captain Daniel Cassidy, USAFA BoV Executive Secretary, facilitated a review of the following action items. Item 1 was closed via a motion from Mr. Nikolai and a second motion from Congressman Vasquez. All members voted in favor of closing the item. Items 2 through 6 were addressed in a single proposal. Items 2, 3, and 6 were moved to remain open, while items 4 and 5 were moved to be closed. The motion was brought by Congressman Bacon and seconded by Congressman Crank. All members voted in favor.

Item	Recommendation	Status	Category	Brief Explanation
1	<u>SAPR Budget and Resources</u> – 2018 Provide financing status update	Closed	Resource	Funding for the SAPR program was secured moving into the next fiscal years.
2	<u>Space Education Center</u> – 2022 Provide plans/funding update	Open	Resource	USAFA leadership advocated for item to remain open as they continue to work to secure funding.
3	<u>Military Professor Copyrights</u> – 2022 Provide status on securing copyrights by military professors	Open	Curriculum	Rep Bacon and Rep Crank advocated for the item to remain open until legislation for item is completed to maintain Board awareness.
4	<u>Update on Strategy for the Prevention of Harmful Behaviors</u> – 2024: encapsulates Let's Be Clear Campaign. Climate Transformation Task Force efforts	Closed	Climate	The Academy's CTTF submitted their final report, and the Board received a copy for review.
5	<u>Update on USAFA's Progress in Response to SECAF's direction for Re-optimization</u> – 2024	Closed	Resource	New SECDEF and SECAF appointments have eliminated the need for this action item.

6	<u>Update on BOS-I-USAFA</u> – 2024 Establish BOS-I-USAFA as a new framework to improve AF’s focus on USAFA’s focus on most important issues of health and safety	Open	Resource	Mr. Nikolai requested that the item remain open to assist with the Board's advocacy for Academy infrastructure projects. Subsequently, the Board requested that the Academy develop a prioritized funding list for its near- and medium-term projects.
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10. Board Member Final Comments:

Per the USAFA BoV Bylaws, statement of member will appear only in summation form, except any member may exercise the right to views incorporated verbatim in minutes.

- 10.1. Mr. Nikolai affirmed “this Board’s responsibility to provide rigorous consistent oversight to this great institution. Our discussions today highlight the importance of examining every dimension of the cadet experience, academics, military training, character development, athletics, infrastructure, and overall well-being. There are areas; however, that warrant deeper investigation. We’ve discussed starting up some focus groups. These are not to be construed as criticism, but as opportunities to elevate the Academy to an even higher standard of excellence.” He noted that he had received comments from a concerned mother of a cadet about the quality of Sijan Hall, with similar concerns being echoed on social media. He expressed hope that USAFA would address these comments and the condition of the hall. He concluded his remarks by expressing sincere appreciation for Lt Gen Bauernfeind and the Academy staff.
- 10.2. Congressman Bacon appreciated the varied interests of the Board and noted that their drive to enhance the Academy’s excellence was making a positive impact on USAFA. He acknowledged that USAFA’s infrastructure issues are a top priority that needs to be addressed and focused on.
- 10.3. Congressman Crank highlighted the cooperative work being accomplished on USAFA’s encroachment issues between the Academy’s staff and his Congressional office.
- 10.4. Mr. Clark stated for the record that while the Board supports and endorses the Superintendent, he cautioned against both micro- and macro-management of the topics discussed during the meeting. He reminded everyone of “the homefield advantage” of the USAFA athletic department, noting that athletic success at the Academy increases the institution’s visibility and positive perception.

11. Chairman’s Concluding Remarks: Congressman Pfluger thanked the USAFA and BoV support team for planning and facilitating a productive meeting. He highlighted the importance of using this year’s meetings and questions for the record to develop the annual report and valuable recommendations for the SECAF and SECWAR. He appreciated the public comments and acknowledged the challenges facing the Academy in ensuring it remains the best military service academy.

12. Adjournment: The DFO declared the meeting closed at 1341 (EST).

Certified by:



HONORABLE AUGUST L. PFLUGER
Chairman, USAFA Board of Visitors

Prepared by:



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

Attachment:

1. Board of Visitors Attendance Roster, 08 December 25
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 – 08 December 25

Title/Rank	Name	Position	Attendance
USAFA Board of Visitor Members			
Congressman	August Pfluger	Chairman, USAFA Board of Visitors U.S. House of Representatives - Texas, 11th District	Present
Senator	Tammy Baldwin	U.S. Senate, Wisconsin	Not Present
Senator	Steve Daines	U.S. Senate, Montana	Not Present
Senator	John Hickenlooper	U.S. Senate, Colorado	Represented
Senator	Roger Wicker	U.S. Senate, Mississippi	Not 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	Not Present
Congressman	Gabe Vasquez	U.S. House of Representatives – New Mexico, 2nd District	Present
Senator	Tommy Tuberville	U.S. Senate, Alabama, Presidential Appointee	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.	Robert Bigelow	Board Member, Presidential Appointee	Not Present
Mr.	David Nugent	Staff, Congressman Pfluger	Present
USAFA Board of Visitor Support Team			
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
Colonel	Richard Kniseley	SAF/LL	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Mahogany Swanson	SAF/LL	Present
Ms.	Lauren Lapporte	SAF/LL	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Joseph Tomczack	SAF/LL	Present
Mr.	Greg Jeffers	DAF, Executive Presentations	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Zachariah Gonyea	HAF/A1	Present
Mr.	Michael Saunders	SAF/IE	Present
USAFA Senior Leadership and Other USAF SMEs			
Lieutenant General	Tony Bauernfeind	Superintendent, USAFA	Present
Brigadier General	Nicholas Evans	Vice Superintendent, USAFA	Present
Chief Master Sergeant	John Alsvig	Command Chief, USAFA	Present
Ms.	Leslie Forrester	Director of Staff	Present
Brigadier General	Gavin Marks	Commandant of Cadets	Present
Colonel	Steven Hasstedt	Acting Dean of Faculty	Present
Ms.	Jennifer Block	Executive Director of Athletics	Present
Colonel	Ahave Brown	Commander, 10th Air Base Wing	Present
Colonel	Corey Cooper	Permanent Professor and USAFA Liaison to Higher Learning Commission	Present
Colonel	Bryan Cooper	AFCEC, Chapel Project Management Officer	Present

Colonel	Ted Richard	USAFA HQ JA	Present
Ms.	Kate Russel	USAFA HQ A1	Present
Colonel	Alex Liggett	USAFA HQ A4	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Nicole Ferrara	USAFA HQ PA	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Triven Pillai	Executive Officer to the Superintendent	Present
Ms.	Sonja Strickland	USAFA HQ Integrated Prevention	Present
Lieutenant Colonel	Leah Pound	CTTF Lead, USAFA HQ CAG Director	Present
Ms.	Sonja Strickland	USAFA SAPR	Present
Major	Tara Holmes	Cadet Development	Present
Mr.	Scott Kneip	Strategic Communication	Present
Colonel	Kristin Beitz	USAFA National Capital Region	Present
Mr.	Tom Bleichert	USAFA Staff	Present
Mr.	Samuel Cooper	AFIMSC/CA	Present
Mr.	Jonathon Byrnes	AFIMSC/A2/5/8	Present
Ms.	Melissa Blakesly	AFIMSC/FM	Present
Brigadier General	Patrick Miller	Commander, Air Force Civil Engineer Center	Present
Brigadier General	Constance Young	Commander, Air Force Installation Contracting Center	Present
Ms.	Joanna Bush	Air Force Installation Contracting Center	Present
Ms.	Kaylee Kostka	AFIMSC/CDE	Present
Board Invited Guests			
Senator	Kevin Cramer	Public Attendee, U.S. Senate, North Dakota	Present
Dr.	Paul Schwennesen	Guest Speaker	Present
Members of the Public			
Mr.	Thomas Bewley	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Stoup	Public Attendee	Present
Dr.	Anthony Aretz	Public Attendee	Present
Dr.	Kent Murphy	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Denise Guempel	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Richard Coe	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	R. Davis Younts	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mike Rose	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Doug Traux	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Austin Bartlett	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Ron Olds	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Joesph Brundidge	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gar Graham	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Xaviera Slocum	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Jennifer Nancarrow	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Matt McCallum	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Mary Elsner	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Ronald Scott	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Eric Guempel	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Cindy Kitchoff	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Don Swallom	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Nicole Ferrara	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Eric Vogel	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Jansen	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Carol Vavra	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	James Schlichting	Public Attendee	Present

Mr.	William Schauffert	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Erin Jeffries	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Tris Sevdý	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Rich Metts	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Wendy Cook	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gregor Guempel	Public Attendee	Present
Dr.	Martha Ostrom	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Jenny Crider	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Peter Knudsen	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Edward Rizzo	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Russ Laney	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Earl Roberts	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Mary Shinn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Bryan Grossman	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gerry Shaw	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Mihaela Fletcher	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	James Marshall	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Dan Bohlin	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Roger Hartman	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Caleb Howard	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Stephen Dalrymple	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Rod Bishop	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Victoria Manning	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Bentley Rayburn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tim Taylor	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Lawrence Kampa	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John Brockman	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gordon Hammock	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Rob Renner	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Robert Hatherill	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Clodfelter	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Lani Kass	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John Dinsmore	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Tanya Regan	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	William Duesbury	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Jenny Davis	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Joe Roh	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Frank Childers	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Chase Hite	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Charles Gill	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Jesse Levin	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Alister Call	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Donald Bishop	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Vernon Conaway	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Kirk Johnson	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Misty Reznik	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Pete Caldwell	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Kenneth Schreiber	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jeff Linn	Public Attendee	Present

Mr.	Jack Hembrough	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Joseph Wirthlin	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tyler Hinkle	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Giachetti	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Horsley	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Carol Silber	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Pat Hurley	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Hannah Kaufman	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Alan Parmater	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Robert Jayme	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John Bloemer	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Doug Wilson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tyson Rydalch	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Steven Edwards	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Estorga	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Lyssa Bell	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Michaela Reardon	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Don Clement	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Sean Dalton	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Lauren Gray	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Donald Tennyson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Kurt LaFrance	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Mark Wells	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Nancy Hixson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tony Mayne	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	David Langan	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Audra Splude	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Riley McGrath	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Kathleen Soldano	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Courtney Hathcock	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Melissa Cunningham	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	William Quin	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jeff Troth	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Virginia Ackison	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	J Ferron	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Connor Crookham	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Loretta Seery	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Katherine Spess-Scott	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	James Kuhn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jim George	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Justin Joffrion	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Nicole Schatz	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Raymond Keating	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Rich Haynie	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	John Verling	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Lillian Rizzo	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Patrick Wilson	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jeremiah Gilbert	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Kelly Anholt	Public Attendee	Present

Mr.	Michael McKenna	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Tom Kalnoske	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Kat Kononenko	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Larry Jones	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Shonna Bisagno	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Ski Wagasky	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Gordon Hammock	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Colby Kuhns	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Jeff Linn	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Brian Tighe	Public Attendee	Present
Ms.	Bambi Banys	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Arslan Khal Mukhamedov	Public Attendee	Present
Mr.	Arne Anderson	Public Attendee	Present

This has been a very difficult year for USAFA. With this letter, I would like to address three vital issues at USAFA, and three sets of actions that can be taken immediately to begin to address them. Much remains to be done.

Issue #1. USAFA faculty (and, most likely, potential new faculty) are intimidated by new DoD+USAFA policies that appear to stifle academic freedom, as recently reported by [KOAA](#) and the [Gazette](#).

Requested Actions: (a) Remove (entirely) the question “Does content address DEI, gender, official DoW positions or policy?” from the new USAFA Request for Presentation Approval that was unveiled on Nov 17.
(b) Describe under what circumstances such Requests will be denied.
(c) Articulate via new USAFA policy that, in the future when such Requests are denied, that the reason for such denials will be made clear and public.

Discussion: This specific question appears to be both career-threatening and political. Having the new Request for Presentation Approval form in place, without this question, appears to fulfill the new requirement of the Sep 15 SecDef memo. Clear policy on exactly how it will be used when denying certain Requests is necessary.

Issue #2. USAFA faculty and cadets, and potential new faculty and cadets, do not have confidence in the long-term academic vision articulated by the leadership of USAFA.

Requested Actions: (a) Work the word “educate” back into the USAFA mission statement. This symbolic initial action will provide a much-needed indication of a renewed commitment by USAFA in support of its core academic mission.

(b) Articulate to the BoV why it has been so difficult to fill the (1-star) USAFA Dean position, and how USAFA plans to fill this position asap.
(c) Commit to work with SecAF to convert the (2-star) USAFA Vice-Superintendent position to that of a long-term civilian (SES) Provost, with a focus on long-term academic continuity, transparency, and accessibility by both faculty and cadets. The Provost position will be akin to the [Provost position at AFIT](#), will report directly to the SecAF, and will work in close collaboration with the USAFA Superintendent and Dean.

Discussion: These initial steps towards the reorganization of USAFA’s academic leadership will help rebuild public trust in its long-term commitment to academic excellence.

Issue #3. As has been broadly reported by KOAA, the Gazette, and the Post, faculty have been leaving USAFA in droves since April: first civilians under the DRP, then substantial DVP cutbacks, and now many uniformed military early retirements, e.g. in [DFAS](#). The full scope of this exodus has not yet been reported by USAFA, which is a public institution answerable to America's taxpayers. Ballpark estimates put the losses of USAFA instructors by next year at well over 100, including the loss of many of its best long-term experienced faculty, calling into question USAFA's very viability as an institution of higher learning.

Requested Actions: (a) Report accurately (working with departmental leadership to collect the necessary info), and publicly (to the BoV, to the HLC, to the USAFA faculty, and to the media), exactly how many civilian, DVP, and active duty instructors there were/are/will be, in AY 23-24, in AY 24-25, in AY 25-26, and projected for AY 26-27, in each of the 20 academic departments at USAFA,

- with what degrees (PhD vs MS) and relevant USAF/USSF experience,
- with how much teaching experience, and
- at what military ranks.

Overall, also report what percentage of the civilian faculty at USAFA during these time periods are seasoned USAF/USSF veterans.

(b) In light of the answers to the above, realistically report, in detail, the anticipated effect that these losses will have on the available majors, minors, special focus areas (e.g., Aerospace Structures), core classes, and anticipated class sizes at USAFA in AY 26-27.

(c) If majors, minors, focus areas, and/or core classes must be cut at USAFA, articulate by what manner the difficult decisions will be made on how USAFA must [pivot and refocus](#) its curriculum, in a military-relevant manner, and how these decisions will be openly debated and determined. Will a new "blue ribbon" panel of USAF experts be involved, as has been suggested? By what mechanism will "buy-in" to these substantial changes, by both the USAFA community as well as its large community of vested stakeholders, be sought?

(d) Inform the BoV and HLC, without delay, hard deadlines by which the requested self-study reports above will be made available.

Discussion: Sunlight is the best disinfectant. The plan discussed at the Aug 7 BoV meeting, to backfill ongoing civilian faculty losses with PhD qualified active duty personnel, has proven untenable - such personnel are simply unavailable in sufficient numbers to take a PCS from their other essential jobs in the USAF/USSF for a tour at USAFA during these

consequential times. Any viable backup plan thus needs to also involve the aggressive recruitment of skilled, military-minded civilian faculty. At this point, this does not look easy, nor cheap. Clear articulation of this backup plan is needed, including what discussions with the SecAF/SecDef are ongoing to make this backup plan a reality. The detailed reports requested above will provide clarity as to precisely what is needed, and will help to lay out a timeline. Time is of the essence.

Summary. In short, we truly have our work cut out for us. USAFA must “pivot and refocus”, working openly to find a creative and realistic path forward for America’s premier military academy that will restore public confidence in its academic vision, ensure that its HLC and ABET accreditations are fully renewed asap, and, most importantly, that USAFA will flourish with a revitalized commitment to academic excellence.

Best Regards



Prof Thomas Bewley, Dept of MAE, UC San Diego ([cv](#))
Distinguished Visiting Professor, DFME, US Air Force Academy (AY 24-25)
cell: 858.997.8369

Tab 2

Dr. Anthony Aretz, LtCol, USAF Ret
2831 Devils Backbone Rd
Cincinnati OH 45233

As a 1980 Academy graduate, a retired Academy military professor of 17 years, and a retired higher education administrator, including two university presidencies, I am deeply concerned about the Academy's ability to maintain HLC accreditation standards given the significant current and future faculty departures.

Specifically, I would like to know the plans for dealing with faculty vacancies, especially PhD slots. I have been told the current approach to filling vacancies with active-duty military is problematic due to the lack of available academically qualified officers.

This is not surprising. When I was a faculty member in the Behavioral Sciences and Leadership department, we mostly had to grow our own military faculty by sponsoring officers for masters and PhD programs through AFIT. Existing qualified military officers were rare, and it was always difficult to get officers released from operational career fields for AFIT with a follow-on Academy assignment. It was a continuing challenge to maintain a fully staffed department.

The only viable solution I see to maintain HLC accreditation standards is to request additional funding to maintain current staffing levels and to restructure academic programs so current faculty can manage the increased teaching load.

USAFA BOV Public Comment

The Superintendent has set forth plans to reduce our carefully curated civilian faculty by approximately 50 positions. His concept of replacing civilian faculty members with a hodgepodge of active-duty military personnel has proven completely nonviable. Here's why:

Any military members who could fill in would have to meet three criteria: First, they would have to have their advanced degrees in the exact fields needed to teach 300 and 400-level majors courses. Second, their knowledge base would need to be highly current, including ongoing research efforts in their given specialty. Finally, their commanders would need to be willing to release them to teach cadets at a time when our war-fighting assets are already stretched quite thin. Our recruiters have a name for such personnel...Unicorns.

Almost all of our current civilian faculty members are actively seeking employment elsewhere . We're continually hemorrhaging them, and to make matters worse, many of our military educators are putting their papers in for early retirement. They simply don't want to teach in an academically understaffed, low-morale environment.

Despite the scale of current and proposed reductions, no quantifiable data has been presented by Academy leadership:

There has been no accounting of which academic disciplines have already lost coverage; No data has been provided confirming an inventory of military officers who supposedly meet the required qualifications; And no plan demonstrates how the Academy will maintain PhD "academic oversight" of STEM curricula given these large-scale personnel reductions.

Accordingly, I respectfully request the USAFA Board of Visitors requires senior leadership to provide:

- 1. Documented evidence that a sufficient pool of qualified military PhD holders exists to backfill both past and future projected civilian faculty losses, throughout the 2028.**
- 2. A discipline-specific staffing plan demonstrating how academic rigor and academic oversight will be maintained if an additional civilian educators are cut.**

Kent R. Murphy MD
Colonel(ret),USAF, MC, FS
USAFA Class of 1980

Tab 4

Alternate Designated Federal Officer:
Ms. Blaire Brush,

Thank you Honorable Members of the Board of Visitors and Officers of
USAFA,

November 26, 2025

Regrettably, my son, [REDACTED], former Class of 2026, recently was involuntarily disenrolled from the USAFA just prior to his final year, despite a spotless record and recognition through the Dean's, Commandant's, and Athletic Director's pins, each awarded for excellence in academics, leadership, and athletics. He currently has a 3.4 military evaluation, 3.2 physical evaluation, and a 2.4 gpa. All but his English professor had recommended his retainment.

My son had multiple scholarships and opportunities; he entered this Academy with purpose, discipline, and a heart devoted to service. He took an oath of service before self, giving up certain civilian rights for military regulations. That sacrifice should require compliance to those standards.

[REDACTED]'s removal raises serious concerns regarding procedural fairness, abuse of authority, excessive punishment and lack of transparency. I respectfully request your assistance investigating and correcting the issues outlined below and advocating on his behalf:

Summary of Concerns:

Lack of Transparency in Accusation

An allegation of an Academic Standards Violation was revealed to [REDACTED] only after a decision to fail him had already been made by his professor and reported to the Academy Review Committee (ARC) board. [REDACTED] was not informed of the allegation, provided evidence, or allowed to mount a response before, to, or at the ARC. Only after a recommendation from ARC for disenrollment did he receive a written determination of the academic violation cited as "inadvertent plagiarism," which his instructor had stated to ARC it was AI use. Both have been disproven by detection tools and outside experienced professors at independent universities. See documents attached.

Refusal to Provide Evidence or View Results

As an educator myself, I find it profoundly disappointing and troubling that the English department appears to have pre-determined [REDACTED] guilt and refused to follow proper procedures, including sharing evidence of both his original essay and his re-examination responses. Why conceal the work and deny a learning-focused discussion, at the very least, so that [REDACTED] might understand and grow from the experience, even outside the Academy setting?

The very purpose of this Academy is to develop leaders of character and education and to foster growth, not simply to punish. As professionals, one would expect the department's highest priority to be transparency, learning, and academic development. Especially in cases of disenrollment. Instead, their actions suggest the primary goal was to justify disenrollment, denying him fair process and equitable evaluation.

This denial not only violates basic principles of educational ethics, but also runs counter to widely recognized academic standards. Withholding graded work in such contexts can impede learning, limit a student's ability to defend himself, and undermine the fairness, real and perceived, these policies are designed to ensure.

In this case, the English department's refusal to disclose the paper and re-examination responses appears to reflect a purposefully closed and punitive process, not one designed to be impartial and to educate, correct, or restore.

Violation of Due Process

USAFA Instruction 36-3534

(Section 2.1: Penalty Proportions)

Because penalties "shall be proportional to the severity of the violation" and "decision authorities may award a lesser penalty" the instructor had discretion to grade the paper and deduct points rather than assign a zero for the alleged "inadvertent plagiarism." Inadvertent implies lack of intent. Can there possibly be "plagiarism" justifying punishment including disenrollment that was not intentional but was "inadvertent?" If it was egregious, why were no other professors or detection tools able to find the issues?

(Section 3: Burden of Proof)

The institution bears the burden of proving an academic violation by a preponderance of credible evidence, meaning it must present sufficient evidence to convince a fair and impartial mind that a violation more likely than not occurred; the burden is not on the student to disprove the allegation. Not only is this in USAFA policy but it is the standard of practice in higher learning institutions to avoid abuse of authority.

(Section 4: Procedures for Determining Academic Penalties for Academic Standards Violation)

This requires written notification of allegations and penalties in advance, along with an opportunity to respond. Neither was provided. [REDACTED] was denied both the academic adjudication and the Honor Code processes to which he was entitled.

Non-compliant Title 10 Re-examination

Under USAFAI 36-3523 (Section 5.3.2) and Title 10 U.S. Code § 9351,

Cadets with a GPA above 2.0 are "entitled to a re-examination of equal scope and difficulty in that subject." [REDACTED] requested this re-examination in proper time, yet the exam he received exponentially

increased the original assignment's scope and difficulty, and introduced new evaluative criteria. He was again denied the opportunity to review his exam results.

False and Misleading Official Comments

Statements by Instructor [REDACTED] to the Academic Review Committee contained false, inaccurate, and misleading information lacking full context, omitting favorable grades, narrowing the scope of her assessment, ignoring 95% of her required coursework, and reporting her allegation as fact. These misrepresentations may have improperly influenced the committee toward a recommendation for my son's disenrollment, since the statements are reviewed prior to any engagement with my son.

Based on [REDACTED] actions, it appears she sought to ensure my son's disenrollment rather than conduct a neutral evaluation. She never contacted him before submitting concerns, reported the allegation as fact, misrepresented his submitted work, omitted required coursework, and disregarded favorable grades. During their meeting, she limited the discussion to two sentences and told him he could not prove his innocence, even though he had documentation and professors prepared to confirm the work was authentic and original; the honor representative noted she had no substantive evidence, yet she still blocked the honor and administrative processes. What solidified my concern was the Title 10 re-exam: although English professors are fully capable of understanding the requirement that it be equal in scope and difficulty, the exam he received was not comparable, and he was not allowed to see his essay or the scoring. The refusal to provide these results, forcing us into FOIA requests and outside experts, creates the clear appearance of a calculated, manipulated process rather than a fair process.

It was gut wrenching every night to imagine the torment this was causing him. To be forcibly removed from something you committed your entire life to. I am proud of how he held up and still remains committed to service, but what she did should be illegal if it isn't.

My son is now forced to "pay" a steep price: barred from completing his final year, losing his future as an officer and pilot, and required to serve two years in enlisted status without promotion or PCS opportunities, leaving him worse off than if he had enlisted straight out of high school. After nearly a decade in the U.S. Navy Sea Cadets, reaching the rare rank of Chief Petty Officer, he sacrificed a normal college experience to serve in the military, only to receive fewer opportunities now and a scar that will forever be in his record. That is a cruel punishment for something he was denied the opportunity to defend.

Every point I raise here is supported by evidence. I am not trying to sound unreasonable; I'm trying to show exactly what was done, because it was egregious and wrong. Every professor I spoke with, questioned the validity of the accusation when they reviewed the Title 10 exam and found out that he wasn't allowed to see any evidence on his essay or his exam results. They said, I paraphrase... "seems that she had a vendetta against him." If this happened to my son, how many others have been treated the same way? My heart aches for the cadet who recently took his life after he faced disenrollment. The hopelessness felt during this process must be stopped. This is not the academy I believe in. ARC and the Superintendent can't address a problem they don't know exists, and I believe they would not tolerate these actions if they understood what actually occurred. My son took the higher road; he mentioned the issues non-assertively, accepted what he could improve and the only thing that happened was his disenrollment. He has learned from this; it will make him a better leader not someone to be terminated. I want to make sure the Academy knows what happened. I want someone to investigate the outrageous treatment and lack of concern about the cadets entrusted to their care.

We kindly request that the BOV:

1. Advocate for [REDACTED] reinstatement to the Air Force Academy.
2. Initiate an inquiry into these procedural irregularities and ensure all cadets receive transparent, fair, and policy-compliant treatment.

[REDACTED] remains deeply committed to serving his country and completing his USAFA education. During his separation, he has retaken the English course at an accredited university, and is eligible for transfer credit under USAFA's Course of Instruction, which allows cadets readmitted after disenrollment to receive credit for coursework completed while away. Granting this credit would let him remain on schedule to graduate within a year, without disrupting his academic progress.

We value your time and consideration and are hopeful that your oversight can ensure due process and institutional accountability.

We are more than willing to provide documentation proving the accuracy of my statements above and to speak further at your convenience. Thank you for your service, integrity, and advocacy for the great institution of the United States Air Force Academy.

Respectfully,
Denise Guempel

Tab 4 December 8 BOV AFA meeting Attachments provided to members

ATTACHMENTS:

I have enclosed supporting documents:

1. [REDACTED] assessment of [REDACTED]'s final essay.
2. Grade Distribution English 211
3. USAFAI36-3534 (pg 2, 3)
4. USAFAI36-3523 Title 10 (pg 18)
5. Dr. Petrie assessment of Title 10 re-exam
6. Title 10 alternatives to be equivalent
7. Instructor [REDACTED]'s False and Misleading Official ARC Statement

Dr. [REDACTED] Pepperdine University: (PhD, UCLA) Associate Provost, Associate Professor of English, and Associate Director of the Center for Faith and Learning.

28 July 2025

Dear Ms. Guempel,

I am writing to provide my assessment of the originality of the final exam essay written by your son, [REDACTED] "Boarding Schools and Wolf Girls: Forced Assimilation."

In my opinion, the essay was likely written by a human rather than by an LLM. If AI was used in its composition, the use is minor. AI generated work tends to be formulaic and grammatical. It would, moreover, be capable of integrating quotations in MLA style correctly. I also do not see evidence of failure to cite from other sources. While the essay has significant room for improvement as a piece of undergraduate close reading, I do not see cause for a failing grade on this assignment.

My assessment of its originality is based on the fact that the essay exhibits numerous traits that are typical of undergraduate writing and which one would not expect in AI generated work. Unless asked to produce an essay with grammatical mistakes, an AI generated essay would not typically include any of these unambiguous errors (underlined) that appear in [REDACTED] essay:

- 1) Non-standard adjectival word order: "In Karen Russell's short story St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves, readers become immersed in a world of fiction where werewolf little girls are forced to assimilate and conform to human society through the strict structure of a Jesuit boarding school." [Should be "little werewolf girls."]
- 2) A mistyped quotation: "At one point, while still only in stage 2, Claudette remarks on her disconnection from her native language, stating "of course I understood what [Mirabella] wanted; I wasn't that far removed from out language" (Russell 235)."
- 3) Comma usage errors of which these are just a few:
 - a. "Claudette realizes that she is being removed from her native language, but does not seem to care." [No comma before "but."]
 - b. "Many Native Americans, especially women, were separated from their families either forcefully or under false pretenses, and were sent to Christian schools to try and 'civilize' the 'savages.'" [Missing subject.]
 - c. There are also comma usage errors in the quotations from numbers 1 and 2 of this document.
- 4) Pronoun-antecedent agreement: "Although Native Americans could not combat the introduction of such weapons of war, many tried to resist their extinction." [The "their" seems like it refers to the "weapons of war" rather than the Native Americans.]
- 5) A prepositional error: "The transformation of language from Wolf to English, like the physical transformation, serves as an extended metaphor throughout the story to the transformation of Claudette and the other girl's personality." [Should be "for."]
- 6) Mistakes in word usage:
 - a. "A clear connection can be drawn from Russell's portrayal of the werewolves' living situation, and the events that lead to it, and the events that lead to the Native Americans living on reservations." ["Led" not "lead."]

- b. "Initially, at the induction of the children's schooling, they cannot speak anything other than Wolf." [He means beginning, though is probably confusing "induction" with "introduction."
 - c. "The language and stages create an institutional procedure that generalizes the girls, and outcasts ones that are not progressing like the rest." [For "generalizes," he probably means homogenizes. For "outcasts," he probably means "casts out."]
- 7) Inconsistent use of tense: "In a clear violation of her nature, Claudette chooses to stay silent and let Mirabella face the consequences alone and unaware. Claudette chose to fall in line with the program, conform to their expectations, rather than assist a fellow student." [Fiction is supposed to be referred to in the present tense only.]
 - 8) Formatting issues when quoting from a website: "As described on the website, the red road, "In an attempt to 'Americanize' indigenous children, they were taken from their families and placed into schools..." ("The Issue of Native American Education System Failure.")." [The Red Road should be capitalized. The ellipsis at the end of the quotation is unnecessary. The period that follows the title of the website is unnecessary.]
 - 9) A semi-colon error: "It is also never directly stated that the girls are originally from another country, however, this stage implies that the girls are being housed in a 'host country.'"
 - 10) Parallelism: "Like Claudette, they lived a life in between two societies, no longer accepted by one and refused to be accepted by the other."

I have restricted my comments above to objective features of writing rather than interpretations; however, there is one instance of interpretation that I also believe is relevant in establishing the essay's originality. The essay includes what appears to be a student's failure to recognize an instance of sexual conduct. In the last body paragraph, [REDACTED] states:

"While most of the students had been making good progress through the stages in a timely manner, Mirabella was struggling with Sister Ignatius saying, "Has [Mirabella] learned how to say anything besides a sinful 'HraaaHA!' as she commits frottage against the organ pipes" (Russell 236). Russell masterfully uses diction to reveal how conformity is not about simply altering behavior but reshaping the inner self to align with external pressures. In *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*, this transformation is framed as growth and betterment through a systematic silencing of individuality."

It seems apparent from his critique of Sister Ignatius's response that [REDACTED] fails to see that Mirabella is rubbing herself for sexual pleasure against the "organ pipes" and her verbal exclamation is one stemming from her sexual delight. I suppose that [REDACTED] could be arguing that little girls' individuality is silenced by a social institution that would prohibit public masturbation, but I find that unlikely. I think it more likely that [REDACTED] did not know what "frottage" means and that he read the passage simply as a silencing of Mirabella's voice. An LLM would not misunderstand obscure vocabulary used literally. If it were a metaphoric use, I could see such an error manifesting in a generated essay; however, Russell means the term literally here. In this instance, [REDACTED] appears to be innocent in more ways than one.

Stylistically, the essay also contains several features that are common to undergraduate work, especially analytical essays such as this one:

- 1) An excessive use of passive voice.
- 2) A dependence on the verbs "use" (12x) or "utilize" (2x) to connect the rhetorical feature with the conceptual analysis. (There are more instances of use/utilize in the paragraph at the end of the essay where [REDACTED] lists his outside sources.)
- 3) A tendency to begin his body paragraphs with a dictionary-like definition of the terms.

These stylistic features would not eliminate the possibility of AI use or unintentional citation altogether; however, they do indicate that a beginning stage writer is dictating the essay's content on the sentence level.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. [REDACTED]

Grade Distribution English 211

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Before Prog:	350 pts	After Prog:	650 pts
Informal Writing	90/100 pts	Informal Writing	62/100 pts
Instructor Option	60/100 pts	Instructor Option	46/100 pts
Essay 1	81/100 122/150 pts	Essay 2, in-class exam	89/100 200 pts
		Essay 3	disputed 250 pts - 0
Total of 1,000 points		563.5	

Late assignments will earn a penalty of 10% per day, starting immediately after the time the work is due.

In order to pass the course, students must complete and submit all 3 major assignments (defined as Essays 1 and 3 and the in-class Essay 2 exam).

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay 1: A close reading of a single literary text. Students should compose an essay that clearly and consistently utilizes close reading to establish a relationship between the author's artistic choices and the text's thematic preoccupations and concerns. Students should focus on understanding the genre of the college literature essay. Additionally, they should begin working in an argumentative capacity and support it with textual evidence. Length: 900-1000 words. MLA format.

Essay 2 exam: An in-class written exam that engages with course content and the skill of close reading. As part of the exam, students will develop both shorter and longer close readings; these close readings will consider the relationship between form and content in course texts. The exam will also include an in-class essay on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Length: Students will write approximately 1100-1250 words over the course of the exam.

Essay 3: An argumentative close reading of a single literary text, possibly informed by another, closely related literary or critical text. Students should develop a robust argument regarding the literary work based on the evidence of close reading. The essay should focus on the relationship between the author's artistic choices and the text's thematic preoccupations and concerns—all of which should be comprehended under the argument. Contingent on instructor approval, students may bring in an additional literary or critical voice that sheds pertinent light on their argument or evidence. Because this is their final essay, students should not only develop a strong argument supported by carefully selected, skillfully analyzed, and properly cited textual evidence; they should also strive to submit a polished, artful, and well-written essay.

Length: 1850-2000 words. MLA format.

Informal Writing: This category includes specific, short writing assignments supplementary to the longer essays, and in-person or online course engagement. In our sections of English 211, informal writing includes essay drafts, peer review, and other short assignments that help students practice the core skill of close reading, develop argumentation, engage with our course texts, and showcase students' creativity.

Instructor Option: This category consists of course participation and preparation, especially engagement in class meetings and completion of required readings and associated reading journal entries. See the preparation and participation guidance for details.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document has been substantially revised and must be completely reviewed. Major changes include the addition of factors for mission element leads to consider in determining whether a violation of academic standards warrants a more severe penalty than a zero on an assignment, clarification on means and timing of notification for academic penalties, and a requirement for instructors to enter comment cards when a cadet receives an academic penalty.

1. Violation of Academic Standards. A violation of academic standards, which are those standards relating to academic integrity or institutional values, is of serious academic concern. Academic penalties are imposed to protect the academic integrity of the institution and the relative class standing of those who abide by academic standards. Additionally, academic penalties serve as a correction of the academic record to reflect the grade or score the cadet earned without unfair advantage. Intent to violate academic standards, although informative to penalty proportion, is not required for the determination that a violation occurred.

2. Academic Penalties. Decision authorities will determine whether a cadet or cadet candidate has violated academic standards. For the purposes of this instruction, the decision authorities for cadet matters are the Dean of Faculty (DF) academic department heads, the Dean of Academics and academic department heads at the Preparatory School, and the Department Head for Physical Education (USAFA/ADP) for Physical Education classes.

2.1. Penalty Proportions. In general, the penalty shall be proportional to the severity of the violation. Penalties shall not be token, which might encourage contempt for academic standards. Ordinarily, the most severe academic penalty shall be a zero on the assignment; however, decision authorities may award a lesser penalty. Before assignments are collected, instructors are encouraged to remind cadets and cadet candidates to document all help received and provide an opportunity to correct or modify missing or vague documentation statements without significant academic penalty, subject to decision authority guidance.

2.2. Severe Penalties. If decision authorities believe that circumstances warrant a more severe penalty than zero on the assignment, they will recommend a penalty for approval by the appropriate mission element lead. More severe academic penalties may include removal from the course and awarding a course grade of "F." To ensure fairness and consistency in determining whether a violation of academic standards warrants a more severe penalty, the mission element lead should consider the following factors:

2.2.1. The character and past service of the cadet or cadet candidate, including, but not limited to, whether the individual has prior violations of the Cadet Honor Code related to academic integrity and/or prior violations of academic standards.

2.2.2. Although separate from the cadet honor process, the cadet's class year to potentially include USAFA Preparatory School time as applicable, which indicates the cadet's time under the Cadet Honor Code, the Leader of Character Framework, and USAFA academic standards, may be considered to the extent such time is viewed as developmental.

2.2.3. The nature and circumstances of the offense, to include, but not limited to, the scope of the offense, the seriousness of the offense, the intent of the cadet or cadet candidate, and the cooperation of the cadet or cadet candidate. The scope of the offense includes whether other individuals were involved and the particular cadet or cadet candidate's role in the

offense, for example, whether they were the instigator or leader or a participant. The seriousness of the offense includes the offense's effect on good order and discipline and the academic integrity and reputation of USAFA. The intent of the cadet or cadet candidate encompasses whether the violation of academic standards was negligent or deliberate. Evidence of planning, calculation, and/or the use of technology in deliberately violating academic standards makes the offense more egregious. Lastly, the cooperation of the cadet or cadet candidate incorporates whether the individual admitted to the violation of academic standards, the individual's forthrightness, and the individual's attitude towards the violation.

2.2.4. The views and recommendation of the initiator, or individual who discovers and reports the violation of academic standards, are also relevant to consider in determining whether severe academic penalty is warranted.

2.2.5. Finally, the treatment of similar offenses and similarly situated offenders will be considered. While not case dispositive, consideration of this factor fulfills the goal of fairness and consistency in administration of severe academic penalties.

3. Standard of Proof. The decision authority's determination that an individual violated academic standards must be based on a preponderance of credible evidence, meaning that the weight of that evidence is sufficient to incline a fair and impartial mind to find it more likely than not that a violation occurred. Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is not required. The decision authority's determination that an individual violated academic standards is separate and distinct from the determination as to whether a violation of the honor code occurred.

4. Procedures for Determining Academic Penalties for Academic Standards Violations.

4.1. Initial Notification. When it appears a cadet or a cadet candidate has violated academic standards, the decision authority will carefully review all the relevant evidence. The decision authority will notify the individual in writing of the allegation and his or her intent to impose an academic penalty. The notification should also inform the cadet or cadet candidate that they have three duty days to respond if they so choose. An email from the decision authority to the cadet or cadet candidate satisfies the requirement for written notification. The individual will then have three duty days to respond to the allegation.

4.2. Determination. After thoroughly reviewing all the relevant evidence (including the individual's response to the allegation, if any), the decision authority will, in a timely manner, determine if there was a violation of academic standards in accordance with paragraph 1. This determination is independent of any associated honor violation proceeding, which means that the result of an Honor Board does not bind the decision authority (e.g., a cadet may still receive an academic penalty even if found not in violation of the Honor Code). The decision authority will notify the individual in writing of this decision and the reasons. An email from the decision authority to the cadet or cadet candidate satisfies the requirement for written notification. If academic standards have been violated, the Air Officer Commanding (AOC) will be informed and the matter will be referred to the Cadet Honor System or Cadet Candidate Honor System as appropriate. If the mission element lead imposes a more severe academic penalty than zero on the assignment, the individual's AOC and academic advisor will be notified promptly as well.

They skipped all due process and went directly to this step

Chapter 5

TITLE 10 PROCEDURES

5.1. Disenrollment of Cadets. Cadets with deficiencies will be processed for disenrollment in accordance with the provisions of AFI 36-3504, *Disenrollment of United States Air Force Academy Cadets*.

5.2. Notification Procedures. Disenrolled cadets will be notified, in writing, by HQ USAFA/JACD. The HQ USAFA/JACD counsels all disenrollees on their rights and options.

5.3. Legal Reexamination (Title 10, United States Code U. S.C. 9351, *Cadets: deficiencies in conduct or studies; effect of failure on successor*). Any disenrolled cadet who is deficient only because of failure to pass a required examination in any one subject is entitled to a reexamination of equal scope and difficulty in that subject, provided both his or her semester and cumulative GPAs are more than or equal to 2.00 for all courses exclusive of the one failed. The cadet must apply in writing to the Office of Student Academic Affairs and Academy Registrar.

5.3.1. The Secretary of the Academy Board or the Registrar will notify cadets of their entitlement to reexamination, in writing.

5.3.2. An ARC coordinator must counsel cadets entitled to a reexamination concerning their Title 10 rights. Cadets will designate, in writing, whether they wish to take the reexamination within ten days of their receipt of the official written notification of disenrollment. Cadets who apply will not be outprocessed until the results of the reexamination are known. The reexamination will be prepared, administered, and graded by the department offering the failed course within five duty days of the department's notification of the cadet's request. The five duty days do not include weekend days, federal holidays, periods of authorized emergency leave, or days where the cadet is admitted as an inpatient in a hospital. Cadets awaiting reexamination will not be sent Temporary Duty (TDY). The reexamination will be of comparable scope and difficulty to the final examination in the failed course. Departments will notify USAFA/DFRC, in writing, of the cadet's final examination grade for placement in the cadet's official records.

5.3.3. The department concerned will notify USAFA/DFRC of the date, time, and location of the reexamination.

5.3.4. Cadets will prepare for their reexamination primarily through individual study. They will not be allowed to attend regularly scheduled classes in the course they failed.

5.3.5. If disenrollment occurs at the end of the fall semester or at the end of the summer term, the cadet will attend all academic and military formations while awaiting reexamination.

5.3.6. If disenrollment occurs at the end of the spring semester, the cadet will take the reexamination in lieu of leave.

5.3.7. Cadets who successfully pass a reexamination will be formally readmitted to the Cadet Wing. The original "F" grade will remain on the transcript, and the cadet will be placed on academic probation until successful completion of the failed course if the course is

Dr. [REDACTED] (Ph.D University of Connecticut) 1998-Present Southern Connecticut State University
 Professor of Graduate, Undergraduate: English Majors, Undergraduate: General Education, First Year
 Composition. Peer Review Evaluator.

“The writing and thinking standard for a one-and-done, unrevisable, timed, handwritten writing exercise, with prompts revealed only at the time of the exam, *must* be lower than a long-term, plan-draft-revise-and-edit essay, if it's going to be fair, reasonable, and equivalent. Those are simply not equivalent exercises, and they should never be graded according to the same standard. (*Nobody*—not even terminally degreed professors—can write to the same standard in a timed sit-down exam with "surprise" prompts as they can in a draft-and-revise essay.)”

Original Essay vs. Title 10 Re-Examination

Factor	Original Final Essay	Title 10 Re-exam	Critical Legal Analysis
Texts Covered	One literary work. (student's choice)	Four required course literary works. (selected by faculty)	✗ Not equivalent — this quadruples the scope. The student must be prepared to analyze any of four complex works, not one. This substantially increases cognitive load and breadth of preparation with barely 24hr notice.
Writing Prompt	Student-developed argumentative claim (self-directed).	Blind essay prompts given day of the exam.	✗ Not equivalent — the original assesses skill in developing an argument independently; the re-exam assesses spontaneous response to blind prompts under pressure to develop a couple of argumentative essay responses.
Format	Typed, polished 1850–2000 word essay with access to resources and revision.	Handwritten, in-person, blind prompts, timed essay using only annotated texts.	✗ Different and arguably unequal — Re-exam test endurance and recall under time pressure, to write analytical, argumentative essay responses to unknown prompts.
Evaluation	Graded with detailed rubric contributing to course grade (25%).	Pass/Fail; “D” = Fail, no partial credit.	✗ Not equivalent — removes gradation of performance, raising the threshold to an unfairly high bar compared to the original. Does not afford the student to achieve deficient points needed to pass the course.

Reasonable and Fair Alternatives

To ensure academic fairness and procedural integrity, the re-examination could have been more equitable by adopting one of the following approaches:

- **Option A:**
Allow the student to **select one** of the four pre-selected course texts in advance, and write an in-class analytical essay based on that reading.
 - **Option B:**
The department selects **one text** and provides **two possible essay prompts** to choose from, allowing the student to prepare and write a response with some agency.
 - **Option C:**
Match the **time, structure, and grading scale** of the original final essay to maintain equivalence under Title 10 standards.
 - **Option D:**
Provide **guided review material** or brief faculty-led discussion to ensure the student is reasonably prepared for the analysis—especially if the texts were studied months prior.
 - **Option E:**
Include a **clear rubric** and expectations in advance to align with procedural fairness and transparency of the original grading process.
-

Tab 5

Richard E. Coe
USAFA Class of 1968
USAF, Retired
1500 E. Split Rock Dr., Unit 153
Ivins, Utah 84738

30 November 2025

Alternate Designated Federal Officer:
Ms. Blaire Brush,
bov@afacademy.af.edu,

Subject: USAFA discipline on Men's Soccer Team Seniors

Dear U.S. Air Force Academy Board of Visitors,

As an introduction, I was the captain of the 1967 USAFA soccer team and retired from the US Air Force in 1988. In the last five years, I have reengaged with the USAFA men's soccer team. I am the cofounder of the Mike Blassie Warrior Award for the USAFA men's soccer team's exceptional player. I am also the cofounder and lead donor for the AOG's Mike Blassie '70 Warrior Award for Men's Soccer Endowment. Mike was a soccer teammate, an exceptional leader and the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery for 14 years.

I am writing to highlight leadership failures surrounding the punishment of the Class of 2025 senior soccer team players. Leadership is a cornerstone of the US Air Force Academy and all of us from the moment we walked into that great institution were able to view both good and bad leadership from permanent party staff and cadets. Importantly, as part of our instruction on how to become great leaders, we all were required to learn by heart the following quote on discipline stated by LTG John M. Schofield during his address to the U.S. Military Academy Corps of Cadets on August 11, 1879:

The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army. It is possible to impart instruction and give commands in such a manner and such a tone of voice as to inspire in the soldier no feeling but an intense desire to obey, while the opposite manner and tone of voice cannot fail to excite strong resentment and a desire to disobey.

The one mode or the other in dealing with subordinates springs from a corresponding spirit in the breast of the commander. He who feels the respect which is due to others cannot fail to inspire in them respect for himself; while he

who feels, and hence manifests, disrespect toward others, especially his subordinates, cannot fail to inspire hatred against himself.

This leads me to my requests to the USAFA Board of Visitors. I ask you to review the charges made against last year's senior men's soccer team members. Additionally, I request that the USAFA Board of Visitors review the pyramiding of increasingly harsher penalties imposed upon these cadets. I use the word cadets because they have not been allowed to graduate on time but “may” be allowed to graduate and commission one year late if they achieve some subjective leadership standard. They are effectively “super seniors” on a five-year program at the Academy.

The first issue, accusations against them, is simple; there were two incidents of hazing involving the USAFA Men's soccer team, one of which was a tradition condoned by the coaching staff in August 2024 during which the seniors participated; after the first incident, the senior team members told the team not to participate in any further “traditions;” the second was an incident that included nudity which occurred during a road trip in the September 2024. None of the seniors participated in the September incident; in fact, some seniors were not even on that trip. The charges leveled against all the seniors conflated these two hazing incidents into a single inaccurate charge [see Exhibit A]. The accused rebutted the inaccurate charges; however, the charges were not corrected and were used to impose punishment.

The second issue concerns sequential increasingly harsher punishments on the seniors, beginning with a Letter of Reprimand they received 8 months after the investigation concluded. A month later the Commandant gave them a Form 10 and notified them that they would not graduate; almost a month later, they received a Notification of Disenrollment; and finally on 3 July, 2025, the Superintendent offered to suspend disenrollment pending acceptance of a 10-month conduct and aptitude probation [see Exhibit B]. Thus, there was not one but four separate and increasingly more severe levels of punishment. At the end of this 10-month probation, the seniors will be evaluated on their progress at which time the Superintendent will “consider removing you from probation and recommend you to be commissioned.” Furthermore, the process was fraught with administrative errors [see Exhibit C]. In spite of having no guarantee that these pyramiding punishments would ever end, each of these seniors accepted the probation and delayed graduation because they still want to be U.S. Air Force officers. It appears to this observer that the senior USAFA leadership was either unable to decide on a disciplinary measure over a 10-month period or as time progressed decided that for some unfathomable reason they should impose harsher punishments to control the cadets’ behavior including the threat of disenrollment.

There is glaring disparity in punishments for the incidents as the members of the soccer team who received Article 15s for the separate event that started the initial investigation are being punished less than the seniors who were not involved in the event that they were inaccurately alleged to have observed and condoned. The seniors are being punished worse because this 10-month probation means they will be graduating and commissioning a year late. The Article 15 soccer players will all be able to graduate on their initial scheduled graduation date.

As an ancillary part of this extended cycle of punishments, the senior Academy staff created a chaotic environment for the newly hired head coach of the men's soccer team. Leadership cancelled all spring training, thereby hamstringing the team as it headed into the competitive

season; and would not allow any juniors or seniors to participate in the 2025 soccer season, thereby giving the new coach a team of only freshman and sophomores. Despite this, coach Dalby's team recorded a better record than the 2023 and 2024 seasons, a tribute to him and the resolve of the two classes that made up the team.

Leadership can be challenging but in this case it did not need to be “harsh or tyrannical.” In the final analysis, if the intention of the pyramiding of harsh punishments was to make the Men’s Soccer Team seniors better leaders, then in an ironically strange way the USAFA leadership has accomplished it. Reports from their Squadron staff and feedback from the seniors indicate that they have become much better leaders. They have done so by observing and learning from the actions of USAFA leadership exactly how not to act as a leader. They have learned that good leaders treat their subordinates as humans and with respect. They learned that good leaders will always consider the evidence timely, fully, and accurately and provide due process to people before making decisions that impact their lives significantly. They will be better U.S. Air Force leaders because of this experience.

Please note that I am speaking for them without their permission, knowing of fears that senior USAFA leadership may impose further punishments on them for my speaking up for them. As a USAFA and soccer team alumnus, I ask the Board to please review their punishments; recommend that the Superintendent not add to their punishments but allow them to graduate at the end of their current punishments or earlier; and investigate and make recommendations about how in the future the USAFA leadership should impose on cadets significant punishments only when they are timely, fair, consistent, based on the facts pertaining to the conduct of each individual cadet rather than the conduct of others, and a result of a fair due process opportunity for cadets to rebut allegations and evidence of misconduct after having been provided fair notice of those allegations and evidence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard E. Coe". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard E. Coe

Exhibit A
Charges made against senior men's soccer team members

Between on or about 1 August 2024 and on or about 30 September 2024, you did, as a Cadet First Class, observe and condone disgraceful behavior among the USAFA Men's Soccer Team, to wit: freshmen members of the team were lined up against a wall while upperclassmen who were nude or partially nude; turned out the lights and groped, grabbed, slapped, humped, and placed their fingers between the clothed buttocks of the freshmen, which conduct was unbecoming an officer and an Air Force Academy Cadet. Investigation further disclosed that this disgraceful behavior was a recurring annual tradition on the USAFA Men's Soccer Team, and you took no action to prevent or stop this outrageous behavior from occurring in the future. Your aforementioned misconduct is evidenced by a Letter of Reprimand (LOR), which was served on you on 24 April 2025, and an AFCW IMT Form 10 dated 23 May 2025.

Exhibit B

Discipline Timeline

1. Traditional freshman dogpile occurred in August 2024 in the team locker room.
2. Hazing incident occurred 30 September 2024.
3. All nine seniors were given a LOR on 24 April 2025, which conflated both of the above incidents.
4. Each LOR had the same verbiage including **the false accusation** that they witnessed the 30 September incident.
5. On 23 May 2025, 3 duty days before graduation, a Form 10 was distributed to them stating they would be placed on 6 months' probation and would not graduate.
6. The Commandant immediately went on two weeks' vacation without reading the Cadets' responses to the Form 10.
7. Note, family and friends already had plane tickets and rooms for graduation.
8. 7 members of the Men's Soccer team were placed on suicide watch.
9. On 20 June, they were given a Letter of Notification of Disenrollment from the Academy by the Commandant.
10. On 3 July, the seniors were given a Conditional Suspension of Disenrollment processing and probation placement on behalf of the Superintendent.
11. The Conditional Suspension of Disenrollment gave them probation until graduation day 2026.
12. All nine seniors accepted the Conditional Suspension as they still want to be Air Force Officers.

Exhibit C
Administrative errors

1. Paperwork delivered on Fridays, Leadership deviated from standard procedures requiring rebuttal in three days:
 1. Informed them of the Form 10 on a Friday (23 May 2025).
 2. A month later informed them of the LON on a Friday (20 June 2025).
2. Timeliness errors
 - A. During the investigation for the separate event that occurred in September 2024, the seniors discovered the details of the August 2024 incident that they were to be punished for.
 - B. They gave them an LOR on 24 April 2025, eight months after the investigation concluded.
 - C. In the LOR the Commandant signed a statement that, “I intend to notify you of my final disposition of this action within three duty days. He got back to them with a response a full month later on 23 May 2025.
 - D. On 23 May 2025, 3 duty days before graduation, he distributed a Form 10 to them stating they would be placed on probation and will not graduate.
 - 1) In this Form 10 he wrote that he was, “considering” giving them the punishments listed on the form 10.
 - 2) As of 19 June 2025, they had not heard back on the results of their Form 10 rebuttals.
3. Improper administration
 - A. Failure to inform them that their Form 10 had been closed out
 - 1) In their Form 10, the Commandant stated that he is “considering” the punishment listed, and they were allowed to rebut this Form 10.
 - 2) They submitted rebuttals and awaited a response on them. They never received a response.
 - 3) The Form 10 was closed out on 14 June, and they were never notified of its closure until they received their LON paperwork.
 - 4) When they received their LON paperwork on 20 June 2025, the packet included their closed-out Form 10.
4. Ignoring of Rebuttals
 - A. Their LORs alleged inaccurately that, “You observed and condoned disgraceful behavior on the USAFA Men’s Soccer Team, to wit: freshmen members of the team were lined up against a wall while nude, and partially nude upperclassmen turned out the lights and groped, grabbed, slapped humped, or placed their fingers between the clothed buttocks of the freshmen, which conduct was unbecoming an officer and an Air Force Academy Cadet.”
 - B. In the rebuttal to LOR, the seniors stated that they did not observe or condone what the LOR claims they observed or condoned.
 - C. The seniors also stated that they did attempt to stop several annual traditions of the Team that they believed could have been on the continuum of harm.

5. Other demonstrations of poor “administrative process”:
 - A. A CIC addressed as “cadet second class” under Form 10 incident details.
 - B. Referred to A CIC with an incorrect name in a response to an official congressional inquiry.
 - C. A CIC name was misspelled on official paperwork.
 - D. Leadership referred to CIC with an incorrect name when discussing the case with Permanent Party.
 - E. The loss of privileges has continually been modified by USAFA staff but is unevenly applied across each Cadet Squadron, despite Form 10 direction.

YOUNTS LAW
— ★ ★ ★ —
THE MILITARY COUNSEL

25 November 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY BOARD OF VISITORS

FROM: R. Davis Younts, Lt Col (Ret), USAF
Younts Law
4620 Fritchey Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

SUBJECT: Executive Summary - Need for Reform in USAFA Disciplinary Processes: The Case of Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

As a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force with over two decades of experience as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer, I served on active duty as a prosecutor, defense counsel, Senior Defense Counsel, Wing Staff Judge Advocate, and Chief of the Military Justice Division at the Air Force Judge Advocate General's School. During my time stationed at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) as both a prosecutor and military defense attorney, I directly observed how the Academy's disciplinary processes can be manipulated by fellow cadets or weak leaders to accumulate excessive paperwork—often referred to as "papering a cadet to death"—leading to unjust disenrollments. In my current role as a civilian military law attorney, I represented Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the appeal of his disenrollment, a case that exemplifies these systemic flaws and underscores the urgent need for significant reform at USAFA to ensure fairness, proportionality, and focus on rehabilitation.

Cadet [REDACTED] a promising athlete and leader who chose USAFA over Division I soccer scholarships at civilian universities to pursue military service, received an Article 15 nonjudicial



punishment on 31 March 2025 for minor infractions: a miscommunication about informal soccer activities (2 January - 18 February 2025) and a one-time failure to sign out properly (5 January - 26 January 2025). These minor issues arose in part because of a self-organized pickup game during a coachless period for the soccer team and were amplified by a politicized Commander's Inquiry into the soccer program. As a freshman, [REDACTED] witnessed but did not report team initiation misconduct (1 August - 30 September 2024) due to a permissive culture, which he later recognized as harmful. Despite demonstrating remorse, growth, strong academic performance (2.85 GPA, 3.22 PEA, Dean's and Athletic Lists), leadership as Honor NCOIC, and endorsements from faculty like [REDACTED] [REDACTED], his case escalated to disenrollment. Not once did Cadet [REDACTED] have a full and meaningful opportunity to present his case to an impartial Board or panel. The result was an unfair process that denied contextual consideration while retaining teammates with more serious misconduct.

Cadet [REDACTED] disenrollment highlights broader issues at USAFA, where minor, redeemable errors are disproportionately punished due to external influences, biased targeting of athletes, and inadequate safeguards against manipulation. Weak leaders and cadets can exploit the system to build unjust records, contradicting the Academy's developmental mission to foster resilient officers through learning from setbacks. Significant reforms are needed, including enhanced due process, mandatory rehabilitation for minor deficiencies, independent oversight of investigations, and training to prevent "papering" tactics, to restore trust, preserve valuable assets like [REDACTED]



Point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at davis@yountslaw.com.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RDYounts".

R. Davis Younts, Esquire

Enclosures:

1. Talking Paper on Appeal of Disenrollment and Request for Reinstatement for Cadet [REDACTED] (26 Sep 2025)
2. Appeal Memorandum to Secretary of the Air Force (2 Sep 2025)

Tab 5 BOV AFA Public Comments Enclosures 1-2 (Dec 8 BOV meeting)

Enclosure 1

TALKING PAPER ON APPEAL OF DISENROLLMENT AND REQUEST FOR
REINSTATEMENT FOR CADET [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

-- PURPOSE

- Request Secretary of the Air Force reconsider disenrollment of Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from USAFA
- Seek reinstatement to allow commissioning, or alternatively, defer military service obligation for commissioning through ROTC
- Affirm Cadet [REDACTED] demonstrated potential as an exemplary Air Force officer despite minor infractions disproportionately amplified by a flawed soccer team investigation

-- BACKGROUND

- Cadet [REDACTED] selected USAFA over Division I soccer scholarships at civilian universities to pursue military service
- On 31 Mar 2025, received Article 15 nonjudicial punishment for two minor issues:
 - False official statement from miscommunication with Cadet [REDACTED] about informal soccer activities (2 Jan - 18 Feb 2025); clarified as mutual misunderstanding in 28 Apr 2025 follow-up
 - One-time failure to properly sign out before leaving base (5 Jan - 26 Jan 2025); common administrative lapse typically resolved via informal counseling
- Issues stemmed from self-organized pickup games during coachless period, misinterpreted as official practices
- As freshman, exposed to soccer team initiation misconduct (1 Aug - 30 Sep 2024) involving inappropriate physical contact by upperclassmen; did not report due to permissive team culture
- Without politicized Commander's Inquiry into soccer program (triggered by leadership failures and ambiguous guidance), these would not have escalated to Article 15 or Letter of Notification (LON) for disenrollment

-- WRONGS SUFFERED

- Article 15 punishment unjustified for isolated, redeemable errors lacking intent to deceive; violated proportionality under USAFAI 36-3504 (para. 3.4) and DAFI 36-3211 (para. 4.3)
- Disenrollment driven by entanglement with broader soccer investigation, denying fair contextual review; most team members with more significant misconduct retained

- Pattern of targeting soccer players/recruited athletes by Air Officer Commanding (AOC), escalating minor misunderstandings into serious allegations
- Commandant acknowledged Article 15 based on misunderstandings, not intentional misconduct; Superintendent denied meeting request and relied solely on Article 15 for decision
- Unfair process violates due process protections (USAFAI 36-3504, para. 2.5) and judicial precedents like Bland v. Connally (procedural safeguards against prejudice from minor errors)
- Stigma of general discharge imposes "substantial prejudice in civilian life" (DAFI 36-3211, para. 4.3.2.1), including loss of VA/GI Bill benefits, education opportunities, and employment barriers (Clackum v. United States)

-- CADET [REDACTED] CHARACTER AND POTENTIAL

- Demonstrated remorse, growth, and commitment to core values: precise communication, consistent sign-out, and reporting misconduct (personal statement)
- Strong faculty endorsements: [REDACTED] (top performance in Financial Accounting, A-, ranked 10/38); [REDACTED] (maturity based on 30+ years experience); Lt Col (Ret) [REDACTED] (hard work in Aeronautics, B grade)
- Peer testimonials: Leadership as Honor NCOIC; contributions to team morale, volunteer efforts (e.g., cutting hair for peers, organizing events)
- Academic/athletic achievements: 2.85 GPA, 3.22 PEA, Dean's and Athletic Lists
- Aligns with USAFA's developmental mission to foster resilient leaders through learning from setbacks (USAFAI 36-3504, para. 2.2)

-- APPLICABLE LEGAL STANDARDS

- USAFAI 36-3504: Allows retention/rehabilitation for minor deficiencies via counseling/probation; requires proportionate decisions free from external influences
- AFCWI 36-3501 & UCMJ Article 107: Needs clear proof of intent to deceive for false statements; absent here, advocating rehabilitative approaches over punishment
- DAFI 36-3211: Supports appeals to Secretary for reinstatement/ROTC options when disenrollment disproportionate or affected by overblown investigations

-- RECOMMENDATION

- Dismiss disenrollment and reinstate Cadet [REDACTED] at USAFA to complete commissioning
- Alternatively, defer service obligation for ROTC commissioning

- Use non-punitive measures (e.g., counseling) to address minor issues, preserving [REDACTED] as valuable Air Force asset and avoiding irreversible stigma

-- CONCLUSION

- Disenrollment contradicts USAFA's role as training environment for redeemable errors
- Reinstatement rectifies injustice, restores trust in processes, and reinforces rehabilitation focus
- Enables [REDACTED] to fulfill commitment as Air Force officer, benefiting the service

Prepared by: R. Davis Younts, Esquire Date: 26 Sep 2025 Contact: 1-833-739-5291 /
Davis@yountslaw.com

Enclosure 2



2 September 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL REVIEWING AUTHORITIES

FROM: R. Davis Younts, Esquire¹

SUBJECT: Appeal of Disenrollment and Request for Reinstatement

1. Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF)

We respectfully request that the Secretary of the Air Force reconsider the disenrollment of Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). The Academy serves as a developmental environment aimed at building resilient leaders by guiding cadets through challenges and setbacks. Cadet [REDACTED] received an Article 15 for minor infractions—a miscommunication regarding informal soccer activities and a single administrative oversight in sign-out procedures—that did not warrant Article 15 punishment or disenrollment on their own. These issues became amplified by a politicized soccer team investigation, resulting in disproportionate scrutiny, a Letter of Notification (LON) for disenrollment, and an unfair review process. Reinstatement at USAFA to allow commissioning, or alternatively, deferral of military service to pursue a commission through ROTC, would affirm Cadet [REDACTED] demonstrated potential as an exemplary Air Force officer, as shown by his remorse, personal growth, and strong endorsements from faculty and peers.

2. Background

¹ Attorney Younts, Lt Col (Ret) USAF, is an experienced military law attorney with over two decades of experience. Mr. Younts is a former Active-Duty JAG who served as a prosecutor, defense counsel, Senior Defense Counsel, Wing SJA, and Chief of the Military Justice Division at the Air Force Judge Advocate General's School. Mr. Younts represents this client in a private capacity as a civilian attorney.

Cadet [REDACTED] selected USAFA over Division I soccer scholarships at civilian universities to pursue a career in military service. His trajectory was disrupted by minor lapses that were escalated due to leadership failures within the men's soccer program and a disproportionate Commander's Inquiry. On 31 March 2025, [REDACTED] received nonjudicial punishment under Article 15 for two allegations: a false official statement arising from a miscommunication with Cadet [REDACTED] about informal soccer activities between 2 January and 18 February 2025, and a failure to properly sign out before leaving base between 5 January and 26 January 2025 (Enclosure, Exhibit B). These incidents stemmed from self-organized pickup games during a period without coaching oversight, which were misinterpreted as official practices (Enclosure, Exhibits C and D). [REDACTED] did not assert that these were official sessions; [REDACTED]'s memorandum references vague "impressions" without pinpointing a specific false statement, and a follow-up conversation on 28 April 2025 confirmed it was a misunderstanding rather than intentional deceit (Enclosure, Exhibit B, paras. 3-6). The sign-out error represented a one-time administrative lapse, which is common among cadets and typically resolved through informal counseling rather than formal punishment. As a freshman, [REDACTED] was exposed to misconduct during a soccer team initiation between 1 August 2024 and 30 September 2024, involving inappropriate physical contact by upperclassmen, which he did not report due to a permissive team culture that he later identified as harmful (Enclosure, Exhibit A). In his personal statement, [REDACTED] acknowledges being drawn into a "vortex of cadet mediocrity" where he followed others in breaching standards, but he has since committed to precise communication, consistent sign-out practices, and upholding core values by reporting any misconduct (Enclosure, Exhibit A). Without the soccer investigation—triggered by inadequate program oversight and ambiguous guidance from coaches—these minor issues would not

have led to Article 15 punishment or a LON for disenrollment (Enclosure, para. 4c). The Article 15 alone would not justify disenrollment, but the investigation's context led to an LON, hindering a balanced review. Faculty endorsements, such as Dr. [REDACTED] highlighting his top performance in Financial Accounting (A-, ranked 10 out of 38) and Dr. [REDACTED] attesting to his maturity based on over 30 years of experience, combined with peer testimonials emphasizing his growth post-probation, contributions to team morale, and roles like Honor NCOIC, demonstrate his alignment with Academy values (Enclosure, Exhibit E). Disenrolling [REDACTED] would contradict USAFA's mission to foster officer development through learning from redeemable errors rather than imposing punitive expulsion.

3. Applicable Legal Standards

a. USAFAI 36-3504, Disenrollment of United States Air Force Academy Cadets

This regulation outlines procedures for cadet disenrollment while emphasizing the importance of rehabilitation potential and contextual factors in decision-making (para. 2.2). It allows for retention when deficiencies are minor and can be addressed through non-punitive measures such as counseling or probation (para. 3.4), and it provides due process protections, including the right to appeal to higher authorities like the Secretary of the Air Force (para. 2.5). Disenrollment decisions must be proportionate to the misconduct, with a focus on developmental outcomes over expulsion for actions that are correctable, and they require a fair review process free from disproportionate external influences.

b. AFCWI 36-3501, Cadet Standards and Duties and UCMJ Article 107

This regulation and the UCMJ require clear proof of intent to deceive for allegations of false official statements (para. 4.3.1). In the absence of such evidence, as seen in cases involving misunderstandings or ambiguity, the allegations do not rise to the level of serious misconduct that warrants Article 15 punishment or disenrollment. Military law and tradition clearly differentiate between intentional deceit and instances of poor communication, advocating for rehabilitative approaches in the latter cases and reserving formal actions for substantiated violations.

c. DAFI 36-3211, Military Separations (24 June 2022)

This instruction governs cadet separations and the characterization of discharges, stressing that decisions must be proportionate while considering rehabilitation potential and the long-term effects of separation (para. 4.3). A general discharge imposes “substantial prejudice in civilian life” (para. 4.3.2.1), including restrictions on access to VA benefits such as GI Bill education benefits (para. 4.5.1). Judicial precedents, including *Bland v. Connally*, 293 F.2d 852 (D.C. Cir. 1961), which underscores the need for procedural safeguards to prevent unfair prejudice from minor or contextual errors, and *Clackum v. United States*, 148 Ct. Cl. 404 (1960), which highlights the barriers to benefits and employment from less-than-honorable separations, reinforce the requirement for equitable review. For appeals to the Secretary, the instruction supports reinstatement or alternative commissioning options like ROTC when disenrollment is deemed disproportionate or affected by external factors such as overblown investigations.

4. Discussion

The United States Air Force Academy functions as a developmental institution where cadets are expected to learn from their mistakes to emerge as effective officers. Cadet [REDACTED] minor missteps,

which were significantly amplified by a flawed soccer team investigation, represent opportunities for personal and professional growth rather than insurmountable barriers to continued service. The Article 15 punishment was not justified for these isolated issues, and its entanglement with the broader investigation prevented a fair and contextual review, culminating in a disproportionate recommendation for disenrollment. Allowing reinstatement or a deferral to ROTC would align with the Academy's core mission and preserve a promising asset for the Air Force.

a. USAFA as a Training Environment

USAFA is designed to shape young cadets into officers by emphasizing character development through overcoming setbacks. [REDACTED] actions—a miscommunication with Cadet [REDACTED] and a sign-out oversight—stemmed from shortcuts prevalent in a permissive cadet culture, rather than from a fundamentally disqualifying character flaw. He has openly acknowledged his failure to rise above this culture, including not reporting the soccer initiation misconduct he witnessed as a freshman (Enclosure, Exhibit A). In the absence of the investigation's escalation, these matters would have been appropriately handled through counseling, not formal Article 15 proceedings or disenrollment (Enclosure, para. 4a). His subsequent proactive measures, such as establishing habits for precise communication, immediate sign-out compliance, and a commitment to reporting misconduct, illustrate strong rehabilitation potential consistent with USAFAI 36-3504 (para. 2.2). Furthermore, faculty testimonials provide concrete evidence of his focus, professionalism, and ability to learn from errors, reinforcing the case for his continued development within the Academy framework (Enclosure, Exhibit E). Retaining cadets like [REDACTED] who demonstrate such growth supports the institution's goal of producing resilient leaders.

b. Cadet [REDACTED] Actions Are Not Service-Disqualifying

The allegations against [REDACTED] do not meet the threshold for serious misconduct under USAFAI 36-3205, as they lack the required element of intent to deceive (para. 4.3.1). [REDACTED] never claimed the informal pickup games were official practices; [REDACTED]'s perception arose from ambiguity during a coachless period, not from any deliberate falsehood, as their 28 April 2025 conversation confirmed it was a mutual misunderstanding (Enclosure, Exhibit B, paras. 3-6). Supporting witness statements further clarify that the absence of coaching oversight contributed to these misinterpretations (Enclosure, Exhibits C and D). The sign-out failure was a minor administrative error, one that is frequently encountered and resolved without escalation to formal punishment. Similarly, his initial silence regarding the initiation misconduct—described in the LON as involving inappropriate physical contact by upperclassmen—reflected the influence of a leadership-void team culture that he has since actively rejected through reflection and commitment to higher standards (Enclosure, Exhibit A). These context-specific lapses, when analyzed in isolation from the investigation's broader narrative, are clearly opportunities for corrective growth rather than grounds for barring future service. Cadet [REDACTED] AOC has engaged in a pattern of targeting Soccer players and recruited athletes by consistently escalating minor misunderstandings and unintentional acts into allegations of serious misconduct.² Judicial guidance, such as in *Bland v. Connally*, warns against imposing stigmatizing separations based on minor misunderstandings without adequate procedural protections, highlighting the need to evaluate

² Due consideration should be given to the disparate treatment Cadet [REDACTED] received via Article 15 for minor infractions. Not only was an Article 15 outside the bounds of normal disciplinary action for a minor mistake or misunderstanding, his AOC continued targeting of Soccer players should be investigated and taken into careful consideration.

intent and context thoroughly.

c. Disenrollment Driven by Soccer Team Investigation

The Commander's Inquiry into the soccer program, prompted by systemic issues like the lack of coaching presence in early months and unclear guidance on honor standards, disproportionately impacted [REDACTED] by entangling his minor issues in a larger probe (Enclosure, para. 4c). This led to an LOR and subsequent LON, where his communication lapse and unreported freshman experiences were portrayed out of proportion amid the program's broader failures. Notably, most of the members of the soccer team who engaged in far more significant misconduct were retained while Cadet [REDACTED] was disenrolled.³ Without this politicized investigation, these matters would not have escalated to formal punishment or disenrollment, effectively denying him a fair review of the underlying facts. This process violates the proportionality principles outlined in DAFI 36-3211 (para. 4.3), as the investigation's flaws magnified redeemable errors into a basis for separation. Correcting this through reinstatement or ROTC deferral would ensure equitable treatment and prevent the misuse of investigative contexts to justify excessive outcomes.

d. Cadet [REDACTED] Character and Potential for Service

Endorsements from respected faculty, including [REDACTED] praising his hard work in Aeronautics (earning a B) and [REDACTED] noting his maturity, along with peer statements from individuals like C1C [REDACTED] emphasizing his leadership as Honor NCOIC, collectively affirm [REDACTED]

³ In a meeting with Cadet [REDACTED] the Commandant recognized and stated that the Article 15 was based on misunderstandings rather than intentional misconduct. Unfortunately, the Superintendent denied Cadet [REDACTED] request for a meeting and relied on the Article 15 to make the disenrollment decision.

integrity and readiness for officer roles (Enclosure, Exhibit E). His decision to prioritize military service over civilian athletic opportunities, combined with academic achievements such as a 2.85 GPA, 3.22 PEA, and placements on the Dean's and Athletic Lists, as well as his volunteer efforts in activities like cutting hair for peers and organizing morale events, reflect a strong alignment with Air Force core values. These elements demonstrate that [REDACTED] possesses the foundational qualities needed for success, and disenrolling him would represent a significant loss to the Air Force, contrary to the rehabilitative focus of USAFAI 36-3504.

e. Stigma of Disenrollment

A separation under these circumstances carries “substantial prejudice” as defined in DAFI 36-3211 (para. 4.3.2.1), including barriers to VA benefits, education opportunities, and civilian employment, as illustrated in *Clackum v. United States*. For a cadet like [REDACTED] who has shown genuine remorse, proactive growth, and strong endorsements, imposing such a lasting stigma is not only unwarranted but also counterproductive to USAFA's mission of rehabilitation, particularly when the underlying infractions are minor and tied to contextual factors rather than inherent deficiencies.

5. Recommendation

We respectfully request that the Secretary dismiss the disenrollment and reinstate Cadet [REDACTED] at USAFA to pursue commissioning, or alternatively, defer his military service obligation to allow commissioning through ROTC. His minor, context-driven actions, which were disproportionately amplified by leadership failures in the soccer program and a flawed investigation, did not merit Article 15 punishment or disenrollment. Instead, non-punitive measures under USAFAI 36-3504 (para. 3.4) are sufficient to address them, thereby preserving his potential and avoiding the irreversible stigma of

separation.

6. Conclusion

Cadet [REDACTED] disenrollment constitutes a disproportionate response to minor errors that were heavily influenced by contextual factors, including leadership shortcomings in the soccer program and an overblown investigation that combined the Article 15 with additional scrutiny to support expulsion. His failure to report the freshman initiation misconduct, along with the other lapses, stemmed from a permissive culture that he has fully rejected through demonstrated personal growth, reflection, and a renewed commitment to Air Force standards. Faculty and peer endorsements provide clear evidence of his potential to excel as an officer, underscoring that he remains a valuable asset to the service. Reinstatement or deferral to ROTC is essential to rectify this injustice, ensure compliance with regulatory emphases on rehabilitation and proportionality, and mitigate the unwarranted stigma of separation. Moreover, such a decision would help restore trust in the Academy's processes by showing that developmental opportunities are extended to cadets who learn from their mistakes, thereby reinforcing discipline and accountability across the institution. We urge the Secretary to grant this relief, enabling Cadet [REDACTED] to fulfill his commitment to serve as an officer in the United States Air Force.

Respectfully submitted,



R. Davis Younts, Esquire



Enclosure: LON Response Packet dated 24 June 2025

Enclosure - LON Response

YOUNTS LAW



THE MILITARY COUNSEL

24 June 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL REVIEWING AUTHORITIES

FROM: Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Through Counsel (R. Davis Younts, Esquire)

SUBJECT: Response to Letter of Notification

1. **BLUF.** We respectfully request that USAFA leadership reconsider the proposed action, recognizing that the Air Force Academy is a training environment designed to forge leaders through challenges and setbacks, where cadets learn from mistakes to emerge as resilient officers. Cadet [REDACTED] actions do not reflect a poor attitude or service-disqualifying behavior and there is little doubt they would not have warranted disenrollment absent the soccer team investigation which was clearly blown out of proportion and politicized. Disenrolling him risks imposing a general discharge with lifelong stigma and ignores his potential to serve as an exemplary Air Force officer, as evidenced by his remorse, growth, and faculty and peer testimonials.
2. **Background.** Cadet [REDACTED] received an LON citing two allegations: (1) a false official statement related to soccer team activities, and (2) failure to properly sign out before leaving base and return without following procedures. These allegations stem from a Commander's Inquiry into the soccer team, which has been disproportionately scrutinized due to leadership failures. As detailed in Cadet [REDACTED] personal statement (Enclosure A) and Article 15 appeal (Enclosure B), his actions reflect a failure to rise above a permissive cadet culture rather than intentional misconduct. Faculty and peers,



including professors and cadet leaders, attest to his integrity, leadership, and potential for future service, supporting his retention and supporting a decision to avoid the lifelong stigma of a general discharge.

3. Applicable Legal Standards.

a. USAFAI 36-3504, Disenrollment of United States Air Force Academy Cadets, outlines procedures for cadet disenrollment, emphasizing that decisions should consider rehabilitation potential and the context of a cadet's actions. It provides for retention when rehabilitation is possible (para. 2.2) and affords cadets rights such as notice, consultation with counsel, and rebuttal opportunities (para. 2.5). Non-punitive measures, such as counseling, are preferred for minor deficiencies (para. 3.4).

b. USAFAI 36-3205, Standards of Conduct, Aptitude, and Discipline for Cadets, defines standards for cadet conduct and specifies that a false official statement requires proof of intent to deceive (para. 4.3.1). Absent such intent, allegations of false statements do not constitute serious misconduct warranting disenrollment.

c. DAFI 36-3211, Military Separations (24 June 2022), governs discharge characterizations for Air Force personnel, including cadets. The DAFI notes that a general discharge may result in "substantial prejudice in civilian life" (para. 4.3.2.1), limiting access to VA benefits like GI Bill education benefits (para. 4.5.1) and carrying social and professional stigma, as recognized in *Bland v. Connally*, 293 F.2d 852 (D.C. Cir. 1961) (noting a general discharge's stigmatizing effect on reputation and career) and *Clackum v. United States*, 148 Ct. Cl. 404 (1960) (acknowledging stigma from less-than-honorable discharges affecting benefits and employment).

4. **Discussion.** The Air Force Academy serves as a crucible for leadership, shaping cadets through challenges and setbacks into officers who lead with resilience and integrity, as military leaders have long emphasized. Service academies are not about producing perfect officers but about forging leaders who learn from their mistakes and emerge stronger.¹ Cadet [REDACTED] embodies this developmental ethos—a cadet whose missteps are opportunities for growth, not barriers to service. Disenrolling him with a general discharge would impose a lifelong stigma, undermining his potential to become an asset to the Air Force, as evident in his actions, character, and the trust placed in him by faculty and peers.

a. The Air Force Academy is a Training Environment. The Air Force Academy is a developmental institution tasked with shaping young cadets into officers with an emphasis on character growth. This process involves navigating setbacks to build resilience. Cadet [REDACTED] actions—poor communication with Cadet [REDACTED] and administrative oversight in sign-out procedures—reflect shortcuts common in cadet culture, not a poor attitude or service-disqualifying behavior. His failure to rise above this culture and lead change does not warrant disenrollment, which risks a general discharge and its associated stigma, as noted in *Bland v. Connally*. His demonstrated potential and remorse align with the view that mistakes are steppingstones to leadership.

b. Cadet [REDACTED] Actions Are Not Service-Disqualifying. The allegations against Cadet [REDACTED] do

¹ As General Mark D. Schwartz, former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force (2012–2016) noted in his 2013 speech at USAFA, the Air Force Academy is a crucible for leadership, where cadets are shaped through challenges and setbacks into officers who can lead with resilience and integrity. Similarly, throughout his career General David Petraeus Commander of U.S. Central Command (2008–2010), Commander of Multi-National Force – Iraq (2007–2008), and Commander of International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (2010–2011), made it clear that he saw the service academies as not about producing perfect officers but about forging leaders who learn from their mistakes and emerge stronger as a result.

not reflect conduct that disqualifies him from future service. The alleged false official statement arose from a misunderstanding with Cadet [REDACTED], who believed [REDACTED] was participating in official soccer practices when he was playing informal pickup games to prepare for tryouts (Enclosure B, paras. 3-5). [REDACTED] clarifies he never claimed these were official practices, and Cadet [REDACTED]'s memorandum uses vague terms like "under the impression," failing to identify a specific false statement (Enclosure B, para. 4). No intent to deceive is evident, as confirmed by [REDACTED] follow-up conversation with [REDACTED], where she acknowledged a misunderstanding (Enclosure B, para. 6). Similarly, the failure to sign out is a minor administrative error, common among cadets and appropriately addressed through corrective measures like counseling, not disenrollment. These actions, while regrettable, are not indicative of a character unfit for officership but rather opportunities for growth. A general discharge would disproportionately burden [REDACTED] with stigma, limiting his civilian opportunities, as recognized in *Clackum v. United States*.

c. Disenrollment Driven by Soccer Team Investigation. Absent the soccer team investigation, there is little doubt Cadet [REDACTED] actions would not have prompted a recommendation for disenrollment. The investigation reflects leadership failures within the soccer program, including inadequate oversight and unclear expectations. For example, the absence of a coach in January and February led to informal pickup games, which were misinterpreted as official practices (Enclosures C-D). Earlier guidance from soccer coaches to navigate honor processes ambiguously further confused cadets (Enclosure A). Targeting [REDACTED] for disenrollment due to an investigation driven by leadership shortcomings is disproportionate and overlooks his capacity for growth. Imposing a general discharge would further

exacerbate this injustice by attaching a stigmatizing label to a cadet whose errors were context-driven, as cautioned in DAFI 36-3211.

d. Cadet [REDACTED] Character and Potential for Service. Faculty and peer testimonials underscore Cadet [REDACTED] integrity, leadership, and readiness to serve as an officer, aligning with the developmental vision of the Academy. Cadet [REDACTED] is a young man who could have prioritized athletics and had the opportunity to play Division 1 soccer at any number of universities, instead he chose to pursue military service. Dr. [REDACTED], Assistant Professor of Management, praises [REDACTED] exemplary performance in Financial Accounting, ranking 10 out of 38 cadets with an A-, noting his unmatched focus and professionalism. Dr. [REDACTED], Professor of Management, highlights [REDACTED] maturity and charisma in a rigorous accounting course, affirming his potential as a model officer based on 30+ years of experience. Lt Col (Ret) [REDACTED], Assistant Professor of Aeronautics, commends [REDACTED] hard work in Aero 315, earning a B, and his selflessness in volunteering. Cadet Squadron Commander C1C [REDACTED] emphasizes [REDACTED] growth post-probation, his role as Honor NCOIC, and his contributions to squadron morale, with a 2.85 GPA, 3.22 PEA, and Dean's and Athletic Lists. [REDACTED], Club Soccer Co-Captain, attests to [REDACTED] teamwork and humility, accepting partial responsibility for a parking miscommunication. C1C [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Honor program supervisor, praises his initiative in honor training and investigations, reflecting commitment to growth. These endorsements demonstrate [REDACTED] alignment with Air Force core values and his potential to excel as an officer, making the stigma of a general discharge particularly unwarranted.

e. Stigma of a General Discharge. Disenrolling Cadet [REDACTED] with a general discharge under honorable conditions, as permitted by DAFI 36-3211, would impose a lifelong stigma that is disproportionate to his minor infractions. A general discharge carries “substantial prejudice in civilian life” (DAFI 36-3211, para. 4.3.2.1). Courts have recognized this stigma’s impact: in *Bland v. Connally*, 293 F.2d 852 (D.C. Cir. 1961), the D.C. Circuit noted that a general discharge damages reputation and career prospects, requiring due process to prevent unfair prejudice; in *Clackum v. United States*, 148 Ct. Cl. 404 (1960), the Court of Claims acknowledged how less-than-honorable discharges bar veterans from benefits and employment, creating a lasting burden. Veterans with general discharges face limited access to VA benefits, such as GI Bill education benefits, and encounter social stigma and employment challenges, particularly in government or security-related roles. For [REDACTED] a cadet with a 2.85 GPA, 3.22 PEA, and strong faculty endorsements, a general discharge would overshadow his achievements and potential, undermining the Academy’s mission to develop leaders through rehabilitation rather than punitive measures.

5. **Recommendation.** We respectfully request that the Commandant dismiss the proposed actions in the LON or impose non-punitive measures, such as counseling or additional training, consistent with USAFAI 36-3504 (para. 3.4). [REDACTED]’s actions reflect a failure to rise above cadet culture, not service-disqualifying behavior, and almost certainly would not have warranted disenrollment without the flawed soccer team investigation. His remorse, corrective measures, and strong character affirm his suitability for continued development, particularly when weighed against the stigmatizing impact of a general discharge.



6. **Conclusion.** The Air Force Academy is a training environment where cadets like [REDACTED] [REDACTED] are expected to grow, not to be perfect. His actions, driven by a permissive cadet culture and exacerbated by the soccer investigation, do not reflect a poor attitude or service-disqualifying behavior. Faculty and peer testimonials confirm his potential to serve with distinction. As Abraham Lincoln observed, "I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice."² In this case, applying mercy to a cadet with [REDACTED] character, remorse, and in this context, rather than imposing the stigma of a general discharge, will yield greater rewards for the Air Force. We respectfully request reconsideration of the LON to allow Cadet [REDACTED] to continue his development as a future officer.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RDYounts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R. Davis Younts, Esquire

Enclosures:

Enclosure A: Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Personal Statement

Enclosure B: Cadet [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Article 15 Appeal

Enclosure C: Witness Statement from C2C [REDACTED]

Enclosure D: Witness Statement from C3C [REDACTED]

² Gillespie, Letter to William Herndon, January 31, 1866, as cited in The American Catholic, April 5, 2016

Enclosure A

Personal Statement

I respectfully submit this rebuttal to take full ownership of my actions and express my commitment to growing into the officer our Air Force needs. I understand the seriousness of the mistakes I have made and the disappointment I have caused, and I do not take this opportunity to speak lightly.

Over the past several months, I have failed to meet the standards expected of a first-class cadet. As someone who just earned the title of firstie, I should be setting the example. Instead, I fell short. I recognize that I have made choices that reflect immaturity and a lack of seriousness about the responsibilities I hold, and I am determined to change that.

One of the central issues in this case was a false official statement. I want to make it clear that I did not lie, but I communicated poorly and allowed ambiguity to enter a situation that required complete clarity. There are areas of grayness in life that can cause challenges, but I now recognize that in this environment — one that demands integrity and accountability — there is no room for that kind of uncertainty. I was guided by my soccer coaches during my freshman year to withhold the truth during an honor probation process. Even though I was young and trying to follow the direction of those I looked up to, I failed to remember that our values are clear: do not lie, cheat, or steal. Additionally, Cadet [REDACTED] interpreted my actions as practicing with the soccer team and coaches, when in fact I was playing casual pickup. The fact that my actions were so easily misunderstood shows just how damaging ambiguity can be. I have allowed this grayness to creep into my communication and judgment, and it has conflicted with the standards of the Academy. From this point forward, I will not allow any gray areas to enter how I operate. I will speak with precision, act with integrity, and ensure that my decisions are clearly aligned with the black-and-white standards this environment demands.

I also failed to properly sign out before leaving base and returned without following the correct procedures. This was a failure of attention to detail and personal discipline. I have already taken steps to ensure this does not happen again by developing the habit of signing out immediately before I leave my room and double-checking each time, I enter a vehicle to leave base. These small actions are critical to rebuilding the discipline that should have been present all along.

After meeting with Mr. [REDACTED], I realized just how far I have drifted from who I need to be. I have been caught in a vortex of cadet mediocrity, where standards begin to feel unimportant and the example around me slowly becomes the one, I follow. When I saw others getting away with breaking standards, I convinced myself that it was acceptable for me to do the same. That mindset is completely wrong. I now understand how damaging

Personal Statement

that way of thinking has been, not only to my own development but also to the trust others place in me.

One of the most serious mistakes I made was witnessing misconduct during a soccer team initiation and failing to report it. At the time, I convinced myself that staying silent would avoid drama or conflict. But in doing so, I failed to uphold the values I swore to live by. As a future officer, it is my duty to protect the culture and integrity of any unit I am part of. My silence allowed behavior that goes against everything the Academy and the Air Force stand for to go unchallenged. I now understand that failing to act is just as damaging as committing the misconduct itself. Moving forward, I will report any misconduct I witness, regardless of who is involved or what relationships are at stake. Upholding our standards must come before loyalty to individuals. Accountability is not optional — it is essential to the trust, discipline, and cohesion of any team, and I am committed to being the kind of leader who enforces that without hesitation.

Sir, I want to make it absolutely clear that I take full responsibility for my actions. I am not blaming anyone else, nor am I minimizing the impact of my decisions. I know that being a cadet, and more importantly, becoming an officer, requires living to a higher standard even when no one is watching. That is the kind of person I am committed to becoming.

I want this second chance not only to remain at the Academy, but to rebuild my character and reshape my self-discipline from the ground up. I understand that I cannot lead others until I learn to lead myself. I am ready to do the work it takes to earn back trust and to grow into an officer who reflects the core values of our Air Force. I now understand that integrity, humility, and accountability are not just expectations, but daily commitments that must be lived intentionally.

This experience has changed me. While my mistakes are part of my journey, they will not define me. How I respond to them will.

Enclosure B

1 April 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR CG-3/CC

FROM: C2C [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Written Response to Article 15 Proceedings

1. Ma'am, I have consulted with my appointed defense counsel, [REDACTED] regarding your offer of nonjudicial punishment under Article 15, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). I have decided to accept this forum and ask you to please consider my response before making your final decision in this matter.
2. I take full responsibility for my actions and any resulting consequences. Between on or about 5 January and on or about 26 January, I was absent without leave. Between on or about 2 January and on or about 18 February, I provided false statements to [REDACTED]. There is no excuse for my actions.
3. Regarding my interactions with [REDACTED], I acknowledge that my communication could have been clearer, but I did not intentionally provide false statements. I told her I was playing pick-up soccer to prepare for tryouts and was not participating in official team practices. The misunderstanding arose because she believed I was practicing with the official team, prompting the head coach to verify in a statement that I was not at practice. Additionally, on February 18th, I saw Cadet [REDACTED] in the gym and provided an update on tryouts. The coach later confirmed in writing that tryouts were taking longer than expected. That day, I was at the gym to run on the treadmill since pick-up was not happening. However, I failed to communicate this to her beforehand, which led to assumptions that could have been avoided. I take full responsibility for my lack of clear communication and will ensure better accountability moving forward.
4. Over the past two semesters, I have worked to improve both myself and those around me. Last semester, I earned a place on the Dean's List and the Athletics List for the first time, reflecting my commitment to academic and physical development. I have also supported fellow cadets in various ways. When hair regulations updated, I helped cadets meet the new standards by providing haircuts to ensure compliance. Additionally, I monitored the 27ers' monthly meetings with their supervisees by reviewing their Form 174 submissions to support oversight and mentorship. To strengthen squadron camaraderie, I organized a few Front Porch Thursdays and Sweet Tea Tuesdays, providing opportunities for cadets to connect. I also worked security during the Parents Weekend Parade, helping to ensure the safety of attendees. When standardizations and evaluations needed additional support, I joined last minute to assist where needed. In pursuit of my professional goals, I have continued to develop my aviation skills, earning flight hours and achieving a 71 PCSM.
5. I accept full responsibility for my actions, which do not reflect the standards expected of a 2nd Class Cadet. This will not happen again. A 30-day base restriction will serve as an opportunity for reflection, reinforcing my commitment to discipline, accountability, and the responsibilities that come with serving. Additionally, completing whatever cadet disciplinary measures you find

appropriate will further instill the importance of integrity and sound decision-making, ensuring I learn from my mistakes and grow as a leader.

6. Ma'am, I ask that you temper any form of punishment with a sense of justice called for under these circumstances. If deemed appropriate, I am willing to complete tours and confinements as a means to reinforce accountability and ensure I learn from this experience. You may be assured that this misconduct will never again occur.

[REDACTED] C2C, USAF

8 Attachments:

1. Character Reference Letter from [REDACTED], dated 6 Apr 25
2. Character Reference Letter from [REDACTED], dated 6 Apr 25
3. Character Reference Letter from [REDACTED], dated 3 Apr 25
4. Character Reference Letter from C1C [REDACTED], dated 6 Apr 25
5. Character Reference Letter from C1C [REDACTED], dated 3 Apr 25
6. Character Reference Letter from C1C [REDACTED], dated 5 Apr 25
7. Witness Statement from C2C [REDACTED], dated 3 Apr 25
8. Witness Statement from C3C [REDACTED], dated 2 Apr 25

Enclosure C

April 3, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

FROM: C2C [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Witness Statement for C2C [REDACTED]

1. I am C2C [REDACTED] and I am in Cadet Squadron One and the captain of the men's soccer team. I make the following statement on behalf of C2C [REDACTED]

2. In the beginning of the semester the soccer team was coach-less so we did not have practice in an official capacity. However, we organized pickup games with the goal of playing every day or almost every day to stay in shape and to keep our touch. Because Cadet [REDACTED] was previously on the team and a very good player, I invited him to train with us during these sessions. Throughout the month of January and some of February Cadet [REDACTED] attended these events and we were thankful he was there.

3. I hope **this information** is helpful to you in making an appropriate disposition of C2C [REDACTED]'s case. I can be contacted at the following email should you have any questions:

[REDACTED]

//SIGNED//

[REDACTED] C2C, USSFA

Enclosure D

4/2/25

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

FROM: C3C [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Witness Statement for C2C [REDACTED]

1. I am C3C [REDACTED] I am a member of the Air Force Men's Soccer team and a cadet in Squadron 28, AFCW, CO. I make the following statement on behalf of C2C [REDACTED]
2. C2C [REDACTED] played pickup soccer with members of the Air Force Soccer team in the afternoon on weekdays during the months of January and February before the Men's Soccer Team had official practices.
3. C2C [REDACTED] was awaiting an official tryout for the Men's Soccer team and was training with members of the team and on his own to prepare in advance.
4. I hope this information is helpful to you in making an appropriate disposition of C3C [REDACTED] [REDACTED]'s case. I can be contacted at the following number should you have any questions: DSN and Commercial.

//SIGNED//
[REDACTED] C3C, USSF

**MEMORANDUM FOR
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
BOARD OF VISITORS**

FROM: Senator (ret) Michael T. Rose
US Air Force Academy 1969
Executive Vice President and General Counsel
Stand Together Against Racism and Radicalism in the Services, Inc. (STARRS)
409 Central Ave.
Summerville, SC 29483

SUBJECT: REFORMS NEEDED IN AFA DISENROLLMENT, CONDUCT AND HONOR SYSTEMS

BLUF: I strongly recommend that, as authorized by the statutory mandate that the AFA “Board [of Visitors] shall inquire into the morale, discipline, and social climate . . . and other matters relating to the Academy,” 10 U.S.C. §9455, and applicable regulations, the AFA BOV authorize, during its 08 December 2025 virtual meeting, a group of legal and other consultants knowledgeable about AFA policies and legal requirements to investigate and recommend improvements in the fairness, timeliness, efficiency, utility, legal compliance and effects on the morale, discipline and social climate at the AFA associated with AFA cadet disciplinary, academic and disenrollment matters. I recommend that this group of consultants deliver an interim report of their findings and recommended proposals and courses of action to correct deficiencies and to strengthen the fairness, utility, and integrity of outcomes in AFA cadet disciplinary, academic and disenrollment matters to the BOV no later than 90 days after the group’s official inception.

The purposes of this memorandum are to provide a **historical perspective** regarding ongoing problems with, and to explain why there is a **need now** for the United State Air Force Academy (AFA) Board of Visitors (BOV) to investigate and to recommend changes/improvements to, the AFA’s cadet disenrollment, conduct and honor systems.¹

By way of introduction, I am a graduate of the Air Force Academy (AFA), the New York University (NYU) School of Law (Editor, Law Review) and Harvard Business School (subject of case study). I reside and practice law near Charleston, SC; am a member of five state and

¹ The terms “conduct,” “honor,” “disenrollment” and “disciplinary” refer throughout this document to any process or system by which a cadet is or can be disenrolled from or otherwise penalized in any way by the Air Force Academy or any other federal service academy.

multiple other bars and the Bar Register of Pre-Eminent Lawyers; and served during four terms as a South Carolina State Senator. I have legal, business, military, and political experience, and am the Executive Vice President and General Counsel of STARRS (www.starrs.us). See:

- <https://starrs.us/michael-rose-jd-mba/>
- <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-2-Political-Resume-2012-Mike-Rose.pdf>
- <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-3-Sen.-Rose-Named-As-Outstanding-State-Legislator-Scan1565.pdf>

As a student editor of NYU Law Review, I authored a 192-page, 1136 footnote study comparing and analyzing, for the first time, the cadet conduct, honor and ethics systems at the Military (West Point), Air Force, Naval, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine Academies (collectively “academies”), as well as at the Citadel and VMI. See A Prayer for Relief: The Constitutional Infirmities of the Military Academies’ Conduct, Honor and Ethics Systems (New York University School of Law 1973) (“APFR”). <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/A-Prayer-For-Relief-Final-5.16.11.pdf>

This NYU Law Review study describes in detail the origins, requirements, and legal bases and authority of, and needed improvements at, the five federal military academies’ cadet/midshipmen conduct and honor systems in 1973; and led to specific changes, particularly at West Point and the Air Force Academy. This study generated national publicity and spawned the landmark US Supreme Court decision establishing the precedent of “redaction” regarding the then new Freedom of Information Act. (*Department of the Air Force v. Rose*, 425 U.S. 352 (1976); see <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/425/352/>).

During the past fifty years I have advised hundreds of cadets at the five federal military academies, including regarding diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), the COVID vaccine mandate, and conduct, disenrollment and honor-related issues. I defended, as the civilian leader elected by sixty active-duty Army JAGS and by civilian lawyers, hundreds of cadets during the 1976 West Point cheating scandal; and advised dozens of cadets in an AFA cheating scandal in 1984.

In 1976 I testified as a subject matter expert before the Military Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, and interacted with members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, especially its Chairman, and the Secretary of the Army about West Point’s Honor Code and System. I met with then House Speaker Carl Albert and got him to cause 230+ members of Congress to sign a petition to the Secretary of the Army not to expel the West Point cadets guilty of cheating. As a result of these efforts, cadets who violated the West Point Honor Code in 1976 were penalized by being suspended for a year, but allowed afterwards to return to graduate from West Point and be commissioned as officers. That was in contrast to cadets having been permanently expelled from West Point in past years after having been found guilty of violating the West Point Honor Code, without the ability to return.

Also in 1976, I testified before The Special Commission on the United States Military Academy (WP), known as the “Borman Commission” (see: <https://starrs.us/wp->

<content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-6-Borman-Commission-Report.pdf>), which concluded in part the following:

“ . . . We believe that . . . the **administration of the Honor Code [at West Point] has been inconsistent and, at times, corrupt**. There must be improvement in both education and administration.

. . . The Commission concurs unanimously with the actions that you have taken to provide a **"second chance"** for certain cadets involved in the Electrical Engineering cheating incident last spring. Moreover, the Commission believes that the same consideration should be given to all other cadets who were involved in cheating, or tolerating cheating, on the examination in question.

The Commission recognizes that there is a body of opinion that believes your action [to suspend guilty cadets for a year rather than expel them from West Point permanently] resulted in a lowering of standards at West Point. **We disagree**. The **cadets** did cheat, but **were not solely at fault**. Their culpability must be viewed against the unrestrained growth of the "cool on-honor" subculture at the Academy, the widespread violations of the Honor Code, the **gross inadequacies** in the Honor System, the failure of the Academy to act decisively with respect to known honor problems, and the other Academy shortcomings. Your action did not condone cheating; rather, it recognized that, **in light of the grave institutional responsibility**, the implicated cadets should be given another opportunity to meet the ideals of the Honor Code.

The time has come to end this unfortunate episode. The Academy must recognize that it is **not treating a disease that can be cured simply by isolating those who have been infected**. The Academy must now acknowledge the causes of the breakdown and devote its full energies to rebuilding an improved and strengthened institution. We see nothing to be gained by further action against these cadets and much to be lost by continuing with the divisive and unrealistic attempt to purge all who have violated an Honor Code that is perceived in widely differing ways. **What is needed are reform and regeneration, not retribution**.

We make several recommendations designed to **correct institutional shortcomings** we have discerned. Many of our recommendations have been made by other bodies in the past, but were not adopted. We urge that the conclusions and recommendations of this report receive your personal and prompt attention.” Report to the Secretary of the Army by The Special Commission on The United States Military Academy, pp. 2-3 (emphasis added).

In 2019 I lectured by invitation about the service academies’ disenrollment, conduct and honor systems to cadets and faculty at the AFA’s Center for Character and Leadership Development.

I. HISTORICAL NEED FOR CONDUCT AND HONOR SYSTEMS REFORMS

My initial intent as an NYU Law Review student editor in 1971 was merely to describe the AFA's Honor System, about which no civilian literature existed and the public was mostly unaware. At that time apparently nobody, including me, questioned whether there was anything wrong with the academies' cadet disciplinary systems. The public respected and revered the academies for producing leaders – e.g., Eisenhower, MacArthur, Nimitz - who had won our country's wars, and seemed to think that "whatever they have been doing, they should keep doing."

However, based on research I learned that as of 1973 the AFA and WP each had had three major honor scandals, including three public scandals at the AFA within 7 years (1965, 1967, 1972), but that the United States Naval Academy (NA), Coast Guard Academy (CGA), and United States Merchant Marine Academy (MMA) had had no public honor scandals. I also learned that the cadet conduct and honor systems at WP and the AFA² were significantly different than those systems at the NA, CGA and MMA, and that certain practices at West Point and the Air Force Academy were illegal and/or counterproductive and should be changed. Further, I came to realize, based on evidence, that the academies were unwilling or incapable of making the needed changes themselves and that the only way to obtain those changes was to document and publicize them. Consequently, in 1973 I explained in **APFR** the need for specific changes to correct specific illegal and/or bad policy practices violative of due process, including the following:

1. **COERCIVE INTERROGATIONS/HEARINGS:** At the AFA **coercive interrogations were imposed and forty honor hearings conducted** around the clock starting on January 19, 1972, during a 48-hour period (APFR, pp. 80, 113-132). This improperly modeled in cadets processes and actions contrary to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Constitution to which they would be expected to bear true faith and allegiance when they would become officers.
2. **LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ACCUSED TO CONFRONT EVIDENCE:** WP, NA, CGA and MMA did **not allow a cadet accused of violating the Honor Code/Concept to be present** when a cadet Honor Committee **heard evidence about that cadet**; that practice was followed at the AFA until 1965. (APFR, p 41. fn 210; p. 80, fn 443; p. 95, fn 551-553; p. 182, fn 1100).
3. **EXCESSIVE PUNISHMENTS DISPROPORTIONATE TO OFFENSES** being punished.
Examples:
 - a. Nine months restriction, 225 tours at AFA for "possessing empty liquor bottle in room" (APFR, p. 48, citing Special Orders No. 175(3), USAFA (April 28, 1959));

² The Air Force Academy's conduct and honor systems were established by West Point graduates and were substantially the same as the conduct and honor systems at West Point.

- b. Four WP cadets walked 6 hours a day, 6 days a week to complete all tours before graduation after May 1 of senior year (APFR, p. 57);
 - c. Several examples of greater [180] 60-day restrictions; 120, 132 tours imposed (APFR, p. 48 fn 255). (Note: Does Art. 15 UCMJ limit to no more than 60 days of restrictions apply to cadets, since protections of the UCMJ apply to cadets? See United States v. Ellman, 9 U.S.C.M.A. 549 (1958) (APFR, p. 50)).
4. **COERCION/THREATS NOT TO APPEAL** convictions of violations as allowed by regulations (See APFR, pp. 72, 103-104, 117 fn 705-706, 118, 131 fn 816).
5. **VAGUENESS:** The meaning of rules must be reasonably clear. Consider the impossibility of a cadet defining and discerning the separate meanings of the following academy conduct offenses they were expected to avoid violating: "carelessness;" "indifference of any kind;" "general inattention;" "lacking judgment;" "poor judgment;" "extremely poor judgment;" "gross lack of judgment;" "conduct reflecting poor judgment;" "poor judgment [gross];" "unsatisfactory conduct trends;" "improper (not public) conduct." APFR, p. 66 fn 358.
6. **HONOR CODE VS. CONCEPT:** WP and the AFA had an Honor "**CODE**;" in significant contrast, the NA, CGA and MMA had an Honor "**CONCEPT**" ("West Point's Honor System ... leaves cadets unable to differentiate between insignificant moral problems and those of great moment. Adherence to rules replaces the exercise of judgment" (APFR, p. 169 fn 1033)).
7. **EXPULSION ONLY PENALTY:** Only West Point and the Air Force Academy imposed **expulsion** as the **only penalty** for violating the cadet Honor Code; the Naval, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine Academies had graduated penalties, imposing penalties less than expulsion for minor violations or due to mitigating circumstances (**APFR**, pp. 163, 169, 205).
8. **TOLERATION – HONOR VIOLATION OR NOT?** Only West Point and the Air Force Academy defined "**toleration**" of an honor violation as itself an honor violation. Whether and how the three "sea" service academies expelled or otherwise punished for "toleration" depended on the severity of the underlying offense, but not as an honor violation and not with automatic expulsion.
9. **THE SILENCE:** West Point cadets imposed, and were allowed, taught, assisted, and encouraged to impose, the "**Silence**" on any cadet convicted by the WP cadet Honor Committee of violating the Honor Code when the conviction had been reversed by a Board of Officers on appeal (APFR, pp. 41-42, 137-150). Cadets being "silenced" were subjected to numerous penalties designed to coerce them into quitting West Point even though they legally were entitled to remain there. Those penalties included, but were not limited to, not being allowed to have a roommate, no cadet sitting at their dining hall table during three meals a day and no cadet speaking to

them except on official business. When imposing the “Silence,” cadets violated and were allowed to violate two West Point regulations (RUSMA 12.09, 16.04) and a federal anti-hazing statute (10 USC 4352) (APFR, p. 41 fn 214; pp. 146-147), learning as a cadet that they could “take the law into their own hands” when they thought honor was involved. A front-page article in *The New York Times* (“Silent Agony Ends for Cadet at West Point,” *NY Times*, 6/7/73, at 1), arranged by me, precipitated nationwide outrage that led to West Point’s permanent and public abolition of the Silence. I interviewed retired Air Force Lt. General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., WP ’36, commander of the WWII Tuskegee Airmen, who confirmed how he was “Silenced” his entire 4 years at West Point solely for being black. He told me the “Silence” of him started his second day at West Point and “was 99% effective.”

10. **CLOSEMINDEDNESS TO CHANGE:** “Key academy officials ... [mostly academy graduates] ... tend to regard any challenge to the current validity of the System [as] heresy” (APRE, p. 184). “The role of tradition at the academies can be aptly described as the practices of the past dictating the practices of the future merely because they were the practices of the past.” (APRE, p. 174).

When General Douglas MacArthur was the Superintendent of West Point, he met with resistance to implementing reforms there. He complained that “conceits, sentiment, [and] blind worship have sustained outmoded offshoots of tradition too long.” (APRE, p. 184 fn 1108). “We should all recognize that it is unreasonable to expect information leaked outside of the Corps to be fairly or accurately reported. This is true simply because it is impossible for anyone but us to understand the honor code and system completely.” (APRE, p. 184 fn 1103, citing USMA Talking Paper, Confidential Nature of Honor Cases 4 (March 1972)).

The then Chief of Staff of the Air Force Academy said the AFA Superintendent “never worries about” the legal propriety of Honor Committee proceedings because he relies on the Honor Committee’s legal advisor to bring to his attention any problems that arise. The 1973 Honor Committee Chairman expressed the same. (APFR, p. 186, fn 1115). But when interviewed, the AFA Legal Adviser said because the AFA Honor System “belongs” to cadets and he is an officer not a cadet, it would be inappropriate for him to volunteer advice to the Cadet Honor Committee and therefore only volunteers advice to the Cadet Honor Committee if asked by it to do so. As a result, cadets were free to run their adjudications in any manner they chose (APFR, p. 186).

11. **COUNTER PRODUCTIVE EFFECTS OF UNFAIR/UNJUST PROCEDURES/CONVICTIONS/PUNISHMENTS/DISENROLLMENTS:**

The counter-productive effect of unjust and unrealistic academy disciplinary practices has been well expressed by a Military Academy graduate and former Academy professor:

“[The West Point disciplinary system] gives to the impressionable young cadet false notions as to how he must exercise the function of discipline when he becomes an officer and is dealing, not with other cadets, but with the various kinds of human beings he is going to find in a company of soldiers. The method of teaching and enforcing discipline employed at West Point has no application anywhere except at West Point . . .” (APFR, p. 181, fn 1096).

Similarly, “seemingly purposeless rules breed resentment,” (APFR, p. 164), and “conviction for an honor violation, when guilt is established by an unjust procedure, is ‘a most embittering experience’” (APFR, p. 164). “Perceived unfairness in the systems would destroy their spirit to a far greater degree than clear definition of offenses and adherence to the procedural requirements of the law” (APFR, p. 187 fn 1120). Destruction of individual judgment: “‘By extensively detailing for the cadet how his life is to be lived, little room is left for the personal growth that comes with responsibility and independence’” (APFR, p. 169).

“... Future positions of high command will be filled by academy graduates. These graduates will set the standards of behavior for the entire military profession and they will carry with them the sense of justice and fairness learned at the academies. If subordinates are to be afforded fair and lawful treatment by their commanders, it is anomalous to inculcate future leaders with a perception of justice which bears little semblance to law” (APFR, pp. 180-18).

II. PRESENT NEED FOR DISENROLLMENT, CONDUCT AND HONOR SYSTEMS REFORMS

The cadet disenrollment/conduct/honor practices/attitudes in the early 1970s described above evidence that AFA and other academies’ practices/policies that were illegal and/or counterproductive had been perpetuated for years. Based on evidence, it should not be assumed that all AFA cadet practices today are legal, beneficial, or appropriate, and that denials by academy officials that what they are doing is wrong are accurate.

On the contrary, there is evidence that cadets still are being denied due process (“fundamental fairness”) and they, their families and other cadets and their families are losing their respect and enthusiasm for the AFA and long-term military careers, due to embittering counter-productive AFA practices/policies, when:

1. Cadets are disenrolled and not allowed to graduate without them having been given fair notice of specific charges and all the evidence against them and a fair opportunity to respond to those charges and evidence.

2. Cadets are punished for actions they were not given fair notice of being prohibited by the AFA, even after being led in some cases to believe those actions were allowed/condoned.
3. Cadets are misled into believing the nature and amount of punishments they accept for a specific offense are at one level and rely on that belief, but discover later that the consequences imposed for that offense are much more severe than they had been led to believe.
4. Cadets are subject to *ex post facto* changes in rules.
5. Some of the punishments given cadets are inconsistent, excessive, and disproportionate to the severity of the specific conduct of the cadet being punished.
6. Identical punishments are imposed on cadets as members of a group, without differentiating and being tailored to the specific conduct and intent of each respective cadet.
7. The amount of time taken to decide and disclose the punishments of cadets for their alleged offenses is sometimes grossly excessive, causing prolonged, unnecessary intense anxiety/angst among cadets and their families.

Evidence that cadets are being disenrolled from the AFA and otherwise severely punished without due process and are being punished excessively and counter-productively was presented to the AFA Board of Visitors at its meeting on August 7, 2025, and will be presented at or before its upcoming meeting on December 8, 2025, including as follows:

1. AFA cadet [REDACTED] recently was involuntarily disenrolled from the AFA and ordered to serve for two years in enlisted status when:

“Not once did Cadet [REDACTED] have a full and meaningful opportunity to present his case to an impartial Board or panel. The result was an unfair process that denied contextual consideration while retaining teammates with more serious misconduct.” See <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-7-Probst-Executive-Summary-002.pdf>.

Cadet [REDACTED]’s attorney, a retired AF JAG Lt. Colonel, states to the BOV:

“During my time stationed at the ... USAFA as both a prosecutor and military defense attorney, I directly observed how the Academy’s disciplinary processes can be manipulated by fellow cadets or weak leaders to accumulate excessive paperwork . . . leading to unjust disenrollments . . . I represented Cadet [REDACTED] in the appeal of his disenrollment, a case that exemplifies these systemic flaws and underscores the urgent need for significant reform at USAFA to ensure

fairness, proportionality, and focus on rehabilitation.” See <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-7-Probst-Executive-Summary-002.pdf>.

2. AFA Cadet [REDACTED] recently was involuntarily disenrolled from the AFA during his third year at the AFA and has been ordered to serve two years on active duty in enlisted status due to alleged academic deficiency in one course, based on allegedly false statements provided by one AFA professor to which Cadet [REDACTED] was not provided notice of and an opportunity to respond prior to his disenrollment, and as a result of a process alleged to have violated *10 U.S. Code § 9351, USAFA Instruction 36–3534* and *USAFAI 36–3523 (Section 5.3.2)*. See: <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-8-AFBOV.pdf>.
3. A third cadet disenrolled from the AFA is alleged to recently having committed suicide soon after learning of his involuntary disenrollment. See: <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-8-AFBOV.pdf>.
4. Excessive punishments, including postponing graduation for nearly a year, have been imposed and continue to be imposed on nine AFA senior soccer players without having provided them prior notice of the specific allegations and the evidence against them and without having given them a fair opportunity to rebut those specific allegations and evidence. See <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-9-BOV-Letter-Filed.pdf>; <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/AFBOV-from-Dick-Cole-to-AFA-BOV-11.30.25.pdf>.

Further, those cadets were coerced into agreeing to those punishments by threatening disenrollment if they did not agree. See <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-9-BOV-Letter-Filed.pdf>; <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/AFBOV-from-Dick-Cole-to-AFA-BOV-11.30.25.pdf>.

5. As stated by a former career Air Force JAG who is the father of one of those soccer cadets:

“The Academy violated Due Process Clause AND took action without considering all relevant data and factors. According to AFI 1-2, para 3.4.4, “Commanders are expected to make data driven Decisions.” Academy leaders violated this provision by ignoring available data. DAFI 90-301, Attachment 1 (Terms), defines an abuse of authority as an action that was not based on relevant data and factors.

The Academy legal office, Commandant and Superintendent were all made aware, in writing, that there was relevant information they did not have that would benefit the outcome of their decisions. Lt Col [REDACTED]’s evidence includes a 5-page affidavit listing the evidence the Academy refused to consider. The

Academy was not aware of most of the information. These facts were readily available to Academy leaders through a simple phone call, yet the facts were simply and negligently ignored. Several cadets provided complete defenses of some of the alleged misconduct. Despite this information being in the hands of the Academy, the Commandant failed to modify any allegations against the seniors. Academy leaders were very sloppy with the disciplinary tools. LORs and other paperwork signed by the Commandant were replete with errors, including misspelled names, wrong names, wrong ranks, and in one case paperwork being given to the wrong cadet. The most prevalent allegation against the seniors is that they allowed certain conduct to take place. The misconduct described was a singular event, but the dates in the letter cover a two-month period making it very difficult for the cadets to appropriately respond. This also allowed the Commandant to conflate two incidents. The pile on was conflated with the alleged sexual assault allegation (which the seniors were not involved). There was no evidence showing that all the seniors were present during the pile on, but all were punished. Seniors were reprimanded for not stopping the underclassmen from certain traditions. However, many seniors stated that they actually told underclassmen to stop some of the longstanding traditions. All the allegations remained on the reprimand and the exact same allegations were the basis for a disenrollment action the Commandant initiated after graduation.

The additional evidence detailed in the affidavit and the cadet responses to the LORs make it clear that Academy leaders made their disciplinary decision early on and were not going to change their mind. That violates a commander's responsibility. It is clear that the Academy refused to hear about the team culture that was already present when the seniors arrived at the Academy and what the true facts of the case entailed. It is shocking that the Academy refused to hear about the knowledge and involvement of coaches and that the coaches ignored Academy policies directly related to the conduct for which the seniors were punished." See: <https://starrs.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/LINK-9-BOV-Letter-Filed.pdf>.

These matters should be evaluated by the BOV because of its mandate that "[t]he **Board shall inquire** into the **morale, discipline, and social climate . . . and other matters relating to the Academy**, 10 U.S.C. §9455 (emphasis added), and the principle taught to AFA cadets but not being applied at the AFA that:

"The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army." (Major General John M. Schofield Address to the Corps of Cadets, U.S. Military Academy August 11, 1879).

The BOV should evaluate and recommend improvements regarding these matters, both because cadets are entitled to due process, especially before disenrollment, and because the processes the AFA currently uses to implement cadet discipline is unnecessarily counter-productive and undermining of cadets' morale and motivation to serve in the military.

After admission to the AFA, cadets have property interests under the 5th Amendment to the Constitution in graduating from the AFA that cannot be denied without due process (APFR, p. 69). To protect those interests, cadets are entitled to prior notice of charges and evidence and the opportunity to defend against the charges and evidence "at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner" and "both from the point of view of time and the use of witnesses and other evidence. (See, e.g., *Hagopian v. Knowlton*, 346 F. Supp. 29, 31 (S.D.N.Y.), *aff'd*, 470 F.2d 201 (2d Cir. 1972); *Wasson v. Trowbridge*, 382 F.2d 807 (2d Cir. 1967); APFR, p. 76, fn. 416).

Aside from legalities, cadets should learn while at the AFA how to adjudicate offenses as officers by practicing and learning proper procedures at the AFA. The AFA's disciplinary/honor/disenrollment procedures should mirror what is required in the real military to model proper legal and ethical principles, habits, and perspectives. Not following and learning as cadets proper procedures required in the "real" Air Force teaches cadets wrong/bad habits that can be employed by them as future military commanders. Future positions of high command will be filled by academy graduates, and those graduates will set the standards of behavior for the entire military profession while carrying with them the sense of justice and fairness they learned at the AFA. If subordinates are to be afforded fair and lawful treatment by their commanders, it is anomalous to inculcate future leaders with a perception of justice that bears little semblance to law (APFR, pp. 180-181, 191 fn. 1135). Further, punishing cadets unfairly/unjustly/illegally/hypocritically, whether real or perceived, will foster demotivational, counterproductive cynicism and disillusionment. (APFR, p. 165).

The NYU Law Review article about the academies' disenrollment, conduct and honor systems was aptly entitled "A Prayer for Relief." Now, fifty years later, the AFA Board of Visitors is being asked to use its investigative authority/powers authorized by Congress, and its great influence, to effectuate improvements in the AFA's processes so that due process and fairness, real and perceived, will be achieved.

Letter for US Air Force Academy (Academy) Board of Visitors

Date: 1 December 2025

Author: Mark Stoup

Parent of a Cadet and Air Force Attorney

6008 Greystone Place

Montgomery, AL 36117

(660) 624-4755

I am submitting the attached statement in my personal capacity and not as an employee of the United States Air Force.

In August 2025, I provided a public comment to the United States Air Force Academy Board of Visitors. The purpose of my comment was to address systemic problems regarding Due Process and discipline at the Air Force Academy. As an example, I used the situation involving nine seniors on the Academy men's soccer team. The comment is attached for your reference and convenience. During the August meeting, the Board Chairman graciously provided me with two minutes to speak. Since I spoke three things occurred which compel me to provide an additional public comment. First, when I finished speaking at the August Board meeting, Lt Gen Bauernfeind replied to me. I did not have an opportunity to respond, but it is important that his statement is addressed. Second, during my verbal statement to the Board, I raised the fact that Academy leadership (Superintendent and Athletic Director) spoke to all the intercollegiate athletes from the incoming class – the class of 2029. Those comments suggested that “soccer seniors” were held past graduation because they committed sexual assault(s). Third, the soccer seniors have completed four months of probation since the August Board meeting. They have already faced disproportionate punishment for their conduct. Keeping them at the Academy will only exacerbate the current situation.

The Superintendent's statement after my comments: In August when I finished speaking to the Board, the Superintendent spoke directly to me. It appeared as if he was reading a prepared statement. He said three pertinent things that the Board should consider.

First, the Superintendent said the soccer seniors received Due Process. That statement was patently false. Although the soccer seniors did receive Due Process for some of the actions taken against them by Academy leadership, they did not get Due Process when Academy leaders delayed their graduation. Either the Superintendent knew his statement was false when he made it or he didn't know what constitutes Due Process. Either case suggests he should not be serving in the role of the General Court-Martial Convening Authority for the Air Force Academy. Please recall from my August public comment that Constitutionally Due Process required the Academy to provide cadets notice and an opportunity to be heard for each individual action taken by the Academy. Notice required leaders to identify specific standards that cadets were expected to follow and to notify cadets of their respective failure. Notice of the standard and the subsequent failure must be done with specificity. We know this required level of specificity wasn't provided to the soccer seniors based on the comments of the Superintendent at the August Board meeting, which I address next. Second, after the Superintendent said the cadets were receiving Due Process, he said there were things that I was unaware of. I am aware of all the facts of the case having reviewed all the evidence and speaking to more than 20 people who were involved, so there were not “things I was unaware of”. But my knowledge is not relevant – “notice” is what matters. The Superintendent's statement is the exact situation that true Due Process prohibits; punishing cadets for actions they were “unaware of”. Since the Academy put cadets on notice for failing a specific standard and then provided them with the evidence that they relied upon, it is not “Constitutionally” permissible for Academy leaders to consider other actions of which the cadets were not put on notice. Third, the Superintendent stated that he couldn't say what those other issues were out of respect for the privacy of the cadets (the same privacy rights he violated days prior to the August Board meeting).

Academy leadership addressed all incoming intercollegiate athletes: The Superintendent created an environment of ostracism which is corroding good order and discipline across the

Academy. He did this by making suggestive statements about the soccer team in a public forum. Several days prior to the August Board meeting, a number of cadets (soccer seniors and other cadets) informed me that the Superintendent and the Athletic Director addressed the situation involving the soccer team. The cadets were not clear on which specific leader made which specific comment. The cadets all stated that the message was delivered while the Superintendent and Athletic Director were present. The takeaway from the cadets was that the message came directly from the top of the Academy leadership. The general nature of the message was that the Academy has zero tolerance for sexual assault. This was immediately followed by a statement that the soccer seniors were denied graduation. When I spoke to the Board in August, I put the Superintendent on notice that statements were made clearly connecting the soccer seniors to sexual assault and that this was a violation of the soccer seniors' privacy rights. My purpose in raising the issue to the Board was to show how Academy leaders were approaching the case. This entire case began with a singular allegation involving a sexual assault. The soccer seniors were not alleged to be involved in that assault, and the allegation was eventually not pursued. The Academy has been conflating issues in this case from the beginning. I am raising the issue now because of the impact those comments are having on good order and discipline at the Academy. Since the August Board meeting, a number of cadets and soccer seniors told me that on multiple occasions they overheard other cadets speaking about the soccer seniors. Cadets have been openly speaking about the situation involving the soccer team. They have referred to soccer seniors as perverts, sexual predators, and even pedophiles. On one occasion an underclass cadet directly confronted one of the soccer seniors calling him a pedophile while attempting to get him to lose his temper. The underclass cadet was unrelenting for an extended period of time and the situation nearly ended in violence. This incident was reported to the athletic department and to the individual's chain of command. Several cadets informed me that the situation was raised to the Superintendent and that the Superintendent refused to address the situation at his level. The perception of many cadets is that the Superintendent knew of the situation (the one he created) but refused to address the issue. In short, when Academy leaders addressed the intercollegiate athletes they created a negative situation, they knew about the situation (because I told them at the August Board meeting), and they failed to rectify the situation. The statements Academy leadership made to the intercollegiate athletes directly resulted in repeated ostracism for all the soccer seniors and created a continued hostile environment. This has added to the disproportionate punishment faced by the soccer seniors.

Soccer Seniors have successfully completed four months of probation: Since the August Board meeting the soccer seniors have successfully complied with all aspects of their probation. The soccer seniors have either completed or substantially completed all 100 tours (each tour consists of marching in a square for an hour). Additional punishment at this point serves no legitimate disciplinary purpose. Keeping the soccer seniors at the Academy from this point forward actually has a negative impact on discipline. It only continues to highlight disciplinary issues at the Academy and leadership's failure to appropriately handle the situation. It is also a waste of taxpayer dollars. Here is a recap of the soccer seniors' punishment. One soccer senior's punishment began when he was removed from the team in November 2024. His punishment has already spanned over 12 months. In May and without any Due Process, all nine soccer seniors were denied graduation within days of their graduation date. The Commandant informed the soccer

seniors that they would be on probation until December 2025. In June, the Commandant told the soccer seniors that he intended to have them disenrolled from the Academy. In July, the Superintendent arbitrarily doubled the probation without considering any additional facts or input from the soccer seniors. He did so under the guise of an agreement. If you (soccer seniors) agree to accept the additional probation, I (the Superintendent) will not seek disenrollment. That was not an agreement - it was coercion.

I have been a JAG Corps attorney since 1994. I have represented the United States in 100 courts-martial and have advised commanders on 100s of other courts-martial and literally 1000s of cases involving other disciplinary actions. Court-martial punishments that extend past 6 months are typically reserved only for egregious crimes. Punishments that last more than 12 months are reserved only for cases tried at a General Court-Martial (felony level cases). When the Superintendent doubled the soccer seniors' probation, he imposed a 12-month sentence on them. Although the soccer seniors did not face a court-martial, their punishment is not far from it. They have been subjected to public humiliation and ostracism. They have been denied driving privileges, confined to the cadet area and denied opportunities to meet with their families on numerous occasions. They are required to produce significant written products outside of their course work, they were required to march in circles (tours) for 100 hours, and they were assigned various other extra duties. In my 31 years working as a JAG, I have seen a large number of military members convicted at courts-martial who received significantly lighter punishments than what the Superintendent imposed on the soccer seniors.

I understand that the Board of Visitors is unable to provide relief for the soccer seniors. You can, however, effectuate change. I ask that the Board's report to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of War highlights the specific failures of leadership at the Air Force Academy. I ask that the Board make its own determination regarding the lack of Due Process when the soccer seniors were denied graduation. The Superintendent's repeated statement that the soccer seniors were provided Due Process is without merit and cannot be given any credence. The Secretary of War routinely speaks about holding senior military leaders accountable when they fail. The Secretary of the Air Force appoints General Court-Martial Convening Authorities. In this situation, the Superintendent who is a senior military leader and a General Court-Martial Convening Authority has failed to abide by his Oath of Office. The Board members have all taken an oath of office or heard one. The oath taken by Air Force officers states in part "I, [name], having been appointed a [grade in which appointed], United States Air Force, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; . . . and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter, so help me God." The aforementioned Secretaries should be directly and specifically notified of the Superintendent's failure to abide the 5th Amendment of the United States Constitution, which states that "No person shall . . . be deprived of life, **liberty or property**, without due process of law."

Attachment: Public Comment to the 7 August Academy Board of Visitors Meeting

Letter for US Air Force Academy (Academy) Board of Visitors

Author: Mark Stoup
Parent of a Cadet and Air Force Attorney
6008 Greystone Place
Montgomery, AL 36117
(660) 624-4755

I am submitting the attached statement in my personal capacity and not as an employee of the United States Air Force.

"The discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment. On the contrary, such treatment is far more likely to destroy than to make an army."

Major General John M. Schofield
Address to the Corps of Cadets, U.S. Military Academy
August 11, 1879

Pursuant to the 10 U.S.C. §9455, "The **Board** shall inquire into the morale and discipline . . . relating to the Academy (emphasis added)." I respectfully request the following information be provided to the Board for its consideration at the August 2025 Academy Board of Visitors meeting.

Senior leaders at the Academy are not providing Constitutionally required Due Process to cadets. This must change. Further, those same leaders are not properly administering discipline. This has a significant negative impact on morale and discipline and results in a failure of the Academy's mission of developing "leaders of character, motivated to a lifetime of service. . . ." I will use an ongoing issue with the Academy Men's Soccer Team to highlight this serious and systemic problem. In short, nine seniors from the soccer team were denied graduation and commissioning for allegedly observing and condoning conduct of underclassmen. The Academy acted without considering all the available evidence. This led to a significant injustice. If the Academy continues on its current course, all nine will have been punished for 19 months from the beginning of an investigation for things **they did not do**. Providing Constitutionally required Due Process would have prevented this injustice.

- Disclaimer: I am the father of one of the seniors on the Academy soccer team. I am writing this letter in my personal capacity. I am also an Air Force attorney who has served in the JAG Corps for more than 30 years. My entire career has been centered on providing disciplinary advice to commanders. I served as a Trial Counsel (prosecutor), Academy Assistant Professor of Law, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate (General Counsel), 3-time Staff Judge Advocate, Deputy Commandant of the Air Force JAG School and for the last 10 years as an instructor at the Air Force JAG School. 21 years of my JAG Corps career have been at training bases. Due to my relationship with the soccer players and my professional experience, I have significant insight into the following situation - procedurally and factually.

- Relevant facts: In October 2024 an underclass cadet at the Academy made an allegation of sexual assault against another underclass cadet. The issue was a hazing incident that was eventually determined to be "consensual" – and not sexual. **None of the senior cadets on the team was involved in that allegation.** Pursuant to evidence discovered in that investigation, all seniors on the Academy soccer team (nine total) were disciplined because they allegedly "observed and condoned" long standing Academy traditions. These traditions took place for years prior to the seniors arriving at the Academy. The seniors were taught these traditions when they arrived at the Academy and the coaches were aware of and allowed that. The traditions that the seniors were punished for were a "pile on" welcoming new cadets to the team room and wrestling matches that occurred between different graduating classes. All the conduct in those traditions was consensual. In January or February 2025, Academy leadership knew that the investigation of the sexual assault

allegation and related misconduct was wrapping up. Academy leaders had at least three full months prior to graduation to complete disciplinary actions against all nine seniors. In late March 2025, cadets began to hear that they might not graduate on time. At the beginning of April, cadets made formal requests through counsel to be informed of the status of graduation. The Academy Commandant of Cadets issued all nine seniors Letters of Reprimand (LORs) on 24 April 2025 – 6 months after the “misconduct” was discovered. Despite continued requests regarding graduation, Academy leadership (legal office, Commandant, and Superintendent) refused to provide a decision on graduation. The leadership stated that the cadets were getting Due Process and that a decision on the LOR would be issued. The LOR and graduation were two separate actions, and no Due Process was given for the graduation decision. This situation left families with a difficult choice. Without knowing if their seniors would graduate, families needed to decide if they should travel for potential graduation or stay home. I chose to travel 15 family members from Montgomery, Alabama. Most of the seniors also had numerous family members travel to graduation because an official decision wasn’t rendered until after families already traveled. After graduation, the Superintendent was very dismissive of the situation he put family members in by stating “the cadets knew they were at risk of not graduating” or words to the effect. In 2024, nine Honor Guard seniors were facing a late graduation for what the seniors believed was similar misconduct. The Commandant allowed all nine Honor Guard seniors to graduate on time. The Commandant’s actions from the previous year led our families to believe the soccer team seniors might also be able to graduate on time. On 23 May, the Commandant completed actions on the LORs and informed all nine seniors that they would not graduate on time, despite having completed all graduation requirements. The cadets were also denied their commission. This decision took place only three duty/business days prior to graduation. This situation prompted many family members to reach out to their respective U.S. representatives. A number of the representatives’ staff members replied to the soccer team parents that the Academy informed them the cadets were getting Due Process, so communication stopped. Family members attempted to contact the following representatives: Senator Tuberville (AL), Representative Schweikert (AZ), Representative Stanton (AZ), Senator Scott (FL), Senator Crapo (ID), Representative Fulcher (ID), Senator Risch (ID), Senator Paul (KY), Senator Warren (MA), Senator Kaine (VA), Representative Wittman (VA). Finally, Eric Trump spoke with the President about this issue the weekend prior to graduation.

- Definitions and important concepts:

- 5th Amendment, US Constitution: **“No person shall . . . be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.”** Case law has clearly established that Due process is considered to include notice and an opportunity to be heard. Additionally, more due process is required when the deprivation is higher. This means notice must be more specific and the opportunity to be heard increases. Increased Due Process also includes additional protections such as discovery rights, rights to call and confront witnesses, juries, increased burden of proof, and appellate rights to name a few. Due Process is required individually for each action the government takes. For example, a service member who commits misconduct might receive a Letter of Reprimand (LOR) for the misconduct, have the LOR filed in an official “Unfavorable Information File”, and eventually have the misconduct documented in the member’s annual evaluation. The

government is Constitutionally required to provide Due Process individually for each one of these three actions.

- Preamble to the Manual for Courts-Martial: **“The purposes of military law are to promote justice, to deter misconduct, to facilitate appropriate accountability, to assist in maintaining good order and discipline in the armed forces, to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the military establishment, and thereby to strengthen the national security of the United States.”** According to Websters Dictionary, justice is defined in part as the “impartial adjustment of conflicting claims” (emphasis added).

- Rule for Courts-Martial 306(b): **“Policy. Allegations of offenses should be disposed of in a timely manner at the lowest appropriate level** of disposition listed . . .” (emphasis added).

- USAFA Mission: “To forge leaders of character, motivated to a lifetime of service, and developed to lead our Air Force and Space Force as we fight and win our Nation’s wars.”

Material to consider: In considering this situation, the Board should consider the following additional information that can be found at the Academy legal office. First, information collated and reviewed by [REDACTED], U.S. Air Force Reserve Judge Advocate temporarily assigned to the Academy in July 2025. Her orders end on 1 August; however, if asked she will be able to assist the Board in some manner. Lt Col [REDACTED] was tasked by the Academy to review all the available evidence involving the soccer team. She was tasked to complete this project in preparation for a potential report to the organization U.S. Center for Safe Sport. She listened and viewed all audio/video recordings and read all available evidence to include response from the cadets and their counsel. She has a broader understanding of the case than anyone at the Academy. She was tasked to look into the material, but not to write a report. Additionally, she was not asked for an opinion or recommendation regarding the case. When she attempted to provide an opinion about the case, Academy leadership did not appear to want the recommendation. If asked, Lt Col [REDACTED] would state that she believes the seniors were not afforded Due Process and that the seniors were punished much harsher than they should have been. Finally, she would state that a review of all the material led her to believe that the Commandant did not read the responses submitted by the seniors. Lt Col [REDACTED] also collected two additional documents that should be considered. First is the legal response submitted by attorney [REDACTED]. Second is the affidavit submitted by me (Mark Stoup).

Additional matter includes: An Article 138, UCMJ, Complaint for Redress filed with the Superintendent requesting he allow the seniors to graduate on time. That document shows what the Superintendent was aware of prior to the May 2025 graduation date. I will cite several instructions below. They are Air Force Instruction 1-2, *Command Responsibilities*, Department of the Air Force Instruction 90-201, *Inspector General Complaints Resolution*, Air Force Cadet Wing Instructions 36-3501, *Cadet Standards and Duties*, and AFCWI 51-201, *Administration of Cadet Discipline*. The instructions can also be provided by the legal office.

Due Process: As stated above, nine seniors were denied Due Process when their graduation was denied. A quick review of AFCWI 51-201, shows that Due Process is afforded for a number of disciplinary actions; however, there is no Due Process provided for late graduations. The process is vaguely outlined in AFCWI 51-201, para 3.7. Although the process speaks to notification, it is silent on providing an opportunity to be heard. AFCWI 51-201 provides an opportunity to be heard for the most minor deprivations **but provides nothing for a senior who earns a degree after four hard years of work**. The “property interest” of an Academy degree is significant and depriving a cadet of that degree and at the cadet’s graduation warrants significant Due Process. The Academy needs to change AFCWI 51-201 to comport with the 5th Amendment of the Constitution. Additionally, the cadets were primarily reprimanded for observing and condoning disgraceful behavior. This behavior was a team pile on in the locker room. Freshmen cadets are required to line up as described in the LOR. Also, cadets are often partially clothed in a locker room. The incident in the LOR was as simple as the light being turned off for 30 seconds or so and cadets jumping on top of underclassmen – which is what soccer teams do. The touching makes the incident sound sexual, but that is not the truth of what really happened. Cadets don’t know exactly what they touch since it is a pile of people in the dark. AFCWI 36-3501 does not prohibit what the seniors believed happened, a simple pile-on that seniors couldn’t really observe and did not participate in. The incident wasn’t a sexual assault, hazing, or unauthorized tradition. See paras 2.3.4 Hazing and 2.3.8 Traditions. Notice requires Academy leaders to articulate what standard was being violated. The Academy needed to put cadets on clear notice in advance of what conduct is acceptable. Then if the Academy believes conduct is unacceptable, notice must be specific. The Academy failed in both areas. It is very difficult to know what that standard is in this case or to know specifically what the seniors did. In summary, when responding to information about late graduation, Academy leaders routinely told outside organizations that the cadets were receiving Due Process. That statement is patently false. The Due Process provided was not related to graduation or commissioning.

Disciplinary failures of Academy leadership: According to Rule for Court-Martial 306(b), “Allegations of offenses should be disposed of in a **timely manner at the lowest appropriate level** of disposition listed. . . .” This means the lowest level of command and the lowest level of outcome. This principle was not followed in the discipline against the seniors. Action should have been taken at a much lower level and immediately. Instead, action was handled by the two top commanders at the Academy. Action was also delayed significantly – 6 months after discovering what happened. In addition, Academy leaders did not consider information that was available to them, meaning Academy leaders acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner.

The Academy violated Due Process Clause AND took action without considering all relevant data and factors. According to AFI 1-2, para 3.4.4, “Commanders are expected to make data driven Decisions.” Academy leaders violated this provision by ignoring available data. DAFI 90-301, Attachment 1 (Terms), defines an abuse of authority as an action that was not based on relevant data and factors. The Academy legal office, Commandant and Superintendent were all made aware, in writing, that there was relevant information they did not have that would benefit the outcome of their decisions. **Lt Col [REDACTED]’s evidence includes a 5-page affidavit listing the**

evidence the Academy refused to consider. The Academy was not aware of most of the information. These facts were readily available to Academy leaders through a simple phone call, yet the facts were simply and negligently ignored. Several cadets provided complete defenses of some of the alleged misconduct. Despite this information being in the hands of the Academy, the Commandant failed to modify any allegations against the seniors. Academy leaders were very sloppy with the disciplinary tools. LORs and other paperwork signed by the Commandant were replete with errors, including misspelled names, wrong names, wrong ranks, and in one case paperwork being given to the wrong cadet. The most prevalent allegation against the seniors is that they allowed certain conduct to take place. The misconduct described was a singular event, but the dates in the letter cover a two-month period making it very difficult for the cadets to appropriately respond. This also allowed the Commandant to conflate two incidents. The pile on was conflated with the alleged sexual assault allegation (which the seniors were not involved). There was no evidence showing that all the seniors were present during the pile on, but all were punished. Seniors were reprimanded for not stopping the underclassmen from certain traditions. However, many seniors stated that they actually told underclassmen to stop some of the longstanding traditions. All the allegations remained on the reprimand and the exact same allegations were the basis for a disenrollment action the Commandant initiated after graduation.

The additional evidence detailed in the affidavit and the cadet responses to the LORs make it clear that Academy leaders made their disciplinary decision early on and were not going to change their mind. That violates a commander's responsibility. It is clear that the Academy refused to hear about the team culture that was already present when the seniors arrived at the Academy and what the true facts of the case entailed. It is shocking that the Academy refused to hear about the knowledge and involvement of coaches and that the coaches ignored Academy policies directly related to the conduct for which the seniors were punished.

Appearance of vindictiveness: The actions taken by the Academy leadership give the appearance that leaders were being vindictive toward the seniors. Some examples are: The LORs issued on 24 April stated that the Commandant would make a decision in 3 days; instead the Commandant took 30 days. The Commandant waited until the last minute to tell the seniors about graduation, only 3 business days in advance. The Commandant informed the seniors late in the afternoon on the Friday before a long weekend. The Superintendent and the Commandant refused to take substantive action on the Art 138 complaint. Instead of actually providing a response (which would have required the case to go to the Secretary of the Air Force), they used procedural gamesmanship to delay their decision until after graduation. The Commandant punished the seniors by giving them 6 months of probation, 100 hours of marching tours, and 110 demerits. This is an extremely harsh punishment only reserved for the most egregious misconduct. The Commandant's vague allegations allowed him to categorize the punishment at any level he chose and thereby making his actions look as if they comport with AFCWI 51-201. Specific notice under the Constitution would have helped to prevent this. After graduation, the Commandant gave a Letter of Notification (LON) to all nine seniors stating he was considering disenrolling them from the Academy. On 3 July, most of the seniors were submitting their response to the LON. Also on 3 July, the Superintendent notified all the seniors that he was going to suspend disenrollment proceedings and that he was

putting them on 10 months of probation, starting that day. The **Superintendent doubled the seniors' probation without even considering their responses.**

I respectfully request the Board review the relevant facts and data that the Academy refused to look at. A neutral party should review this case to determine an appropriate outcome, a party who has not predetermined the outcome like the Academy leaders did. The instructions at the Academy need to be changed to provide required Due Process.

In conclusion, I respectfully request the Academy Board of Visitors to thoroughly consider the Due Process violations and disciplinary failures outlined in this letter. This will help ensure a fair and impartial review of the evidence, **including Lt Col [REDACTED] evidence, cadet LOR responses disregarded by Academy leadership, and additional evidence the Academy refused to consider.** These systemic issues, exemplified by the unjust treatment of the nine seniors on the Men's Soccer Team, undermine the Academy's mission to forge leaders of character motivated to a lifetime of service. **These issues also erode trust in the Air Force's commitment to justice and discipline.** I request that the Board recommend the Academy revise AFCWI 51-201 to align with Constitutional Due Process requirements. I also request the Board recommend the Academy appoint a neutral third party to reassess the cadets' case to rectify this injustice, restore morale, and uphold the integrity of the U.S. Air Force Academy. **The best outcome for all parties concerned, cadets, the Academy in general, and the Air Force, would be to immediately graduate and commission all nine seniors and to ensure they get their post-graduate assignments. There is no way the Air Force can replicate a graduation for the nine seniors and their families. The moment they worked so hard for even prior to arriving at the Academy is gone. There must be some avenue to recognize their hard work and the resilience they displayed during their "entire" time at the Academy.** "Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small number formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all." (George Washington), but only discipline done with justice.



December 2, 2025

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

Dear Board of Visitors,

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

My organization wants to ensure our nation's service academies are producing the most qualified and highly prepared warfighters and leaders possible. In July, I submitted a letter to the BOV outlining my organization's concerns and suggested solutions relating to issues at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

We authored a widely-published [summary article](#) after the last BOV meeting. We highlighted the excellent leadership of Chair August Pfluger and commended him for wanting to “hit the reset button on functionality” of the BOV. We also shared the late Charlie Kirk's push to accelerate the renovation of the U.S. Air Force Academy Chapel, and we hope the BOV will make that a priority in memory of Charlie.

We also stressed our ongoing concerns with Candice Pipes remaining at the helm of the USAFA admissions department. Pipes [previously claimed](#) that the Air Force required “radical change” to fix what she called its “racial disparity.” She also said she pays a “diversity tax” because she is a black woman and encouraged the Air Force to implement more DEI policies and strategies.

It's essential the U.S. Air Force Academy ensures its faculty and staff fully support merit-based admissions and instructional standards. The previous appointment of individuals such as Martin France as a permanent military professor raises concerns regarding past alignment with these principles. While he has since retired, France's radicalism runs deep—he [recently equated](#) Charlie Kirk's Turning Point USA with the KKK. Has USAFA conducted a thorough review to ensure other activist professors like France are not employed at the Academy?

As a reminder, I'm including the items submitted in my last letter to the BOV. I'm 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,

Doug Truax