

USAFA Community,

As we navigate the ongoing challenges presented by the international COVID-19 pandemic, I intend to maintain regular contact with our community, and keep you posted as information becomes available. To that end, I would like to share several recent updates.

First and foremost, many of you have likely already heard that yesterday our Academy community lost one of our own. I am heartbroken to confirm the death of a cadet on our campus, and I ask that we all respect the family of this cadet by not sharing any speculation on social media or otherwise. There is currently no indication that the death was COVID-19 related.

As our entire Academy community mourns this loss, we are taking immediate steps to make sure we take care of the Cadet Wing during this difficult time. I have spoken with all of our first class cadets and available permanent party staff, and used video teleconference to speak with our cadets dispersed across the country. Despite our distance, now is a time to check on and support one another, and I ask that our entire community pulls together to support our cadets. A complete list of our helping agencies can be found at <https://www.usafa.edu/helping-agencies/>. Please share this with cadets in your communities and encourage them to use these resources at any time. Cadets are encouraged to reach out to graduates during this time. One way to do this is a tool called Zoomielink, provided by our Association of Graduates (AOG), found here: <https://zoomielink.usafa.org/hub/aog/home>

Two of our first class cadets have now tested positive for COVID-19. They are each in isolation here in accordance with the Academy's COVID-19 plan, and we are closely monitoring their health. We are also identifying and monitoring anyone who may have come in close contact with them, and have closed a number of our facilities for the next 48 hours in order to thoroughly clean and disinfect. Cadets have been restricted to base for more than a week, so they are no longer interacting with the community, and we have strictly limited the number of permanent party staff who have access to the cadet area.

As of today we now have five confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 among our USAFA community members living and/or working on the installation: two cadets, two civilian employees and one active duty military member. The workspaces of the employees have been cleaned, and we are following CDC and DOD guidelines for testing and medical responses.

I would like to reiterate that the health and safety of our cadets, our entire base population, and our greater community remains my top priority. As part of our prevention efforts we have declared Health Protection Condition C (HPCON C) at the Academy, a posture which enacts additional health protection measures and procedures. In addition, the Governor of Colorado enacted a stay-at-home order yesterday, which limits the conduct of nonessential business and activities. This order applies to all USAFA cadets, faculty and staff currently in the state of Colorado. For COVID-19 information relevant to our Academy community, guidance memos,

and updates, please continue to check our website at <https://www.usafa.edu/news/coronavirus/>.

This has been a difficult week for our Academy, but despite these uncommon challenges we are pushing forward in our crucial mission for our Air and Space Forces. Thanks to the incredible ingenuity and determination of our faculty, AOCs and AMTs, this week all four classes of cadets resumed their Academic coursework – 3000 of them remotely, and 1000 at USAFA but online – and they are working hard toward completing the semester. For our First-Class cadets, that means graduation and commissioning into our Air and Space Forces. We are assessing the situation daily, but it is too soon to speculate about graduation or a date when cadets might return to USAFA.

I cannot begin to thank our cadets, faculty and staff enough for the extraordinary efforts I have witnessed this week. We have an incredibly strong and capable family here on our campus and in our greater USAFA community across this country, and we will confront the challenges that lay ahead together. Once again, thank you for your support and partnership.

Very Respectfully,

Jay Silveria