

USAFA Parents,

Earlier this month the United States Air Force Academy commissioned 967 new officers into our Air and Space Forces, in a historic ceremony that was filled with firsts for our Academy. The Class of 2020 was the first class in our history to graduate early, the first to hold their ceremony on the Terrazzo, and the first to send graduates directly to the United States Space Force, with 86 lieutenants joining the newest branch of our armed forces. As they begin their journey as officers, I am incredibly proud of these graduates and inspired by all across our Academy who enabled the culmination of their development as cadets. With graduation behind us, we now look to the challenges of the weeks and months ahead as we direct that same developmental journey for your cadets.

Our three rising underclasses are also experiencing a first for our Academy, as the first cadets in our history to complete course requirements remotely, through online learning. That makes this experience a first for our cadets' parents as well, as the first to welcome their cadets back home in the midst of their immersive USAFA experience. As I have said before, together we are navigating uncharted territory for our Academy and our Air Force, and we cannot begin to thank you enough for your partnership in this effort.

For cadets and parents alike, I am quite certain the same question is on everyone's mind – what comes next? First, I can assure you that no matter the answer to that question, my first priority as Superintendent will always be the health, safety and welfare of our cadets, and our entire Academy community. Thus far the numbers of COVID-19 cases on our campus have been extremely low, and my intent is to do everything in our power to keep them that way. How we move forward from here, including transitioning cadets back to campus, inprocessing the Class of 2024 and conducting Basic Training, involves complex decision-making and coordination between our USAFA leadership team, Air Force and Space Force leadership, the Department of Defense, and public health professionals.

We have assembled our own planning group here at USAFA, and are weighing all options for the best way forward in continuing our mission requirements. In the meantime, our base remains in Health Protection Condition Charlie (HPCON-C), like all installations across our force. We will continue to remain vigilant against the spread of COVID-19, wearing masks and following the social distancing and other protocols proscribed by the CDC and Department of Defense. We are continuously monitoring the situation, tracking the decisions of the Governor of Colorado, talking with local leaders and health professionals, and ensuring that our decision-making is in synch with the other local military bases across Colorado Springs.

At this point, anything you hear about decisions that have been made is purely speculation. We owe you thorough communications of our actions, and I commit to you that as decisions are made we will inform you and your cadets promptly. To that end, our Dean of Faculty is working to close out the semester, with grading and other relevant policies briefed to cadets yesterday. Further, a number of our summer programs have been cancelled, and a list of the affected programs has been provided to the entire Cadet Wing. Despite the unprecedented adjustments to our schedules of academics, training and athletics, our faculty and staff have been working tirelessly to maintain the strength of our programs. As more information becomes available, we will provide it to you as quickly as possible.

While there remains much uncertainty about the weeks and months ahead, I am consistently impressed by how our cadets have conducted themselves as we face these uncommon challenges. I will continue

to encourage them to stay focused, and dedicated to their academics, physical fitness, and leadership obligations. Please help us remind them to take care of themselves and to check on one another. Now is not the time to veer from the rewarding path in front of them. Instead, now is the time to stay together, and stay strong. We may be physically distant, but that does not mean we have to be distant in our support, encouragement, and communication with one another.

Thank you again for all you have done and continue to do.

JAY B. SILVERIA
Lieutenant General, USAF
Superintendent