

USAFA,

The key points of our schedule for summer programs has been decided and I look forward to welcoming the class of 2024 on June 25th.

Some upperclassmen have begun trickling back in small numbers and we will start bringing in larger numbers next month to prepare for BCT. That will start on the 4th of June. We plan to have most of the cadets back by mid-July and will make full use of these summer months. While the requirements for hygiene and physical distancing caused the cancellation of many of our traditional programs; the situation has increased opportunities for research and academics. Finalized summer opportunities will be released shortly by the Mission Elements.

To the cadets: though this summer may look different than in years past, I urge you to capitalize on the opportunities it will bring. Take this chance to get involved with BCT, pursue an aviation program, knock out some academics, or do research. You may see some very non-traditional programs pop up to work with top-tier organizations on and off base. This is not an exhaustive list, so work with your AOCs and Academic Advisors. In any case, be ready to volunteer for your preferred programs – if you do not, you risk the summer schedule being decided for you. Again, your AOC and academic advisor are key to opening those opportunities.

Further, I want to remind you that we have maintained all along that you are welcome back to the Academy anytime if needed. If your academic performance is suffering or your current situation is not conducive to distance learning, come back! Ultimately, you are responsible for your success. Whether your desire is to return to USAFA for academics or to return early for summer programs, work with your AOC and AMTs to route your request up the chain to the Commandant's approval.

Conditions in Colorado Springs and El Paso County are favorable for a gradual opening of USAFA. We are, therefore, slowly and deliberately reopening services on base. As of today, base access is no longer for Official Business Only and some of our services have reopened. These were discussed on Thursday but please visit the 10 FSS website or social media pages for details and the latest information. The 10th Med Group is also taking other medical appointments and the North Gate will be opened in the morning and the end of the work day.

The ultimate goal of reopening is not necessarily to go back to a "business as usual" status, but to remain "business as required" and gradually return to a new normal as our unique mission dictates. As I said last Thursday, this "new normal" will still consist of zoning the workforce, physical distancing, face coverings, and maintaining heightened hygiene measures. Again, these measures, and others like it, may last for more than a year. We must learn to be successful in these conditions and that take all of us.

The rate of infection in the state and county may have decreased, but COVID-19 continues to be a threat to the mission and the readiness of our Air Force and Space Force. Remain vigilant and be conscientious of any risks you take—a risk by one of us is a risk to us all.

Stay healthy, stay connected. JS