

USAFA Community,

During this unprecedented time in the history of our United States Air Force Academy, I would like to provide an update to the entire Academy community on some of the actions we have taken to protect the health and safety of our cadets, and where we stand in the continuation of our crucial mission for the United States Air and Space Forces.

At present, there have been no positive cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) at USAFA. The State of Colorado and the City of Colorado Springs have both declared a state of emergency, and at the Academy we have entered Health Protection Condition B (HPCON B), a status which enacts measures to prevent the spread of disease. Per Department of Defense order, all official domestic travel is currently prohibited and military Airmen are only authorized local leave, which by our definition is a 100 mile radius from USAFA. For those who are off station, whether Cadets, Cadet Candidates, or staff working elsewhere, the home of record or place of duty is the center of the 100 mile radius. Despite this radius, I must emphasize that everyone should do all they can to limit travel only what is absolutely necessary. All of our COVID-19 information relevant to our Academy community, guidance memos, and updates can be found at <https://www.usafa.edu/news/coronavirus/>.

As many of you likely know, on 13 March we began the orderly dismissal of nearly three quarters of our Cadet Wing. The Class of 2020, our firsties, as well as our international cadets, have remained on our campus along with any cadets who elected to stay. No cadets were forced to leave our campus, but were given the option to return home so that we could better implement the recommendations of social distancing made by our public health professionals and the CDC. Similarly, Cadets can return to USAFA if they need to for personal or connectivity reasons.

I am incredibly proud of our firsties, who leapt into action as leaders and helped more than 2,700 cadets leave the Academy within 24 hours of notification. As they finish their coursework and training for the remainder of the semester, the firsties will also be responsible for supporting the geographically separated underclassmen. Along with our AOCs, they will provide mentorship, active communication, support with online coursework, and act as a conduit to our Academy during this challenging time. They accomplished a periodic check in of those Cadets on 18 March. We are expecting more individual responsibility of our cadets now than perhaps any time in our history, and they are stepping up.

I would also like to applaud the work of our incredible USAFA faculty and AOCs, who have cancelled what would have been their spring break leave in order to lead in this current situation. Faculty have spent the last several days transferring our entire academic curriculum to an online, remote learning format. I cannot begin to thank them enough for enabling us to continue our coursework through the end of the semester. Courses will resume for all four cadet classes on Wednesday, 25 March.

Many thanks are in order for our entire alumni community, our nonprofit organizations, USAFA parents, sponsor families, and the City of Colorado Springs for the incredible support we have received during this difficult time. I have never before witnessed a clearer example of what it truly means to be a member of the Long Blue Line – the strength of the bonds between our graduates, the support for our institution, and the spirit of our entire USAFA family. You can be proud of how our cadets are handling this situation, and our cadets can be proud of the uncommon community they will soon join. We have worked closely with the AOG to ensure all cadets can virtually connect with alumni and have access to those in their geographic area. This tool can be found at <https://zoomielink.usafa.org/hub/aog/home>.

Second only to the health and safety of our cadets and base population, my priority is the continuance of our mission success in developing the future leaders of our Air and Space Forces. My intent is to get the Class of 2020 to graduation on time. This situation changes daily and even hourly, but we will continue to do what is right for the health and safety of our cadets, their education and training, and the execution of our mission.

To the entire USAFA community, thank you again for your support and understanding during this time.

Very Respectfully,

Jay Silveria