

STATEMENT OF
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SUPERINTENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
MARCH 26, 2025

SUBJECT: GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE MILITARY SERVICE ACADEMIES

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Tuberville, Ranking Member Warren, and other distinguished members, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address this committee on behalf of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). Thank you to my fellow superintendents for your statements and your close partnership as we ensure our warrior leaders are ready to lead on Day One after their commissioning. At the United States Air Force Academy, we are in the midst of a transformation with an updated mission and priorities. We are focused on forging the warfighting leaders our Air Force and Space Force need to defend our homeland, deter our adversaries, and should deterrence fail, fight and win our Nation's wars.

At the United States Air Force Academy, we are proud of our military, academic and athletic heritage, where we have developed leaders who have served with honor in every conflict since the first graduating class of 1959. With our 30 majors and 19 minors, to include eight warfighting minors, we are the number one funded undergraduate research institution, the number two public college in the United States (US News and World Report 2025), and the number eight ranked National Liberal Arts College in the United States (US News and World Report 2025). Our academics prioritize warfighter development, while ensuring we remain a premier academic institution.

Additionally, our 30 intercollegiate athletic teams continue to showcase our warrior spirit and athletic talents. Throughout our history we have forged 247 national champions, 928 All Americans, and in the last five years, earned six conference championships. Our outstanding athletes develop the critical leadership and teambuilding skills, while overcoming adversity through physical and mental toughness, to ensure success. But this is not enough.

As a nation, we are in a time of consequence where geopolitical instability exists throughout the world. Our adversaries have watched and learned the American way of war over the last three decades, and they are challenging our capabilities in every domain – from ground and sea, to air, to space, to cyberspace – and it is our responsibility to act now. We are American Warriors in the Air Force and Space Force, and this is reflected in our Academy's updated mission:

“We will 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.”

PRIORITIES

Our priorities are both derived from our mission and are built on the foundation of our Air Force and Space Force Core Values: Integrity, Service, Excellence, Courage, Character, Connection, and Commitment. Building on these foundations, focused on universal military standards, and grounded by our Honor Code, our priorities are:

- Forging **Warfighters to Win**
- Inspiring **Leaders of Character and Quality**
- Motivating **Critical Thinkers to Adapt**

Warfighting is not a job – it is a mindset. The warrior ethos our Nation needs must focus on readiness — physical, mental, spiritual, and within our families — driving us to be offensively-minded, masters of our craft, and team builders who overcome adversity. Our mission, priorities, and warfighting training are the bedrock of developing Warfighters to Win. When our nation calls, we will say, “Send me!”

Leaders of Character and Quality make the right decision, the right way, even if unpopular. They value teamwork, hold each other accountable, and build each other up to exceed the standards. Leaders set the vision for their team, fight for resources needed to succeed, and knock down barriers to ensure their team’s success. As Leaders of Character and Quality, especially when faced with the fog and friction of war, we will uphold our high standards and our honor. To that end, we are revitalizing the intent, execution, and oversight of the cadet-led Honor Code, with an understanding that while sanctions from honor violations may be tiered, to include the ultimate sanction of expulsion, our Honor Code is holistic and will not be parsed.

Finally, the dynamic, strategic environment of our time demands Critical Thinkers to Adapt. On modern-day and future battlefields, our leaders must innovate solutions to wicked-hard problems, while operating with limited information. By focusing on military readiness, rapid decision making with limited data, exercising mission command, and managing operational risk, our cadets will be ready to face a changing world.

Enforcing our Standards

For this Academic Year, we returned to the basics of military training and standards for all Academy personnel. Standards and accountability are critical to good order and discipline. Of greater importance, they are vital to modern warfare, where precision, professionalism, and trust are the bedrock of complex military activities inherent in our tactics, techniques, and procedures. We are laser focused on executing the sets and reps required to instill enhanced standards and accountability in the muscle memory of our Academy and our future warrior leaders.

With our new priorities, we hold everyone responsible for developing a culture of warfighting excellence, team building, and respect. Our training will be demanding, but never demeaning. It is about holding each other to our high standards, being there for one another when times are tough, and ensuring unity across our entire team, where each member is giving their all to the mission.

As a Military Service Academy, our priorities are the foundation of everything we do. Each Major Unit – the Cadet Wing, Dean of Faculty, and our Athletic Department – contributes to our three priorities. Every military training session, every classroom educational experience, and every athletic competition must support and reflect our priorities in the development of our warfighters ready to lead on Day One.

PRIORITY 1: WARFIGHTERS TO WIN

Cadet Wing and Military Training

To instill the warrior ethos among our future leaders, we are training our cadets in the foundational warfighter skills of Shoot, Move, Communicate, Medicate, and Automate. Some may call this Army training, but the face of modern warfare has evolved – this is joint warfare. These are the skills our joint force requires, where our warriors will fight to deploy *from* their bases, fight *into* theater, and fight *from* theater in pulsed operations to achieve the strategic advantage our joint force requires.

At full capacity, our warfighter training will require every cadet to qualify on two weapons each year. We can no longer afford to provide familiarization training and rely on the active duty units to provide just-in-time training. A more lethal force requires Airmen and Guardians who are proficient and confident in their weapons and engagement techniques.

As the Air Force and Space Force build the capability to rapidly establish and fight from small forward airfields, Airmen and Guardians must be capable across multiple specialty codes. Cadet squadrons, as our foundational Unit of Action, will learn to execute Agile Combat Employment concepts by quickly establishing, sustaining, generating combat power, and defending forward operating locations.

Cadet squadrons will execute command and control, through mission-type orders, at all echelons, to generate combat power. They will understand and execute commander's intent to succeed in an environment where communications will be denied or degraded. While cadets will develop resilient command and control centers, they must also prepare for a "Day Without Space" or a "Day Without Comms" to enable decentralized execution of their mission.

Cadets will learn and execute enhanced life-saving medical skills necessary in combat conditions. As we pivot to high-intensity warfare, the concept of the "Golden Hour," where we had high confidence medical care or rescue would occur within an hour, is not a guarantee. Airmen and Guardians must have the skills to immediately care for their teammates in contested, hostile environments, while still generating combat power to defeat our adversaries.

In our rapidly changing environment, cadets will learn to utilize automated systems and processes to increase their speed of decision making, enable their defense, and assist the generation of combat power. Our cadets will embrace the power of automation and the understanding that the military force who moves out with automation first, gains the competitive advantage.

We are in the crawl-walk phase of our military training efforts. For the run phase, the long-term vision is for our cadets to own their training. They will be resourced appropriately, understand their mission, lead their squadrons through their training and mission requirements, and be evaluated against defined standards through Fall and Spring culminating exercises.

Operationalizing the Academy

As we evolve our training and mindset as an institution, we must also change our structure and nomenclature to best prepare cadets for their time as officers.

The cadet squadron, led by the squadron commander, is our Unit of Action and must represent the squadrons and units within the Air Force and Space Force. We have restructured our squadrons to align with the updated roles and responsibilities, mirroring Air Force and Space Force operational units.

The cadet squadron A-staff provides cadets the experiences unique to staff functions (A1 – Admin/Personnel, A2 – Intel, A3 – Operations, A4/6 – Logistics/Comm). From addressing personnel matters, exercise planning and fixing communication outages, to maintaining our facilities, A-staff opportunities give our future leaders front-line experience on how our Air Force and Space Force operate. Of special note and aligned to our warfighter training, we established the A2, an Intelligence Operations Division, in our Headquarters staff and within each cadet squadron to provide regular intelligence briefs to cadets. These briefs prepare cadets for the complex state of the world and the threats we face.

Culminating Exercises (CULEX - Fall and Spring)

As cadets continue through their leadership development, we are assessing their progress. Their training moves through the crawl, walk, and run phases where they gain the necessary skills for progression. This large-scale event takes place each semester and is designed to evaluate the readiness of the Cadet Wing to operate in contested environments. The 72-hour exercise emphasizes adaptability, teamwork, mission planning, and physical and mental resilience giving our cadets operational experience to gain the sets, reps, and fundamental skills to be successful to lead on Day One.

The spring semester CULEX serves as a comprehensive training exercise, comprised of field training and four focused events to assess cadet readiness, leadership, and operational competencies. As cadets successfully meet the syllabus of instruction standards, they are recognized and promoted to the next class level as an integral part of our four-class leadership development program. Those who fall short are provided a pathway to meet the standards and advance before the beginning of the next academic year. We expect to build on this year's CULEX to develop more challenging and in-depth scenarios. This includes procuring the warfighting equipment necessary for more realistic training.

Dean of Faculty

The Dean of Faculty ensures cadets develop as warfighters first, integrating rigorous academics, immersive training, and cutting-edge research to prepare them for combat leadership. Through eight warfighting-focused minors, including Airpower Studies, Space Warfighting, Cyber Science, and Robotics & Autonomous Systems, cadets gain expertise in critical national defense areas. The Multi-Domain Laboratory (MDL) serves as a state-of-the-art immersive learning environment, where cadets plan, execute, and assess complex warfighting concepts using flight simulators, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)/ Electronic Warfare

(EW) platforms, and cyber warfare tools. This hands-on approach ensures graduates are combat-ready, capable of understanding joint and multi-domain operations on Day One.

The Academy's research portfolio advances warfighting capabilities in autonomous systems, counter-Unmanned Aircraft System (c-UAS), and space operations, directly supporting Combatant Command needs. Cadets and faculty lead counter-drone research, developing low-cost, AI-driven detection and mitigation technologies in partnership with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and industry leaders. The Space Systems Research Center (SSRC) and FalconSAT program provide real-world experience in satellite operations, contested space warfare, and hypersonic research. These initiatives, combined with the Academy's partnerships across the Air Force and Space Force, ensure cadets enter the force prepared to outthink, outpace, and outfight future threats. Through this deliberate approach, the Dean of Faculty ensures Academy graduates are Warfighters to Win.

Athletic Department

General Douglas MacArthur said, "on the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days, on other fields will bear the fruits of victory." Our Directorate of Athletics provides the competitive athletic experiences that sow the seeds of victory for the future fight. NCAA Division 1 Athletics provides invaluable training opportunities against formidable adversaries. Cadet athletes face situations that mirror some of the pressures of combat: high stakes-split-second decisions, and the need for both individual excellence and cohesive teamwork. The crucible of athletics demands physical toughness, mental toughness, and the ability to perform under pressure – all qualities that speak directly to a "Warrior Ethos."

Whether it is Intercollegiate Athletics, Competitive Clubs, or Intramurals, all cadets push well beyond their perceived limits; they learn to embrace discomfort and cultivate an unwavering commitment to their team and the mission. They will experience victory and defeat, both of which teach invaluable lessons about character, perseverance, and leadership. This experience provides foundational leadership lessons for our future officers to apply critical thinking skills, discipline, teamwork, resilience, and most importantly, the will to win.

PRIORITY 2: LEADERS OF CHARACTER AND QUALITY

Inspiring Leaders of Character and Quality is the foundation that underpins our warrior leaders. This is emphasized through our honor code and within our Major Units. We restructured our Cadet Wing to provide leadership progression throughout their development program, while our Dean of Faculty offers curriculum on leadership through educational courses, and our Athletic Department provides key opportunities for our cadets to demonstrate leadership skills.

Honor

Our Honor Code is foundational to our institution and our history when it was adopted by the first graduating class of cadets in 1959. It is the centerpiece of our cadets' commitment to inspiring Leaders of Character and Quality. Every cadet takes the oath that states, "We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does." This is a fundamental priority of ensuring our cadets lead with honor. Through our initiative to reinforce the Honor Code, we are

instilling a strong sense of accountability and ethical conduct among our cadets. We hold our cadets to the highest standards focused on instilling the character necessary of warrior-leaders.

Our leaders are standard bearers – they establish the standards, uphold them, and build a climate where exceeding the standards is the norm. They hold the team accountable in a way that lifts the team up. Leaders set the vision for the team, fight for resources, and knock down barriers to ensure their team’s success. Our leaders will cultivate climates of excellence where every teammate can give their all...they will be demanding, but never demeaning.

Cadet Wing - The Four-Class System

As cadets gain, improve, and test warfighter skills throughout their time at the Academy, they will also gain, improve and test their leadership competencies. Historically, our Academy placed a great emphasis on stress-focused training, with limited military value, during the four-degree year. We are evolving to an intensive, military-focused, progressive training at the team and unit levels that spans their entire 47-month developmental program.

As Cadets Fourth Class (freshmen), cadets focus on becoming strong followers and good teammates with a focus on basic military skills and junior Airman-level responsibilities. They gain the experience and knowledge throughout their first year to build the confidence and skills to teach and mentor the next class.

As they become Cadets Third Class (sophomores), cadets transition to front-line, engaged supervisors taking on the responsibilities of non-commissioned officers and supervising fourth-class cadets in their flights. As 3-degrees, cadets teach, motivate, mentor, and are responsible for those under their supervision, while taking direction from their upperclassmen.

Cadets Second Class (juniors) focus on being team and element leaders, where they continue to supervise other cadets. They take on increased responsibilities as primary military training instructors (Shoot, Move, Communicate, Medicate, Automate), learn specialized roles within the squadrons, identify resource shortfalls, and begin to manage operational risk.

Our Cadets First Class (seniors) become unit leaders managing every level, while taking responsibility for a healthy command climate. These leaders plan and execute unit training, military exercises, and ensure team success, while understanding and managing risk and resources.

Aligning our four-class system into a follower/teammate, front-line engaged supervisor, team leader, and unit leader model enables us to train, test, and certify each cadet on required leadership skills – skills necessary in our Air Force and Space Force. As cadets progress through their leadership development, we evaluate their progress through Fall and Spring Culminating Exercises (CULEX). These CULEXs serve as comprehensive training exercises, comprised of field training and focused events to assess cadet readiness, leadership, and operational competencies. Cadets who successfully meet the defined standards, are RECOGNIZED for their performance, and PROMOTED to the next grade.

Dean of Faculty

The Dean of Faculty ensures every Academy graduate is prepared to lead with integrity, competence, and respect for human dignity in the profession of arms. Leadership education begins in the first year with **Leadership 100**, where cadets develop self-awareness and moral courage, learning to navigate the complexities of followership and ethical decision-making. As cadets progress through **Leadership 200** and **300**, they build interpersonal and team leadership skills, mastering the ability to influence, manage power, and foster trust within their teams and complex organizations. The capstone **Leadership 400** course challenges cadets to apply organizational leadership principles in real-world scenarios, ensuring they leave the Academy ready to lead Airmen and Guardians in dynamic, high-stakes environments.

Ethical reasoning and national security awareness are also woven throughout the curriculum, reinforcing moral responsibility in military leadership. Core courses in philosophy and military history, instill principled decision-making, while national security studies prepare cadets to defend our Nation in a complex global environment. Across all four years, cadets engage in real-world leadership experiences—from leading teams in operational problem-solving to participating in ethical case studies on life-and-death decisions. By integrating academic theory, experiential learning, and a deep commitment to service, the Dean of Faculty ensures Academy graduates are Leaders of Character, prepared to inspire and elevate those they lead.

Athletic Department

Competitive sports are physically and mentally challenging, pushing cadet-athletes through their perceived limits, redefining possibilities and success. Our sports teams select Captains to lead through challenges in and out of the competitive arena. They have a unique opportunity to lead up, across, and down within their framework while solving unique issues and guiding their teams to victory against determined adversaries at the highest level of collegiate competition. The Team Captain Enhancement Program guides Captains through leadership issues, such as communication difficulties, interpersonal friction, and performance challenges. This program prepares them for a lifetime of service, leading lethal warfighters through the trials of an ever-changing strategic environment.

The Directorate of Athletics employ cadets as Reconditioning (RECONDO) Cadets in Charge (CIC), Cadet Fitness Center (CFC) CICs, and Squadron Athletic Officers to prepare them to lead, while utilizing comprehensive airman fitness tactics. The strength and conditioning skills learned in RECONDO will help them train and lead their peers, and give them the sets and reps in leadership roles that will make for better future leaders. These programs emphasize the mental, physical, and social components needed to maintain Airman and Guardian resilience and lethality.

PRIORITY 3: CRITICAL THINKERS TO ADAPT

Modern warfare is changing and our leaders must find unique solutions to complex problems. If we correctly develop our future leaders, they will not accept the status quo, they will be empowered to find the solutions we need, and to challenge bureaucracy, which by its nature can impede our progress. Our cadets will not wait to be told what to do, but instead bring ideas and capabilities forward to keep our adversaries guessing and ensure our advantage. The time is now for critical thinking and rapid action.

Cadet Wing – Modern and Future Warfare

Warrior-leaders must understand the myriad of effects delivered from Air, Space, and Cyber domains. As we evolve our warfighter training, we will develop programs to ensure our graduates appreciate the organizations, doctrine, tactics, and procedures involved with generating Air, Space, and Cyber effects for the joint force.

Air-Minded

We must understand the influence of air power on joint warfare. USAFA has a long history of ensuring our graduates understand how to exploit the air domain to deliver Air Superiority for the Joint Force. Through education and experience, we will continue to focus on the influence of air power for our strategic advantage.

Space-Minded

We must understand the influence of the space domain on terrestrial affairs. All cadets, not just those becoming Guardians, will understand and appreciate the ultimate high ground, as well as the strategic advantage of ensuring Space Superiority. This includes comprehending the organizations involved, the effects generated from space, the doctrine involved with generating those effects, and the systems employed in and through the space domain.

Cyber-Minded

We must understand the digital domain's impact on all aspects of military operations. Understanding cyber effects is essential to preparing our cadets for the fast-paced, complex, and unpredictable future. With a focus on cyber warfare, artificial intelligence/machine learning, robotics/autonomous systems, and virtual reality/augmented reality, our cadets will be ready to lead in this interconnected environment.

Dean of Faculty

To propel cadets military training across air, space, and cyber-mindedness, the Dean of Faculty lays a firm foundation of critical thinking capabilities to ensure every Academy graduate can solve complex, real-world problems in contested environments. From day one at the Academy, cadets engage in intentionally designed coursework and research opportunities that build self-aware, informed, and reflective reasoning—key to making sound decisions under uncertainty. Core courses embed problem-solving frameworks, while academic majors and interdisciplinary programs, develop cadets' ability to analyze and adapt to emerging threats.

Every first-class cadet completes a Capstone project, applying critical thinking to real warfighting challenges, from developing modular repairs for 500lb Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) to robotics research enhancing autonomous systems in combat environments.

Experiential learning further reinforces adaptability and innovation. Cadets conduct live-flight test evaluations at Edwards Air Force Base, apply hypersonic research in the Academy's Mach 6 wind tunnel, and contribute to real-world safety investigations like calculating KC-46 component recovery with advanced physics modeling. The Academy's emphasis on research-driven innovation has resulted in 65 patents, with the latest – a robotic bunker infiltration system – enhancing Defense Threat Reduction Agency missions. Through this deliberate, four-year developmental approach, our faculty ensures Academy graduates leave prepared to assess, adapt, and lead in dynamic and contested battlespaces.

Athletic Department

Athletic competition creates a volatile and uncertain environment where cadet-athlete roles and situations change moment to moment, where they lead in one moment and follow the next. Our athletes embody the concept that no plan survives first contact, as the competitive environment requires them to observe, adjust, and execute against determined adversaries actively trying to deter or deny victory. Cadet-athletes and teams debrief and review lessons learned to improve for the next engagement through pre- and post-game analysis. Critical thinking is a focal point of the cadet-athlete experience, and forms habits that mold them into the officers who will fix, fight, and finish our adversaries and near peer competitors and solve our nation's complex issues.

The Air Force Combatives Program Center of Excellence develops the Combatives curriculum for the Air Force and Space Force. These courses provide cadets with an opportunity to practice the ethical application of force, reinforcing the importance of decision making, restraint and judgment in high-pressure situations. The strict enforcement of rules of engagement teaches cadets how to operate, adapt, and succeed while staying within set boundaries.

OTHER TOPICS OF INTEREST

Through our transformation, we are committed to ensuring our cadets receive the training and preparation to become warrior leaders ready to answer our Nation's call. In addition to our evolving leadership program and updated mission and priorities, we are prioritizing countering harmful behaviors, investing in our installation infrastructure and security, enhancing the expertise of our permanent party, updating our admissions processes, and ensuring better access and availability for cadet health.

Countering Harmful Behaviors

The Academy is dedicated to fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and proactive intervention to combat any form of interpersonal violence. By equipping cadets with essential leadership skills, creating protective environments, and maximizing access to support services, we are dedicated to developing resilient, accountable leaders who cultivate climates free of violence or harassment, and prioritize the well-being of their peers in the name of mission-

preparedness. These efforts are designed to eliminate harmful behaviors, support victims, and ensure a positive, mission-focused environment where future leaders and their teams can thrive.

Data from the 2024 survey of cadets and midshipmen at the Academies shows the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment declined at the Military Service Academies compared to 2022, disrupting an upward trend in the prevalence of unwanted sexual contact and sexual harassment over the past ten years. USAFA saw a decrease from 22.3% to 13.4% for women and 4.3% to 2.9% for men. This year's reduction in prevalence reflects the ongoing commitment to fostering a healthier environment. Some of our directed efforts include hosting the National Discussion, bringing experts and leaders together to address the challenges of eliminating sexual assault and harassment. Our cadets are taking charge and organizing events like Take Back the Night, creating a space for cadets to support survivors as they share their stories.

We have embedded victim advocates in cadet dormitories, academic buildings, and other areas for easier accessibility. We also expanded the hours of our helping agencies to align with cadet schedules to improve accessibility. We are implementing an Interpersonal Foundations Course to help these young adults appropriately navigate professional and personal relationships. These measures are making a difference, but we must continue to prioritize prevention efforts, support for our survivors, and accountability measures to ensure long-term, meaningful change. We must remain vigilant and dedicated to creating an environment free of harmful behaviors for all cadets.

We are dedicated to our people. By addressing the stigma around help-seeking and improving access to care, we are taking crucial steps in eradicating interpersonal or self-directed violence. By empowering cadets to detect and address risk factors early, promoting leadership at all levels, and ensuring clear support for help-seeking behaviors, the Academy aims to create a supportive and resilient community. We are embedding these actions into our priorities with our long-term focus areas in improvements to cadet training and development, enhancements to permanent party hiring and training, and improved transparency and communication to combat misinformation.

Installation

We continue to prioritize investments in our facilities and infrastructure to meet mission requirements. From enhancing our training equipment and facilities, to ensuring a secure installation and better living conditions, we are focused on every support element to ensure our cadets are ready to lead on Day One.

Security

We are committed to creating a security posture that is focused not just on our installation security, but also our network security. Given recent threat reporting and observed shortfalls, we made modest changes to our installation security to ensure the safety of our people and our unique, 19,000-acre installation. This is especially important given the impact our cadets will have on our National Security for decades to come. With our increased security protocols, we also assessed our network capabilities and security, to ensure we are protecting our networks and

educating our future leaders on the value of computer networks as a weapon system, all while providing access for educational purposes and our unique mission.

Sijan Hall Dormitory

The five-phase project to renovate the 625,300 square foot, six story building housing approximately half of our cadets, is our number one facility priority. Infrastructure systems are in a constant state of repair, incurring significant maintenance and manpower/resource investments to sustain operations and ensure that life/health/safety is maintained for cadets. There are mission critical requirements to upgrade mechanical, electrical, plumbing, communications, fire protection, and interior finish systems to meet current existing code requirements. We are currently in Phase 1 with the authority to advertise in FY25.

Mitchell Hall

The Mitchell Hall dining facility is foundational to our success at the Academy. Whether providing high-quality nutrition, enabling an environment for team/unit table conversations, or surging for special events, Mitchell Hall is a no-fail mission. We are committing more resources to the facility and are focused on providing the quality, quantity, and variety of food - guided by nutritional requirements - for cadets to excel in a demanding Academy environment. Enhancing both the manning and facility improvements required is our number two facility priority.

Madera Cyber Innovation Center

USAF A broke ground on the Madera Cyber Innovation Center in summer 2021. On completion, the three-story facility will present nearly 49,000 square feet of collaboration space to the Department of Computer and Cyber Sciences to serve more than 1,400 cadets who attend courses annually. Air Force CyberWorx, a service-wide organization that brings government, industry, and academic experts together to quickly design and develop creative solutions for our warfighter Airmen and Guardians, will also be housed in the new facility. With a completion date in spring of 2025, collaboration spaces will bring academia, industry, and military cyber operators together to educate and train future officers. Coupled with traditional funding, we partnered with the Air Force Academy Foundation to ensure completion.

Cadet Chapel

Renovations began in 2019 to repair multiple infrastructure issues threatening the survivability of our spiritual center of gravity, the Cadet Chapel. The most visited, man-made tourist attraction in Colorado is currently 83% complete in its renovation. The discovery of asbestos beyond original design plans and structural inconsistencies discovered during renovation added layers of complexity. The plan to restore the building to its original state remains the same, to include replacing aluminum siding, stiffening the steel upper structure, installing a new water barrier, removing and cleaning the building's original 24,000 pieces of stained glass, and restoring the pews and two organs to their original state. The Chapel is currently scheduled for completion in late 2027.

Kucera Legacy Center and True North Commons

The Kucera Legacy Center and True North Commons are two more examples of the Academy innovatively using partnerships outside of government appropriated funding. The Kucera Legacy Center broke ground in January 2023 with a ribbon cutting in September 2024. It is by far the biggest improvement to Falcon Stadium to date and is a great step in modernizing our home field to meet National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I standards. This project was externally funded by its lead donors, Jack and Vianne Kucera, the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation, and the Air Force Academy Foundation.

True North Commons, located just outside our north gate, is the new gateway to not just the Academy, but also to Colorado Springs as part of their City of Champions effort. This project was also externally funded in a public-private partnership with Blue & Silver Development Partners, the Association of Graduates, the Air Force Academy Foundation, and the City of Colorado Springs. In return for a lease to the land to develop a hotel, office complex, and retail options, the Academy took delivery of the building for our new Hosmer Visitor Center this past fall in the same complex.

Both projects were built to support the Academy's constant efforts to attract the best and brightest of our nation to serve in our Air Force and Space Force.

Permanent Party

Through our transformation, the more than 3,000 members of our military and civilian permanent party have been the foundation for our warfighter focus. Our focus on enforcing standards includes both cadets and permanent party, creating greater unity across the Academy. Permanent party members are the standard bearers, commanders, teachers, coaches, mentors, leaders, and supporters of our cadets, preparing them to lead on Day One. From military training, academic endeavors, athletic exploits, to ensuring a world-class facility, our permanent party deliver excellence for our mission and our people. They have passionately executed our transformation and have taken ownership evolving all aspects of the Academy experience to develop leaders with a warfighting mindset.

Admissions Process

Our Admissions process is driven by annual guidance from the USAFA Superintendent and involves two critical tasks: (1) recruiting/outreach, and (2) selection.

Recruiting/Outreach

The Academy engages in two aspects of recruiting: (1) wide-spectrum recruiting to encourage the best and brightest young Americans to join the Academy, and (2) precision recruiting to include Congressional Opportunity Districts (districts not leveraging their full capacity of nominations), Intercollegiate Athletes, and Prior Enlisted. Our Admissions team publishes an annual Campaign Plan for Recruiting and Outreach. We are updating the Class of 2030 campaign plan to increase outreach and recruiting in Congressional Opportunity Districts and to align with our Academy priorities and Superintendent guidance.

Selection

Selection requires both a nomination (either from a Congressional or Military Affiliated source) and a competitive application. To score the applications, the Academy leverages an objective, merit-based selection process with minimum standards for entry. The majority (75%) of the admissions selection scores are objective, measures based upon a candidate's Academic Record, Extracurriculars, and Fitness Score. The remainder (25%) involves an Admissions Committee Evaluation (review of non-academic factors such as Integrity, Service, alignment to our Core Values, and Warfighter characteristics) and an Air Liaison Officer Evaluation. Leveraging Congressional Nomination slates, we ensure the best candidates are selected for attendance based upon meritocracy. We utilize a data and risk-informed waiver process to assess, and potentially approve, candidates with exceptional characteristics (e.g. Intercollegiate Athletes, Merit Scholars, Prior Enlisted).

Cadet Health

We are committed to ensuring our cadets receive quality medical and mental health care at the Academy. We increased our hours of operation for Cadet Medicine and Cadet Helping Agencies providing greater availability and access for cadets to seek medical treatment. Additionally, cadets have access to a variety of helping resources to include: embedded mental health providers at the Peak Performance Center, Mental Health Clinic, Military Family Life Counselors, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and Chaplains.

While different resources cater to a cadet's specific need, we acknowledge the complexity of options. As such, cadets may present to any helping agency and it is the provider's responsibility to appropriately hand-off to the desired helping agency to ensure a continuum of care ("No Wrong Door").

Given the complexity of USAFA's 47-month leadership development program (military, academic, athletic), the enhanced stress our future warrior-leaders face on a daily basis, and the limited time in a cadet's schedule, we are reviewing the manning, processes, and resources our medical teams require to keep our cadets healthy and on mission.

CONCLUSION

The United States Air Force Academy will be America's premier Military Service Academy, forging leaders of character who are motivated to a lifetime of service. From Day One, our graduates will be prepared to lead the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force as warfighting officers, ready to lead lethal, warfighting teams to defend our homeland, deter our adversaries, and should deterrence fail, fight and win our Nation's wars. Through rigorous, adversary-focused military training, a nationally-recognized academic program, and a culture of highly competitive athletics, we will develop graduates who exemplify unwavering courage and a deep commitment to honor and integrity. Our world-class installation, professional and dedicated permanent party, and engaged alumni ensure we will be the nation's preeminent institution for developing leaders prepared to answer our Nation's call.

On USAFA's Terrazzo, you will find the next 40 years of national security leadership for our Nation. These young Americans are our mission. Our mission and our priorities are clear. We must forge **Warfighters to Win**. We must inspire **Leaders of Character and Quality**, firmly rooted in honor and integrity. We must motivate **Critical Thinkers to Adapt** to deliver a decisive advantage over our adversaries. At the end of their 47-month development program at the Academy, our cadets will be the warrior leaders our nation deserves.

Respectfully Submitted by Superintendent #22