

# US Air Force Board of Visitors Meeting

16 October 2026

## AI Transcript

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### Dr. Raquel Rimpola

I turn it over to the chairman, Representative Congressman Pfluger, for his opening remarks.

### Congressman Pfluger

Thank you, Dr. Rempela, and good afternoon. The U.S. Air Force Academy Board of Visitors meets today for an update on action since our last meeting in July. The board sent its latest semiannual report to the Secretary of War in September, and I will discuss our recommendations today. Looking ahead, the board also plans to hold a virtual meeting in December. Before we begin, I want to inform the public that the board and the Air Force Academy officials held a closed session of the board prior to this open session. The Department of the Air Force determined a closed session was required due to the topic that was scheduled to be discussed. I'd like to start by welcoming the new Air Force Academy superintendent, Lieutenant General Moga. I look forward to working with General Moga to advance the Air Force Academy and also to hear his perspective on how we can help advocate for the Academy. There's a few things to congratulate the Air Force Academy on recently, on multiple accomplishments over the last few weeks. Congratulations to the football team for beating Navy.

And we look forward to beating Army as well and bringing that Commander-in-Chief Trophy back home to its rightful place, which is Colorado Springs here at the Air Force Academy. The Air Force Academy was once again recognized as one of the nation's top undergraduate colleges. The Academy has consistently been ranked as a top school for the past 18 years, and they have also had multiple engineering programs ranked in the top 10 for their categories. Finally, I want to congratulate the Academy on breaking the Guinness World Record for the most people simultaneously performing push-ups for one full minute. The Air Force Academy had 3,000. 703 people complete this exercise, and it's even more significant because the previous record holder was Navy with just over 3,000, which was, as we can admit, pretty weak. Since our last meeting, the board's congressional members have partnered with congressional board members from the West Point— from West Point and Annapolis boards to advocate for provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act that benefit all 3 military service academies. We are calling on the House and Senate Armed Services Committee leadership to keep these provisions in their final

bill. I have sent the board's semiannual report to the Secretary of War in September, and it also includes key recommendations for the Department of War.

The board recommends an update to the bylaws for the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation by elevating the superintendent from having an advisory role to to a more meaningful approval authority over major Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation actions. The board also strongly advocates for the retention of the 70th Flying Training Squadron at USAFA. The Air Force Reserve unit is a critical and cost-effective partner in executing training at the Academy airfield. The board also urgently recommends that the Department of the Air Force establish a dedicated facilities sustainment restoration and modernization funding line to USAFA to overcome decades of infrastructure neglect. The board also believes in the value of cadet internships and recommends that USAFA reprioritize internships in the Pentagon, on Capitol Hill, and potentially even in the White House. Additionally, the board emphasizes the need to actively promote Air Force and Space Force officer assignments at USAFA as a career-enhancing duty And recommends a review of promotion rates for officers who perform those duties, especially as instructors at USAFA. One area that requires an audit is the USAFA preparatory school's return on investment. The board received data outlining the success rate for an individual who enters USAFA preparatory school and ultimately graduates from the Air Force Academy.

A rigorous audit is required to optimize resource allocation and to evaluate the prep school's return on investment. And lastly, the board continues to advocate for USAFA to accelerate air, space, and cyber-minded training. USAFA must lead the other service academies in drone research, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and the adaptation for future warfare. The board recommends USAFA increase investment in drones and also on cutting-edge portable aircrew proficiency trainers and virtual reality training devices. The Air Force Academy was featured in the Secretary of War's Send Me tour a few weeks ago, and I was with Secretary Hegseth myself the week prior to his visit to USAFA. I spoke with the Secretary about the importance of service academies and why we need to invest in them, and just like the Secretary said, our cadets are the 1%, that they all made a decision to serve something greater than themselves. We owe all of them and the men and the women who work at the Air Force Academy the best academic experience, the best facilities, and the best military training environment in the nation. I'll divert from the script for just a second because I want to thank those that set this meeting up.

I want to thank the public for joining this meeting. As you know, prior to this board 2 years ago, public comments were not a thing, so we will definitely— we appreciate their participation, but most importantly, I want to thank General Moga and his entire team. They are training the next generation of leaders that will go into the Air and the Space Forces to keep us safe. I think we can all agree that the environment, the threat environment that we face is complex, that it is

challenging, that it is unknown how things will unfold. But I think one thing is for sure, that there are enemies all over this Earth. that would seek to destroy this great nation and our interests around the globe. And if you look back at the last 30 years, 40 years, the Air Force, now the Air and Space Force, have been involved in every single action, have been involved in every single decision to leverage the power of the United States to deter our enemies and, if needed, to defeat them. And so I want to thank General Moga and your team for continuing to train the very best that our nation has to offer.

With that, it is a pleasure to welcome our next guest, the Honorable Richard Anderson, who is the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. And this is significant because their team traveled from the Pentagon to be a part of this meeting, which is not lost on us, and I cannot tell you how much we appreciate you being here. So, Secretary Anderson, the floor is yours.

### **Richard Anderson**

Thank you, Representative Pfluger, and thanks to the members of the body and to my colleague, Assistant Secretary Borders, and of course, to General Moga. Welcome very much. Welcome. I'm going to be very brief because I always learn more at these than this, and I'm here to learn. I've been in this position now for a year, just went over a year. And during that time, I've been able to come to the Academy for visits. This is my third. It is my first Board of Visitors meeting, as it is with General Moga, and I would not want to be anywhere else but this. I've had several conversations with Chairman Pflueger, and I think I have a pretty good perspective now from those conversations, and I make a personal commitment that I will make it a personal priority to be at these meetings in person, because I think what you do is essential and crucial, not only to the cadets here, but to our nation. And so you really are engaged in substantive work. I've made a ton of notes so far, and we ain't— we're just getting started. And I hope to be able to go away and to do what's important.

It's what happens after these meetings that are so vital. But I think we are at a crossroads right now. with a new leadership team between General Moga, between a new provost, a new commandant. I just think— I don't like the word reset button, but I think there's been a good reset here for great things to come for the Air Force Academy. So I'll just leave it with this, speaking on behalf of the Secretariat for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, We strive, will strive, and are devoted to supporting your efforts and to doing everything we can to take these things that come out of this meeting and translate them into hard action. So thanks for having me.

### **Congressman Pfluger**

Dr. Rimple, I'll turn the meeting back to you.

### **Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Yes, sir. At this point, we'll have the superintendent's update. So, Lieutenant General Moga. Um, floor is yours.

### **Superintendent Moga**

Uh, thank you, and warm welcome again to everybody here, uh, joining us in person. Uh, warm welcome to everybody that's dialed in virtually. And, uh, Rep. Pflueger, thank you for your, uh, kind opening remarks. Um, I just have a few things to go over in no particular— well, it is a particular order. Um, and I just want to thank all members of the BOV for everything they have done, are doing, and I know will continue to do to support this great institution on behalf of America. So go to the next slide, please. I'm gonna speak relatively briefly, just some strategic-level headquarters updates with regards to the first 60 days of my tenure as the new superintendent, and then I'm gonna hand it off to our professionals, our amazing and elite team from the cadet wing, the academic wing, the athletic department, and then our Space Force detachment as well. Okay, next slide. All right, first 60 days. I took over the first week in August. I'm obviously quite familiar with this institution as a graduate and a former commandant, and I'm married to a graduate as well, so showing up, I pretty much had a good understanding of what this institution is all about.

I spent the majority of the last 2 months really taking an assessment of our allocation of manpower resources and funding and authorities to make sure, 'cause those things are for the most part relatively easy to fix rapidly with decisions from the superintendent's level. And I've already made several changes specifically, I would say, with regards to where the decision-making authority lies. My initial impression was that a lot of authorities had been pulled up to the headquarters level. I'm more of a delegate until you get uncomfortable, and then once you get uncomfortable, delegate a little bit more. So I made a deliberate effort to make sure that every authority that I had the ability to delegate was pushed down to the lowest level that I am comfortable with it residing at. So those were probably the immediate changes I made in the first, week or two. And then I really, I really wanted to make sure that we had the right people in the right place doing the right things. In this world of finite and limited resources with money and manpower, you're never going to get everything you need. So I needed to make sure that we were getting the biggest bang for our buck based on our people and our, and primarily our money.

And I think we're in about as good a place as we can ask for currently. We'll always take more people. We'll always take more money. I understand there are competing resources across all

this inside of the service and across all the services inside of the Department of War. But we are ripe for, I think, some help with regards to increasing our resources, and I'll talk more about it here in just a sec. It's all about supporting the cadets in their 47-month journey here at the Academy. The last one, we received about a month ago, give or take, the USAFA guidance letter that was signed off on by the Secretary of the Air Force, also signed by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Chief of Space Operations. It basically asked us, it gave us some direction clearly, and it tasked us within 60 days of receipt to circle back with regards to where we are aligned, where we might not be aligned, what resources we might need from the department, and then what policy changes we might request to become in better alignment with the guidance we recently received from the Secretary and the 2 chiefs.

That we are in the process of reviewing that and writing our response that will be submitted back to Honorable Anderson. FMR, and then eventually make its way back to Secretary Ming. In general, I think we are in very strong alignment with the language that is in that, the USAF guidance letter, but more to follow. We owe that back up by the middle of November, so the senior leadership at the Academy is going to hold a 2-day offsite in the second week of November. We're going to finalize our response to make sure everybody's on board with it, and then we'll submit that back in accordance with the direction from the Secretary. A little bit on my perspective with regards to our mission. I will say that I don't think that the mission of this Academy has fundamentally changed over the years. It is, in my mind, and you can pick whatever words you want to describe it, but we build and inspire the next generation of warfighters that are prepared to go out and lead with character. So we can deliver elite military leaders to win the future fight. And I guess some of the words and the way you describe that changes relatively, but that's the way I boil it down.

That's what we do. That's why all the permanent party, the faculty, the staff, that's what gets us out of bed every single morning, is to make sure that we are doing everything within our means and in our power and within our resources to make sure that that is what we are doing every single day. for the cadets. I've made it a deliberate effort, not necessarily because I thought that cadets had lost their purpose, but I think it's important for us as an institution to remind them all as quickly as possible and as often as possible why they are here. So in my first week, week and a half, I had an all-call with all 4 classes, every cadet that was available, and this is one of the things I focused on, not because I thought that they were here with the wrong purpose, but I wanted to make sure that they understood the right purpose. Because they are the best of the best of this country, without a doubt. These phenomenal young men and women that compete, apply, and get selected to attend this Academy are the best our nation has to offer. Full stop.

I remind them that some of them might think that they are here to play Division I athletics. And about 25% of them on average do because we recruit them to play sports, to compete and win. But that's not their purpose for being here. Some of them are extraordinarily intelligent and they want to compete and be selected for scholarships— Martinson, Rhodes, Olmsted, you name it. I think that's great. And a handful of them will meet the cut and they will be selected to eventually go on and participate getting a scholarship, but that's not their purpose for being here. Their purpose for being here should be to complete the 47 months, get their degree, get their commission, and go out and serve their country as members of the profession of arms. Fight and win wars on command and on demand, because that's really, that's what we do. So I made a deliberate effort to communicate that message to all the cadets, and we're going to routinely do that throughout every opportunity we get throughout their 47 months here. That comes with some commitment. It comes with some commitment from us as faculty, staff, and permanent party to make sure that we, when we get out of bed every single morning, we understand that we are committed to making sure that every cadet has the highest quality training, highest quality education, and the highest quality facilities that they deserve to make it through this institution, get their degree, get their commission, and then go forth and conquer.

That is our job as permanent party and senior leadership at the Academy. And then I remind them of their commitment. We make several assumptions when cadets get selected and show up here at the Academy. And I think 2 of the most, when they raise their right hand and they take that oath, not all of them understand what they're really signing themselves up for. So it's on us to make sure that we remind them the most consequential things that they are signing themselves up for here at the Academy. Not going to deploy and be put in harm's way throughout their time here as cadets. They will eventually be down the road, but one of the things I've made it a point to remind them of is when they raise their right hand, take that oath, and make a commitment that 99% of their peers across the country either couldn't or wouldn't, they're signing themselves up for a couple of things. One of them is they agree to follow a different set of rules. than their peers across the nation in civilian colleges and universities.

We follow a different set of rules here at the Air Force Academy. Second, they will be held to a higher standard without a doubt, because if we don't, tragic things and the consequences of failure down the road could be very, very dire. So I do my best, and I— and the other thing is, I ask— I've been also really focused on making sure that there is synergy and synchronization across all of our mission elements, mission units, and mission leaders. Everything the cadets experience here should optimally be complementary. It should never be contradictory, i.e., if a cadet goes and takes a class and they hear one thing, and they go back to the squadron and they hear something that conflicts with it, then we're screwing up. So we need to strive to be complementary yet never contradictory across all of the major areas that the cadets go through their training, their

education, coaching, teaching, mentoring across the board. And then the last area before I talk about some ongoing institutional changes, and I'm not going to steal the thunder from our senior leaders, is institutional pride is a really big thing for me. A lot of people have already heard this about— heard this from me, several in the room.

I don't expect every cadet that goes through the 47 months here, I don't expect every single day to be the best day of their life. That is by design. It is not meant to be fun. It is not meant to be easy. It is meant to be challenging. Even though not every single day of their life here is their best day, they should be dang proud to be here.

Because again, they made the cut, and their peers across the nation that worked really, really hard and didn't make the cut, they should be proud to be here as a cadet. When they graduate, they should be proud to be from here. And I've asked all of our graduate communities to help me get that message out, because graduating from this institution genuinely means something. I don't want to wax too much poetic, but eventually, if you decide to separate or retire from the military and you go out and try to find a job in the civilian world, When you slide a piece of paper across the table and somebody reads where you went to school and it says that you have a degree from the Air Force Academy, they are going to make several assumptions. Number 1, you're smart and you're well-rounded. Your degree was not an easy one and wasn't handed to you and you didn't buy it. Number 2, you're tough. You know how to persevere. You know how to perform under physical, mental, and emotional stress. And number 3, you got character and integrity. People will make that assumption without ever, ever meeting you because you have a degree from this institution. And we have to maintain that high degree of standard across the board.

Okay, the last one is executed and ongoing institutional changes. I get asked a lot, or at least relatively routinely, you know, what are your big changes that are on the horizon? And I'm taking my time. I've already made some relatively small and some easy changes for efficiencies and administratively, and I talked about a few of those previously. The larger institutional changes, when you're talking about mission, vision, and priorities, I'm deliberately taking my time so we as a senior leadership team at the Academy have the opportunity to discuss it, agree on it, and then when it's time for me to roll that out, probably early next year is what I'm looking at for a variety of reasons. And one of those reasons is that we already have some relatively major institutional changes that are ongoing inside of the academic wing, the cadet wing, the airfield, and the athletic department that our amazing team is about ready to socialize with you. as soon as I start to stop talking here, which is pretty much right now. So again, thanks for your time. Looking forward to any questions you have. And I think the Commandant is up next, if I'm not mistaken.

**Commandant Tellez**

Thanks, Boss. Mr. Chairman, to the board, as well as the greater public that we serve, it's an honor to be here. Thank you guys for the time. If you could advance the next slide. My name's Brigadier General Gringo Tellez. I'm humbled to be back here as a graduate from 2001. Back here now to serve this place that truly did change my life, and grateful for the opportunity that I now have to do the same for many, many, many more. While this slide has a lot of detail that are useful for insights, the, the underlined words will show you where my emphasis is really focused right now. But I think most importantly is just the picture on the top right. As the boss alluded to, this place is intentionally Challenging. This place is intentionally designed to create exactly what you see in the eyes of that young man that's grinding himself during our Basic Cadet Training in this, in this particular picture. If you look at that picture, you're going to notice significant doubt in his eyes. And if the same picture was taken maybe 30 seconds later, you would see significant pride and now new questions as to what is possible.

That's exactly what my job is, is to create moments of doubt To find ways to motivate and encourage and push them to a limit that they did not know they could get through, and to do that regularly. I'll tell you, in my specific purview as the, the one specifically tasked by the superintendent to drive military training, the most important thing that I do to make that happen regularly, which is what it takes to build callus and, and develop denser bones, is to partner with these guys to my right as well as around the table here. We have to make this a consistent cultural experience for 47 months straight to push these young folks to be the lieutenants we need in both the Air and Space Force. And that is exactly what we do. I'm very excited to have tremendous partners next to me so we can create these moments that America needs for our folks. If you could advance the next slide, please. This is more of a brag sheet, and I'll hit first just to emphasize the chairman's wonderful point on how we absolutely destroyed the pathetic effort that Navy put forward on the Guinness Book.

They, along with West Point, are far, far below us. So we're really, really proud to have brought that together. But I will say the emphasis for me is not just on the cadet wing that came out or the permanent party that supported, but it was also the greater graduate community as well as the local community that came out to support this effort and really push us to a point that, in my expectation, will be unreachable in the future. So that's really powerful testimony to the support community around us. A-Day is the day that we bring in our new cohort. So our 4 degrees who showed up this summer as basic cadets, they showed up with record numbers, and it's a great nod to our incredible admissions team that is just gathering what the boss quoted as the finest in America to bring them out here and compete. We grind them, as I alluded to before, and they've come out in the best form I've ever seen. And I'll tell you, maybe the bluff on that side is America is in good hands and should be incredibly optimistic, not just for the young 4 degrees that we have

brought into the wing now, but for the upperclassmen that are all in as leaders, completely owning their responsibility to bring up a better, a better group below them.

We are in great hands, so we're in a great place. I'm very excited about the future here. The Comrades Challenge and the VALEX, they're just good examples of some military exercises we're doing around here that all rhyme with Incredible emphasis on competition and teamwork, high standards for success, as well as rewards for those that do so. And that's building an incredibly healthy competitive environment around here as a great driver to what, in fact, we need in the future is those folks that are going to fight and strive and win and learn when they don't so that next time they can. So hopefully, if you have any questions, I'm happy to dive in deeper. On the honor update, for those that don't know, The honor code is probably the most important difference that this place has relative to non-military service academies. The key point on this is two-part. One, that it exists. We hold our graduates, our cadets, to an incredibly high standard that requires constant investment to reach and then graduate with honor. What's secondly most important about this is that it's all cadet-run. So the ownership of that problem, that opportunity, that responsibility is all cadet-run.

And in my assessment, we're right now, as we adjudicate all the challenges in that front, the failures that we're learning from, we're really on par with the last several years. We're in a very healthy place. It looks to me like the cadets own it very well. We're learning a lot. So very excited about the path we're on there. The last note I'll make on the warfighter development, to stay brief, is there's a couple of components. One is the beating heart of a warrior. We grind on them to make them hard and strong. But one thing that I would offer, maybe off script here, I just came back from our Cadet for a Day event. You guys will probably see some media splashes on this, and I hope you do. The cadets, with no drive from me, no push from me at all, have created this entire system to welcome young, incredible folks that are not in a great health place. Myla, a little 6-year-old who's thankfully recovering from her brain cancer, was just welcomed to the cadet wing. And I will tell you, That I've never seen a more significant and heavy emotional outpour from a cadet wing that is incredibly tasked, incredibly talented, very busy, and increasingly under my pressure, very, very tough.

But if a warrior's heart is strong, it's also warm, and it is evident right now that the cadet wing is in a great place. So events like that give me great confidence. I'm very excited next week to take the cadet wing to an offsite, and we're going to kind of go clean sheet on this and reassess everything we're doing so that it's not only assuring us that while we are certainly doing things right, that we can be confident that we're doing the right things. And we're going to carry that into the offsite that the Superintendent mentioned in November as well. So very excited about the path we're on and look forward to your questions. Thank you.

## Provost Valpiani

Well, good afternoon, Chairman and Representative Pfluger and the members of the Board of Visitors, as well as the ladies and gentlemen attending virtually from the public. My name is General James Valpiani, and it's a pleasure to serve here at the Air Force Academy as the Chief Academic Officer. On this slide are 2 new phrases since the last time that I had an opportunity to brief you all. The first is academic wing, and the other is provost. Those are unusual terms here at the Air Force Academy, so the first update I'd like to provide you is where those terms come from and why. So this slide shows you the new organizational structure that we've put in place. Since the last Board of Visitors meeting, the academic wing structure really comes from what the senior leadership of the Air Force Academy identified as an opportunity to enhance the education that we provide here and drive it towards the integrated multidisciplinary focus that we need in order to tackle increasingly complex problems of modern war and peace. Rep. Pflueger, you mentioned some of those in your opening remarks, and I'll talk a little bit more about that as we get into the superintelligence portion of the briefing.

But the key point here is that it was necessary from a structural perspective to bring together a number of our different disciplines so that they work together, they live together, and most importantly, teach the cadets how to think together across the different boundaries, which in general are artificial boundaries that exist in higher education. So previously, we had 20-plus departments that were individual direct reports to the formerly known as the Dean of the Faculty. The opportunity that we identified was to create schools of integrated studies. So you can see those up here in the light blue. You've got the School of Integrated Engineering Sciences, the School of Integrated Basic Sciences, and the School of Integrated Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, each of which is led by a dean, and underneath which are the departments that pertain to those different domains of study. And then most importantly, we have a School of Integrated General Studies, and that's the one that's near and dear to my heart. That's where we have placed responsibility for the entire core curriculum we provide here. on the order of 90 to 100 core credit hours, which is the common education of all officers that graduate from this institution.

Much like basic training, much like boxing and other elements of, you know, jumping off the 10-meter here, these are the iconic elements of our 47-month education that every cadet undergoes. And previously, the core curriculum was really distributed across these 20 departments in such a way that there was very little harmony very little coordination across. And so cadets would routinely jump from one course to another without a whole lot of understanding of why they were taking these courses or how one related to another. We think it's, especially in this modern era of rapidly accelerating technological change, incredible complexity of modern warfighting, that they be able to habitually think across disciplines. And so the School of Integrated General Studies is our visible commitment to providing that kind of integrated, mission-aligned education. So we're

very excited as we've built this structure to now move towards the curriculum that will form our future officers, which is what the next slide is about. So on the next slide, you'll see 3 main lanes that constitute our core curriculum: humanities, arts, and social sciences; STEM; and a very strong thread of superintelligence; and then warfighting. In general, our humanities, arts, and social sciences focus as we rebuild the core curriculum will be oriented on helping the cadets to understand where it is that the commitment that they have made to the Constitution comes from, grounded in our Western civilization and moving forward to the modern day, and what it means to defend the Constitution, why it's worth defending, the fragility that our Constitution has, and the renewal that we must make in every generation to be a self-governing republic.

And so that entire education is designed to give them that focus, but also to then turn that same attention to detail and holistic way of thinking towards other nations, whether allies or potential competitors, so that we understand, you know, the environment that we're operating in, ideally to prevent war and to sustain peace, but if necessary, to utterly dominate in conflict. And so that humanities, arts, and social sciences focus will now be a deeply integrated education focused on preparing them for the humanistic elements of warfare. In the STEM and SI components, historically, cadets have taken about 5 engineering courses and 4 science courses, and they look— they're fairly conventional as it looks or as it appears at other colleges and universities. But our objective is not necessarily to make our cadets excellent in aeronautical engineering, astronautical engineering, mechanical engineering. The vast majority of them are not going to serve or even major in those domains. What we really want them to understand is how those elements come together in order to design, develop, operate, maintain, and employ the world's finest technologies, the world's most capable warfighting machines and technologies. And so we are reforming the STEM and SI component around an integrated engineering and an integrated science program so that they work through the scientific process, they work through the engineering process hands-on in air domain, in the space domain, in the cyber domain.

And really get a hands-on understanding of what engineering and science is rather than piecemeal introductions, 101 courses to a bunch of relatively unconnected disciplines. And then finally, in the warfighting domain, we've— we're moving from one course focused on trying to bring together aerospace and cyber at the tactical, operational, strategic level into a sequence of courses. So we're expanding the warfighting education. So that this institution, where we have the privilege of 47 months with these cadets, really provides them a mental model in which they can see how air, space, and cyber effects work together to achieve national strategic objectives in a way that is very difficult in other commissioning sources just due to the lack of time and focus of those other institutions. We are looking to build out a robust warfighting sequence deeply focused on hands-on education using modern simulation tools drones, Rep. Pflueger, to your previous discussion, in order to ensure that our cadets leave here air-minded, cyber-minded,

space-minded, and not just in a theoretical way, not just on paper, but in a way that they're getting real feedback in high-fidelity simulation and live practice. Very excited to bring that core curriculum together. We're targeting next fall to roll out the first year of that education.

The next slide shows a focus that I think is of particular interest to the Department of War and to the Department of the Air Force. And that's how it is that we are preparing our officers to be prepared for a world in which superintelligence touches everything that we do. My objective and the objective I've set for the faculty is to be the world leaders in developing curriculum and preparing our graduates for that future, to be masters of superintelligence, even as we focus on academic excellence policies that ensure that they have really solid foundational grasp of the concepts that we're teaching here without the aid of superintelligence, both-and proposition. What I want to show here is just So, here's an example of how we've made progress just in the last several months on threading through what we believe to be, you know, leading curriculum, leading focus on how superintelligence comes to bear on the profession of arms. So, on the left-hand side, you see an aerodynamics spreadsheet. This has been the state of the art here at the institution for a number of years. It's how cadets in our core class, as well as in some of the design classes, think about taking commander intent and turning it into an aircraft, a design that they can ultimately either 3D print or in in the Air Force contract with performers to develop.

That process is slow. It relies on a lot of rules of thumb that are not perfect, and it involves multiple different disciplines working back and forth in a sequential fashion. It's what accounts for why the equipment that we purchase today, which is truly exquisite, is also extremely expensive and takes forever to develop because we are trying to do so many different things in the minds of many different people in sequence. Superintelligence allows us to go much faster, to bring together high-fidelity tools rather than low-fidelity tools, and to bring them into conversation with each other across disciplines. So we worked with a couple of teammates across industry this summer, and in the middle picture you're looking at, basically that left-hand picture, it's the same underlying logic, but elevated to a higher degree of fidelity and turned into an environment in which cadets can design an aircraft from commander's intent in 10 minutes. In what used to take an entire month, and that has now been deployed in the curriculum as of this semester. At the same time, those tools now that allow us to develop high-fidelity solutions, we can apply superintelligence to, and we can do it across domains.

So the 3rd picture you're seeing there is the design of the outer mold line of an aircraft to optimize its radar cross-section. And normally that's a very complex task, and it's done in a silo relative to aerodynamics. And we've brought those 2 things together and employed superintelligence techniques so that the cadets are designing not only the outer mold line to solve aerodynamic problems, but at the same time optimizing its stealth characteristics. And again, this is just the

beginning of what we see as a transformation that will allow us to go further developing agentic solutions to control these aircraft in simulated environments and really showing our cadets what it looks like to develop design for the future fight at, you know, using the latest capabilities that superintelligence provides us. Next slide, please. Somewhat less interesting or less sexy topic, excuse me. This is copyright. So this was a question that came up from the Board of Visitors in the last visit. I just wanted to provide a quick update. In FY20, the NDAA amended the U.S. Code to allow civilian faculty at military schools, including USAFA, to own copyright and scholarly work. There was an inquiry from the Board of Visitors previously, but I just want to highlight that we are postured to move forward with that capability.

There are a number of intermediate guidance documents that need to be published at the Department of War and Department of the Air Force level in order for us to finalize that capability. We're a little bit farther behind inasmuch as it concerns military faculty and their ability to own copyright and scholarly work. But in any case, I'm happy to answer questions after, but I just wanted to provide an update that we are ready to move forward with that capability.

There's some intervening policy that needs to be developed within the department first. So with that, it's a pleasure to have had a chance to give you a quick update on the academic wing and where we are headed. And now I'll hand it over to Dr. Nancy Hickson, who's our acting athletic director.

### **Dr. Nancy Hickson**

Good afternoon. I am Dr. Nancy Hickson, acting athletic director and also the CEO of the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation. I am honored to be here today. We will provide an overview of Air Force athletics, highlighting cadet athletes, our physical mission, and external business operations. As always, we remain focused on developing leaders of character through athletic experiences to strengthen our competitive programs and to advance the Academy's mission of preparing cadets to lead and serve. Slide, please. So, let's, let's get into our cadets. No one tells the story better than they do. Lieutenant General Moga has made it clear from day one— we love this line, sir— that we need to beat Army and Navy in everything from Frisbee to football, and our cadets have certainly stepped up and done very, very well this fall. Our women's soccer program and our men's tennis team have beat Army and Navy both this fall. Women's tennis has beaten Navy. Our men's and women's boxing program won 8 out of 10 bouts, beating Navy. There's a theme here. And Our football program, of course, beat Navy just a few weeks ago. We do have our sights on Army to try to even that out, so football will also be a dual service academy winner.

It's important to note that our level of competitiveness continues to escalate, which is really a direct reflection on the hard work and dedication of our student athletes, our cadet athletes, our

coaches, and our staff. We're going to also speak about our cadet wing and physical mission, and I've asked Ms. Block to share a few of those highlights as well.

### **Jennifer Block**

Thank you, Dr. Hickson. Chairman Pflueger, Representative Pflueger, and to the Board and distinguished visitors, thank you for the time and an opportunity to give an update on the Athletic Department. As you can see from the center banner, that this Athletic Department is laser-focused on warfighter performance optimization. Chairman, you talked about we don't know what the next war is going to look like, But we do know who we're sending, and it's these young men and women that we are training today. And so we are focused on making sure that we send them physically fit and ready to go. The Secretary of War and our DAF leadership have been crystal clear that we want a greater emphasis on readiness, lethality, and resiliency. In Secretary Hegseth's 6 May memo, he talks about uncompromising fitness standards. And so where does that start? Well, that starts with BCT and basic cadets. So we partnered—the athletic department partnered with CW, and we decided that we needed to up our game a little bit on physical training. I know BCT is full, but really partnered well with Geronimo-Tellas and realized we needed a little bit more time. So we increased the number of PT sessions from 11 to 19, a 40% increase.

We also increased each session from 60 minutes to 90 minutes. So overall, 85% increase in training. So you ask, and we do the training on the terrazzo and on Stillman Field. And we actually, for you grads, we actually do PT training at Jacks Valley. As long as you're not doing the obstacle course or the assault course, you will do PT in the morning. And so the results are, we had the basic cadets had the highest average for the PFT score at the end. And then for the aerobic fitness test, they had the highest average in 5 years and second highest on record. 1 point lower than the Class of 2025. So when you put the time and effort into it, we saw some amazing results. For the entire cadet wing, we have also reinstituted minimal passing scores for each of the physical fitness, the PFT components, and a minimum time for the AFT score. The results are significant on both sides of the spectrum. This fall, the PFT and AFT averages were the highest we've ever seen on record. And at the same time, only 47 cadets are currently on athletic probation, down from 83 from last fall and 111 from 2 years ago, a 57% reduction in 2 years.

AD is simultaneously raising overall fitness performance and reducing the number of cadets falling behind standards. Sir, I'd like to now switch over to our physical education classes where we're linked at the hip with the Provost. and how we're looking at the core curriculum. Again, in the 6th May memo from Secretary Hegseth, he talks about the importance of elevating cognitive performance as a key to readiness. He emphasizes decision-making and cognitive endurance are critical, as critical as physical fitness. So all of our PE courses, our core PE courses and our warfighting PE courses, are focused on ensuring not only personal physical fitness, but teaching

cadets how to operate in a stressful situation, Following ROEs and working as a team. We're preparing our cadets to graduate ready to lead themselves and others in a dynamic, physical, and in any combat situation. If you look at the bottom middle, we want to talk about intramurals. 75% of the cadet wing participates in intramurals, and as the commandant said, competition is important at every and any level. This is another great news story for the athletic department. We have gotten great support from the entire cadet wing and across campus.

We just held the championships for intramurals on the Commandant's Lawn, and it was an amazing event last week. We had hundreds of people out and full squadrons out to support their teams in the competition. Winners got a t-shirt and a patch to put on their A jacket, and again, we're placing emphasis on competition, teamwork, and the will to win. And then finally, we wanna talk about combat focus. Again, our entire department, there's a focus on exposing and educating our intercollegiate athletes to all rated career fields. We do this through several different ways. One is through our rated panels. For all of our 3 degrees, or our sophomore cadets, our intercollegiate athletes, we host rated panels where we get former intercollegiate athletes who are pilots, special operators, or guardians, and we talk about the different rated career fields and the different platforms that they could fly. We also have reinvigorated our officer rep program, making sure that our intercollegiate athletes have multiple people to talk to about different rated career fields. Both of these programs have resulted in a large increase in the number of ICs going into rated career fields. We know our athletes make the best warriors.

We also invest a lot in our TCEP program, which is our Team Captain Enhancement Program. Monthly, we meet with our team captains to ensure— to give them additional tools to lead. Our team captains are similar to our squadron commanders. They lead their teams in the locker room and on the fields of friendly strife. We are starting to see great dividends in the investment, this investment, where the teams support each other and the relationships that these team captains are forming, and then the relationships they form with other squadron commanders. It's been amazing. I'm sure you're all tracking the 2 great hires we had over the summer to help support our warfighter focus. One is from Mike Kozlowski, our 16-year baseball coach. He's now our Director of Leadership and Institutional Strategy, who's really helped us enforce some of the, some of these new incentives, especially with the TSEP program and our rated panel. And then also Sam Barber, who's been here for 18 years, and he's our Director of Internal Development and Strategy, really focused on the TSEP program and our SAC and also onboarding new coaches and staff members to ensure that the culture and the, uh, the culture of the department, uh, stays strong.

Next slide, please. With those 2 head coaches that we've lost, we didn't— we never messed us— we didn't miss a stride. Our new baseball coach is Drew Lacombe. He was with us for 3 seasons.

He was a national champion in college. He's an exceptional coach that understands our mission of developing more fighters. Next slide, please. And our new wrestling head coach is Joe Johnston. He was with us for 8 years before. He's been coaching for over 20 years. He's a 2-time All-American from Iowa. He built a mission-first, value-based, championship-driven program with Sam and will continue to develop outstanding warriors on and off the mat. Now I'd like to hand it over back to Dr. Hickson.

**Nancy Balkus**

Thank you.

**Dr. Nancy Hickson**

And we'll continue with some really great head coaching hires. Slide, please. Yes. This past spring, we hired a brand new head men's basketball coach in Joe Crispin. He is exceptional. He is a fast-paced, mission-driven, amazing pedigree coach. He played professionally. He was a standout at Penn State, and he has a long history of building competitive successes in his programs. We're delighted to have him and look forward to what he does for our men's basketball program.

**Dr. Susan Morrow**

Slide, please.

**Dr. Nancy Hickson**

And there's a common theme. We have exceptional associate head coaches. Our legendary head hockey coach, Frank Cerretore, announced his retirement. He will be leaving us at the end of this season. And we have announced that his associate head coach, Joe Doyle, will take over after Frank is finished after the season. Joe has been with us for 20 years. He is a 1989 graduate, former player, highly respected, And he will seamlessly take Air Force hockey into the future. Very excited about that. And then finally, we'd like to share some external highlights with the group here today. Slide, please. First is our iconic head football coach, Fisher DeBerry. He was honored by the Air Force Academy Foundation and the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation in September with the unveiling of his statue outside of the Kudrow Legacy Center on the east side of Falcon Stadium. He is the winningest coach in Air Force history, an incredible human being. His entire family was here to help him celebrate, and he had about 350 former players that came back as well. It was an extraordinary day. Bruno Mars came to Air Force for back-to-back sold-out concerts. Incredible partnership with our teammates across the Academy.

Couldn't have done it without them. We saw 67,000 concertgoers in a 2-night period of time. Notable is that 1,500 tickets were donated to our cadet wing. Those came through the AFAC, the foundation, and also our concert promoters as well. That was pretty extraordinary. Our baseball team went to join— excuse me— Paul Skeens and Griffin Jacks at the World Baseball Classic, nationally televised, internationally televised, a bit of branding for USAFA and an opportunity to celebrate some outstanding outstanding former players who are now superstars in the Major League Baseball world. In June, we hosted— and that's the lower left-hand photo— PBR Space Cowboy Bull Riding Event and Tim McGraw concert that was sponsored by the Space Force. It was also a sold-out event and hugely popular with our community, and we're hopeful to bring them back next summer as well. In the middle there, we launched the Air Power Legacy Series campaign featuring our B-21 Raider. Air Force football wore those against Navy, those jerseys, and the apparel line supporting the B-21 is the highest-selling APLS campaign to date. And finally, our sold-out Navy game featured 2 B-2 flyovers honoring the Midnight Hammer campaign. And you can barely see it in the middle there, but that's one of our newest campaigns that made it up in Falcon Stadium and will be there in perpetuity.

As you can see, it's been a very busy fall, very successful fall for Air Force Athletics. We thank you for your time today, and your continued support is instrumental to USAFA's success, and Athletics is committed to working hand in hand with our senior leaders. remaining laser-focused on lethality, readiness, and resiliency. Thanks so much, and go Falcons!

### **Col. Stephanie Silva**

All right, good afternoon, Chairman, Representative Pflueger, and to the board, everyone that's here in person and online. It's an honor to be here today to talk to you about Space Force and be the lone Space Force person in the room. I'm going to talk to you a little, just a little bit about how we integrate space here at the United States Air Force Academy. So, Colonel Stephanie Silva, class of 2004, and it is my honor and privilege to be the Space Attachment Commander here. My job is to integrate with all of these amazing mission partners and to bring space into every aspect that we have here at the United States Air Force Academy. Next slide, please. So I want to quickly start off with how we're organizationally structured. So our job is to motivate, inspire, educate, and train cadets to commission elite space-minded second lieutenants in both the Space Force and the Air Force. So regardless of what service they're going to go into, we want to ensure that all of our cadets graduate with that space mindset. While I am administratively aligned to STARCOM, Space Training and Readiness Command, and under Space Delta One, which is training for the Space Force, I fully and completely support the superintendent and all of our major units in bringing space to the United States Air Force Academy.

We have about 40 guardians that are here at the United States Air Force Academy across all of those major units. So they're instructors, they're squadron commanders, we're gonna pretty soon have some AMTs that are Space Force, as well as trainers. And so through that partnership, that is how we're gonna bring and integrate space here. You can see in the bottom there the key initiatives, and so the things that we're trying to focus on while we're here from our small detachment and how we are able to make an impact. We have our guardianship programs, which I'll talk about on the next slide, but The first thing is really making sure that everyone knows what is the Space Force and why do we exist, and if they want to go to the Space Force, what is that path to go to the Space Force? I want to make sure everyone has a space mindset for all 4,000 cadets, and then I want to make sure that all of our active duty guardians, since there's so few of us, that they're all synchronized with across those major units, and then we actually do the selections for those that are going to be guardians in our Space Force.

Next slide, please. So how do we do Space Force integration? Starting with space education, there's Space Force and space curriculum through almost every single department that we have. So cadets are getting that exposure in their daily academics. From a training perspective, we partner with the cadet wing, and in the wing exercises or on Silver Training Weekends, we're actually doing space injects, making sure that cadets are getting that training specifically for Space Force. So orbital warfare, electromagnetic warfare, missile warning, cyber, space domain awareness, those type of aspects are being brought into those different trainings. If you go to hockey tonight, or if you see volleyball, they're gonna be wearing Space Force uniforms. And so we partner with the athletic department representing Space Force in some of the uniforms that they wear. Our guardianship programs, we start with Azimuth, which is a summer program that is run here at the United States Air Force Academy. It is a Joint Undergraduate Summer Training Program, including ROTC, sister services, and even bring some Canadians in. The opportunity is to make sure every cadet has the space foundations when they leave that course. So we start off with learning some of those basics, you know, what is the Space Force structure?

What is space weather? How does orbital mechanics work? And then we go on to mission planning, and we continue to develop that. They have hands-on opportunities through electives and get the ability to do experiments with a neuromorphic camera on the International Space Station, or they do space domain awareness with our 1-meter telescope here. We do neutral buoyancy so they can understand how things operate in space. They build and launch rockets. The following week, we go out to local bases so they actually can see ops floors and what it looks like and what it would be to look like a Space Force officer, what those— some of those mission sets are. We do intel briefs, threat briefs, so they understand truly what those space threats are. And then finally, that final week is a culminating exercise called Apollo Dagger, and that's where we bring all of the information that they've learned over the last 2 weeks together and put those

into a war game and put those into practice. The additional guardianship programs we have are the Cadet Space Operations Squadron, or CSOPS. So the ASTRO department is responsible for the FalconSat program. They do the research and development and the launch of those.

of those satellites. And then the Cadet Space Operations Squadron is who does the operations. So you can learn space by doing space, which is a really neat opportunity. And so they do on-orbit ops from the USAFRA ground station here, and all years and all majors are able to participate in those activities. Another opportunity we have is our I-5 Squadron. This is an international student organization that goes not only across the nation, but also internationally. We have over 1,000 members that are a part of I-5. And then our partners include Australia, Canada, Japan, Romania, and South Korea. This is an opportunity to partner with other space-minded students and to learn and grow together. Our I-5 Squadron here really focuses and integrates on our training that we do for space exercises here at the Academy. And then finally, we have Blue Horizon. This is our rocketry club where cadets are actually building rockets and gaining that experience, and they get to compete. So, they compete in the NASA Student Launch Challenge, and they have designed a liquid-fueled rocket and have also are in progress of launching a rocket and actually landing the booster again. And so, these are incredible cadets that are— have that engineering drive and rigor, and they just do this as an extracurricular activity.

All right, next slide, please. For our Space Force selection, we 2-degree year all of our All of our cadets are going to put into their dream sheet. For Space Force, we do our service selection the same time that we do classification for Air Force. And so every year we graduate about 100 graduates, and in order to select who's going to be a guardian, we look at 3 different things. So we have their general order of merit, and then we have an interview. This is something different than any other of the career fields where once you say that you're interested in Space Force, we have an interview where they— It's HireVue. They're going to have 5 questions, provide answers to those, and then there's a board that's going to grade those. Finally, we give additional credit for if you are doing leadership with one of our space-focused clubs, as well as a Space Warfighting minor.

### **Dan Clark**

Next slide, please.

### **Col. Stephanie Silva**

And finally, this is a— has a lot of numbers on it, but this is to show you across the years of how we've graduated approximately 100 graduates per year. You'll see in 2025, that is the first year where they didn't actually get a Space Force specialty code. So, there's only 5 career fields in the

Space Force for officers. So, space operations, acquisitions, cyber, intel, and what'd I leave out? Engineering. Engineering. And so, with those 5, they originally were given those when they were given their classification, but now they go to the officer training course where they spend at Peterson for 1 year, and they will get that specific job after completing the officer training course. They will graduate as a multi-domain officer. and to have the foundations for all of those career fields. And so when they go and do their first assignment, they can pivot between those different career fields as they go forward. But the Space Force— or the Air Force Academy currently is the institution that commissions the most Space Force officers into the Space Force, and we are very proud of the officers that we are commissioning here. So, next slide.

And sir, I'll hand it back over to you.

**Superintendent Moga**

Okay, thanks to all of our briefers. I'll just note that as our senior leaders stepped through their presentations, what you heard was the word warrior or warfighter more than once from each and every one of them. That was not by accident. And that was not by coincidence. That was, that was by design. As I talked up front, we want to be synergized, we want to be complementary, and this was, this was, this was deliberate. So I want to say thanks to all the briefers. And Chairman Pflueger, do you want to open it up for questions or do we want to move on to what's next?

**Congressman Pfluger**

Yeah, I think let's do that. We'll see if any of the board members— we've almost caught back up on time, which is great, but we'll open it up for any questions from our board.

**Dan Clark**

Ma'am, uh, there's a Pine Valley portion of the Academy acreage that has not been utilized. And when President Trump mentioned that he wanted to create a space academy, is that a possibility that you would build that space academy in the Pine Valley area of the Air Force Academy?

**Col. Stephanie Silva**

Sir, we are waiting to hear what is the outcome of the commission and where they would like to place the space academy that has been discussed.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Dan, I'll jump in there.

**Dan Clark**

I was just going to give her another opportunity to answer.

**Congressman Pfluger**

There's probably a lot of discussions that will happen, congressionally speaking, about, about this subject.

**Larry Card**

Sorry.

**Speaker 16**

Yeah, I want to say thanks for lunch, but also thanks for lunch yesterday and the time with the cadets. So, as we were eating, I kind of looked at the wonderful grilled cheese and everything. I was like, you know, I counted about 7 grams of protein in the whole meal. So, as I was also talking with the swimmers that were at the table and the other athletes and They were talking about, yeah, but there's other additional food for the athletes. And then I was talking with Amy Kate about this, my amazing wife, and she says, aren't they all athletes here, all 4,000? So I was just wondering, are we properly feeding the cadets for the athletic rigor that they're engaging in and the academic rigor? Are we giving them the nutrition that they need?

**Superintendent Moga**

I think, Senator, the answer to that is yes. We are giving them the healthy foods. We're giving them the caloric requirements. We're giving them a time to eat. As you can imagine, routinely not every cadet enjoys the meal that they're served in Mitchell Hall. But I mean, there's dietitians there within our budget constraints with regards to how much money per day we are allocated for each cadet. I think that our dining facility does a really nice job in giving the cadets what they need. to refuel their bodies with food and liquid. I will hand it over, but they do have food available if they're on a team sport and they're in season provided by the athletic department or the AFAC. That's primarily because they don't necessarily have time to get back up to the dining facility. So, and I'll also turn it over to our Air Base Wing as well to just give you a quick overview of how much—how many allocated funds the dining facility has to refuel the cadets.

**Zach Miller**

Senator Gilwaite, I'm at the Air Base Wing.

**Commandant Tellez**

Each cadet gets 4,700 calories per day, and that's what they're fed.

**Zach Miller**

and their 3 meals. We get \$22.10 per day per cadet. There's also the overhead and the employees at Mitchell Hall that we have to pay.

**Superintendent Moga**

The athletes—

**Zach Miller**

and Ms. Block can talk to it— get additional, and they usually eat outside the facility in the evening for that 25%, and they get over 1,000 calories more based on sport. And there's some other funding that also goes with the football team and others when they travel. Any questions on the 4,700 calories or the allocation?

**Speaker 16**

Yeah, I counted 28 calories worth of protein in that meal. So I was, I just didn't know if that's going to help make the warfighters that we're looking for. I'm not looking at the total calorie content, 4,700. I would swell up and I wouldn't fit in this chair if I ate that much a day. But for them, it just seemed a little low on the protein side, protein being the most expensive of your nutrients.

**Jennifer Block**

Senator, may I add to, um, for, uh, we also have a thing called Falcon Fuel that we started probably about, uh, 12 years ago, and that is for all cadets, and it's in our fitness facilities, in our CFC, our Cadet Fitness Center, and in our major weight rooms. And we partner with the dietitians at Mitchell Hall, and we have 2 sports dietitians, and we've stocked that with protein-based, uh, food. Chocolate milk is one of the best ones for pre- and post-workouts, or Gatorades. There's also fresh fruit and then different protein bars. And we educate the cadets on, depending on if you're lifting or you're doing a cardio workout, that you should take one from this bin and one from this bin. And we do try to educate them. I will tell you, these young folks are very, very dialed in, much more so than probably— I don't want to insult you, but our age. Our generation on their

food and nutrition. But you were right, sir, we could always be better, and we're always partnering with Mitchell Hall and figuring out how do we help get the right protein to them, that lean-based micro— macronutrients to them.

But Mitchell Hall has been a great partner for us. But they do have that access when they're down. Every day they can get 2 things out of Falcon Fuel.

### **Dan Clark**

And for the record, as a football player, my cholesterol count was higher than my SAT scores, and I became an All-American.

### **Dr. Nancy Hickson**

Sir, I'd just like to add that we do spend quite a bit of time on donor dollars for our athletes that are in season, feeding them up to 3 times a week with additional supplementary meals coming and going. And we pay specific attention to that, that protein number and the balance there, depending upon the sport.

### **Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

Hey, Dr. Hickson and Ms. Block. Great to hear that intramural story. That was fantastic. So, uh, rumbled in the jungle on the comms lawn, huh? That's pretty cool. Hey, you know, there's, there's 4 levels. So you have intercollegiate, you have club, you have intramural, and then you have the academic classes. I, I mentioned all 3 of them, but the club sports was, was lacking. Um, as you know, I was a rugby national championship back in the day, and we get defeated now, unfortunately, by Navy and Army. So that's one area we can improve. But, um, besides money and resources, an easy win is on-season status. So I know the emphasis is on military training, but instead of sending these club athletes down to play intramurals and then having to catch the last 15 minutes of their club practice team, uh, how difficult it is to open up the on-season status for those sports?

### **Jennifer Block**

Hi, sir. Thank you for that. We actually have opened that up quite a bit, and we're working closely with CW. We think there's a little bit of an overcorrection, and we're trying to right-size that. Absolutely. We are big supporters, both— see, I think all 3 of us are— all 4 of us are huge supporters of competitive clubs and what that does. Competition is competition, and we want to see our cadets competing at the highest level whenever they can.

**Larry Card**

Thank you.

**Jennifer Block**

I mean, we're ensuring that they get that competition when they can, and we're working closely with that and trying to level that out and making sure that those really high competitive clubs have that opportunity to train and compete.

**Larry Card**

Mr. Craig.

**Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

General Valpiani, I had a question about a year ago. I asked about curriculum and U.S.

**Congressman Pfluger**

history and whether we were teaching U.S. history appropriately here. And one of the things that that still rings in my mind is that, like, and I can't remember exactly who it was, said, well, we rely on high schools to teach that as they come in.

**Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

And my response was, I don't think in America today you can rely on high schools to do that. I wanted to see your thoughts and if you could just address that and how we're teaching U.S. history. I think it's so important that folks who come into the Air Force Academy understand what the greatness of this country, what they're fighting for.

**Provost Valpiani**

Sir, I couldn't agree with you more. It is currently the case that we do not have a course on American history. As you highlighted, there's a long history to that particular course. It was removed several decades ago, I believe, and under the belief that the core civic education provided by high schools was sufficient. I don't share that perspective, and I agree with you that at least some recent studies that I've seen suggest that civic education is not nearly as good as it was when that decision was made some years ago. So, good news to report. We're in the middle of reformulating the core curriculum, as I alluded to earlier in my briefing, and the American history component will be making a comeback for our education here. And I think it's important to highlight

that the education that we want to provide, really, we want to provide the cadets with a long view. The Western civilization tradition from which our nation and specifically our Constitution comes from is one full of a number of remarkable successes and also failures. And they have much to teach us about what it takes to sustain a self-governing republic, as well as, you know, the fragility of our government, the responsibility in every generation that citizens must take up in order to sustain our form of government.

American history is a critical component to that. So incidentally is an understanding of political economy, understanding the economic order that we live under, as well as the competing systems that, you know, that are part of competitor nations' ways of life. So it's important that we understand those as well to appreciate the strengths as well as some of the weaknesses and potential pitfalls of the approach that we have to managing our resources. So broadly speaking, you know, my objective in the core curriculum is to prepare citizens Leaders, warfighters, and scholars, in that order. Preparation for citizenship, to be leaders of our nation, whether in or out of uniform, is our first academic responsibility. And so you will see American history play a prominent role going forward.

#### **Larry Card**

Senator Rosen, can I ask— I can't see the rest of the room right now very well. Can I ask a question?

#### **Congressman Pfluger**

Please go ahead. Thank you.

#### **Superintendent Moga**

Senator, ma'am, it's Colonel Moga. Thank you, that's a fantastic question and clearly very relevant to some recent changes that we have made both inside of the cadet wing and the academic wing, so the short answer is yes, we are addressing and getting after all the things you addressed. I do want to hand over to, I don't care who goes first, either the Provost or the Commandant, to give you some specific examples of what we have already done, what we are currently doing, and what we're planning on doing in the future.

#### **Provost Valpiani**

Thank you, sir. I'll jump on this first. General Valpiani, the Provost. So I share your conviction. My previous assignment at DARPA and prior to that in the test community, I have a, I think, a pretty intimate understanding of the technical requirements and the capabilities that we're procuring and

looking to procure for the future fight. The focus on this, the central portion of the core curriculum I described previously for STEM and superintelligence, is really designed to prepare our officers to think well about acquiring those kinds of systems, but not just designing and developing them, but also thinking about the automation and the artificial or superintelligence required to ensure that they're capable in a future fight in which automation is ubiquitous. So we are building out, we've already built out a multi-domain laboratory, which is a wargaming environment that allows our cadets to explore strategic, tactical, and operational concepts in a hands-on way. We are in the process of working with some of the leading designers in software development, including Fortnite game developers, to supercharge that wargaming environment so that our cadets have the experience of operating alongside drones, whether CCAs or drone swarms, and in the medium term, developing sandboxes so that the cadets can design their own artificial intelligence agents to run those capabilities in a wargaming environment to see how they perform, where their strengths and weaknesses are.

This really capitalizes on work that the Air Force is doing more broadly alongside DARPA to develop agentic solutions for air and space platforms, which I have some connection to. So we are orienting our education very strongly towards preparing our cadets to understand the strengths as well as the potential pitfalls of employing superintelligence in a combat environment. Just as a sort of footnote to this, we are this summer offering a course for cadets across all disciplines to take drones and build them from basic components all the way to fully functioning drones, and then to develop the superintelligence capabilities to navigate, including in a GPS-denied environment. I think we already— we've just started advertising about a week ago for this class or 2, and there's already 40 cadets who have signed up to give up a summer period to participate. And assuming that's a successful class, I think it will be, that will become one of a number of courses oriented towards preparing our cadets for the drone-enabled and automated fight Thank you.

### **Commandant Tellez**

Ma'am, this is your commandant, and while I'll probably have to speak just a little more slowly and use smaller words than our provost, I will acknowledge I am very clear-eyed about the path we're on as it pertains to warfighting, and it is certainly all of our job here to ensure that the context and the environmental knowledge is absolutely baked into every experience that these cadets have, and and mindful that we, we don't have the resources we might need to replicate those environments. We certainly have opportunities to spark interest and to feed those conversations through the programs that the provost just acknowledged as one example, but also getting them out more directly and coherently into the operational forces to, to see exactly what is happening outside of this place. And again, partnering with places like Nellis and Creech, it's a dream sheet. So I look forward to working with you on some of that Well, but I'll finally just acknowledge, back

to the point on the offsites next week and next month, that these types of questions are specifically what we're targeting, is what are the things that we're not yet doing, but also acknowledging that while those things might be essential, there might be other needs that we have here from a basic 100-level.

What are the experiences we need to give to our cadets in this place at this time? so that they have the foundational warrior ethos, the character, the leadership skills to go into the operational fleets and actually be productive as we get into more specific weapon system development and education. So there's a bit of a partnership there, but look forward to getting back with you with our ideas. Thank you, ma'am.

**Larry Card**

Thank you.

**Congressman Pfluger**

We will have time for additional questions after a couple of other briefers. Dr. Rempla, back to you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Yes, sir. Sir, we now welcome Honorable Borders, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy, Installation, and Environment, for his remarks.

**Michael Borders**

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is my 10th month in the job and my 3rd trip out to the Academy, and just to be completely blunt, the reason why is the chapel. I will be out here quarterly and continue to come out here quarterly. In order to hold the contractor accountable and responsible to meet timelines and budget. The first thing that I was briefed on, the first topic I took any type of information or guidance on before confirmation and during confirmation prep was the chapel. So for me, it's the chapel, the chapel, the chapel. The fabric of the chapel will be off in May. You will see the superstructure of the ETF that's there currently, but you will also see the chapel. It will be seen for graduation. Colonel Cooper will discuss this a little bit more in depth, but I will see you next quarter and we will talk about the chapel. I also bring thee a warning. The concern I have is SAFIE for the Academy, for its infrastructure, is great and growing. We have a plan to fix it. You've heard of USAFA 2050, and it is a great plan that's been coordinated with General Moga's team and SAFIE, and it's, it's ready to go.

It just needs the funding. And the reason why it needs the funding is because of decades of critical underinvestment into the plant replacement value of the academy. Industry standard is usually 4%. The academy has hovered somewhere right at 0.5%, which is why you have some of the issues that you have today. So I would like to thank Congressman Pflueger, Representative Crank, for their transformative legislation, for their access that we have to them to discuss this, and giving the academy a protection, a top line of funding, which for whatever reason may have happened at other academies but has never happened here. The reason why that's important is because a couple months ago, before the end of the FY, we almost lost funding for the Cy John Hall renovation. It was within days, hours. And I would also like to assure you, you have no larger, no bigger, no greater friend advocate for the Academy in the Pentagon than Honorable Lohmeier. Through his efforts, we were able to get this back on track and save the funding for phasing and make sure that it continued without the waterfall that was going to happen should we lose that funding.

But that's why you need this protection, 'cause without it, this competes with everything else in the Air Force, everything, the runway at Barksdale, the critical mission systems at Offutt, Everything gets ranked, gets rated, and unfortunately the terrazzo would not rank very high, if you understand what I'm saying. Without the key legislation and funding of USAFA 2050, the BCI, the Building Condition Index for the academy where cadets live, and learn will continue to fall. You will not have any ability for any type of growth remodeling. That won't happen. You'll go from 80 BCI to 70 BCI to 60 BCI, and what those represent is failings inside of that infrastructure, whether you're talking about heat, whether you're talking about water, whether you're talking about mold, Those BCIs will continue to fall without the funding and acceptance of USFA 2050. My bumper sticker for the importance of it is the terrazzo never gets fixed without USFA 2050, period. It's not going to happen. Ms. Balkis will talk a little bit more in detail about it. Again, we have a very Detailed plan, and I'll assure you there is no gold plating in that plan. That is the deferment of over \$4.2 billion of required projects that have been needed to maintain the academy at the level that it is and where it needs to go.

We have the plan. We, we can do this. It can be an excellent plan, but we need the funding. And I will continue to foot stomp that just as I foot stomp the chapel, the chapel, the chapel. In addition, as part of USFA 2050, I want to make sure that we're, we're a direct review of our gift receiving process and also our enhanced use leases. And the intent of that is to give the Superintendent General Moga the resources and levers he needs to spend money where he, as the superintendent, feels money is needed to be spent. And through EULs and really the gift receiving process, that was— that is mechanisms that will give him the levers to do that. It's an expedited review. We'll see where it goes. But I think what we've done inside the Pentagon Through the actions of Honorable Anderson, his team, Ms. Balkis and her team, Mr. Saunders, is really take

a holistic look at how to fix the academy, how to bring it back up to where it needs to be from an infrastructure perspective. It's not lost on us how important this is and how far behind we are.

But I would also like to assure you, oddly enough, when we sit around the table and talk about it, There happens to be 7, 8 Academy graduates that are all very passionate and that are all very willing to work this until it's complete. With that, I thank you for the invitation. I appreciate it. I hope to be back at future ones with my good friend, Honorable Anderson. But again, I'll see you next quarter to talk about the chapel.

**Larry Card**

Thank you.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Thank you, Dr. Rimple. If I, if I can just— I inadvertently skipped over Mr. Hertelling on a question and want to yield to you before we go to the next proof. Thank you, Chairman Pflueger. I'll make this quick, but I think it's worth circling back on something that Miss Block brought up about this class having the highest physical fitness performance in, I think, the last decade and all that.

**Shane Kramer**

So the first part of my question is for either you or Dr.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Hickson, and then the second part is for Is for General Valparaiso.

**Larry Card**

The—

**Shane Kramer**

this class, as you know, was the first class admitted under the president's merit-based directives.

**Congressman Pfluger**

And to me, it's no coincidence that that would translate into physical fitness excellence as well. And I'm wondering if you agree with that assessment. And then as a follow-up, Dr.

**Shane Kramer**

Valparaiso, I know it's early in the academic year, but are there any metrics that you can point to that this freshman class is performing academically?

**Jennifer Block**

Sir, thank you for the question. I will say that what we look at for incoming candidates is the CFA, the Cadet Fitness Assessment, and for this class and the last couple classes, the CFA has been about the same. It hasn't— it wasn't any higher, so it really was, I believe, sir, it was the extra time that the commandant gave us and the extra time and training to help get them into shape and proper training to help that really produce those higher scores?

**Provost Valpiani**

Sir, thank you for your question. It is, as you mentioned, a little early to assess the performance of the newest class. We just passed midterms and the grades are rolling in. We will be able to provide a more robust update at the end of the semester. I'll mention at the same time, there are probably a number of confounding factors we're focused on. Academic excellence and standards across the board, including some IT policies to minimize distraction within the classroom and looking at grade inflation and other issues. So it may in the end be a little bit difficult to identify unless it's a really strong signal, the differences from last year to this year. One signal that tends to be fairly robust and stable will be the cadets who are placed on probation academically. And so that might be an easy measure for us to provide an update on at the next BOV.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Sir, we now turn over to Ms. Balkus, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Energy Installation and Environment, to give us an update on USAFA 2050 Task Force.

**Nancy Balkus**

Thank you very much, Chairman Pflueger and the representatives of the board. It's really an honor to be here. This is my first time attending a BOV meeting. So I really appreciate the opportunity to be here. I am a class of '88 graduate, so it's very exciting to be back in a very different capacity. I also happen to be one of the newest AFAC board members that I just was inducted with my classmate Chad Hennings. So it's really an opportunity to see everything across many different venues in our United States Air Force Academy. So the 2050 plan really is intended to be all-encompassing and You all have put me in significant roles to be able to make a difference. And so it's really exciting for me to be able to be a demonstration of how you can serve outside of the

uniform and still be able to give back to the Department of the Air Force as a government civilian. Okay, so let's go to the next slide, please. The Secretary took the 2050 plan that your Air Force Academy developed, and he wrote a memo on the 27th of April to officially create a task force.

So it's not just the 2050 plan, but there's now a task force that is across the entire enterprise working with the Air Force Academy leadership team. And it's to cover not only modernization of the facilities and the energy, but also to create a sustainment plan for it, the funding plan. Honorable Borders is designated as the senior program executive. You can see the membership listed here that is across not only all of the Air Force Academy components, but also inside the Pentagon, to be able to ensure that you have top-level coverage to be able to make the task force a reality and bring to bear all of the resources that are needed. And the battle rhythm you see on this chart just shows that the charter was established. This is a fast-moving task force. That was to identify clear roles and responsibilities for the Secretary's Task Force. We have to provide in-progress reviews quarterly, and we are aligning those requirements that are in the 2050 Plan with the funding that is made available, including requesting additional funding, and then the legislative authority that the Congress has identified pathways for. I'll say a little bit more about that later.

And then furthermore, the most important perhaps is how to implement 2050 and using all of the authorities that are available so that it is not all appropriated funding is the only way to get after our United States Air Force Academy. So next slide, please. I want to just do a quick refresh because I know there are a couple of new members on the board. So what is USAFA 2050? So briefly, you've already heard this, from General Moga's team. There's the military training aspect on the top left, making sure that our leaders are ready for the challenges for tomorrow. This includes, from a facilities and energy perspective, everything including Vandenberg and Cyjon, where the cadets live, more than 4,000 bed spaces that are required, Mitchell Hall that is necessary to be able to feed the cadet wing, which we've already talked about today, in less than 30 minutes at each of those meal times. And then Jacks Valley, that was already also mentioned about being able to do training there. That's 3,300 acres that's used year-round. So that's military training, but it's facilities and land access that's needed for the academic training environment. It is the Air Force's only 4-year research institution.

So we have to make sure that we give General Valpiani every everything that he needs to make the academic wing successful, the accreditation requirements that go with that, which includes, I know, a board interest item of the Higher Learning Commission and possibly considering the Commission for Public Higher Education, that transition for accreditation. From a facilities and an energy perspective, there's a lot that we could talk about here, but Fairchild Hall is one of the initial academic buildings that is still standing and still in every day from when the Academy initially opened, but all of the laboratories and the lecture halls that are required to deliver the academics

are also crumbling at the same rate of everything else. And then from the athletics perspective, the athletic department makes do with providing all of what we've already heard, the amazing updates that we heard from Dr. Hickson and from Ms. Block to deliver NCAA Division I level athletics as well as all of the intramural sports as well as the club activities and the facilities that are required to do that. And it is a different type of facility to provide a football practice than a basketball, basketball team practice than it is for a hockey practice.

And so recognizing those facility differences, the temperature differences in them, the energy, etc. So the problem on the top right that I want to address is the Academy was built between 1955 and 1967. And so we are 15 years past the 50-year lifespan that your United States Air Force Academy was designed for. So it's this combination of the age, the chronic underinvestment that Honorable Borders mentioned, and the increasing frequency of utility infrastructure failures, flooding in our major buildings that have negatively impacted being able to deliver the Academy's mission. And this is eroding our competitive edge for one of our lead commissioning sources. There's over \$4.2 billion in deferred projects. Honorable Borders mentioned that. \$635 million of instantaneously needed sustainment projects that are overdue. And the Air Force Academy currently is only receiving \$40 million a year. So that is woefully inadequate. This is that competition for resources issue that Honorable board has mentioned. Bottom left, the fix for this, there's a 3-tiered approach over multiple 5-year defense programs. So we're talking about 15 years to try to get us back to where we need to be. And the first would be critical readiness. These are immediate repairs that are needed today to prevent mission failure.

The extraordinary lengths that this Department is having to address under General Moga's leadership to continue the mission 24/7, 365 in facilities that are failing does not meet the standard that I know this board wishes that we could. So how do we address that? We need an increase to the base maintenance contract that would increase those FSRM investments above of that \$40 million a year investment.

#### **Dr. Susan Morrow**

Thank you.

#### **Nancy Balkus**

And second, to repair that failed infrastructure, which we categorize as critical because it has life, health, or safety issues associated with it. That's why it's called critical. The second line of effort is called essential sustainment. This is where we need near-term repairs. This cannot wait for 2 years or 5 years down the road. We have to be able to preserve that mission capacity. We need to prioritize those operational and educational platforms so that we can deliver the capabilities

that our warfighters need. And these are quality of service repairs that are essential to delivering that mission. And the third line of effort is also modernization. These are transformational supremacy requirements for our future warfighter. 2 examples of this would be a multi-domain warfare training center to be able to let all of the wing elements from the cadet wing to the academic wing to the athletic wing to bring together all of the elements warfare together in a multi-domain warfare training center. And secondarily, an integrated space and engineering center that brings together, as General Valpiani so eloquently described, all of the engineering disciplines that cadets are taught to be able to make them better warfighters.

So that's the fix. That's what it looks like. The vision is to make sure that your United States Air Force Academy is able to maintain a competitive edge and our status as America's premier service academy. They are doing amazing things with the facilities that they're working with today. So the bumper sticker is what I really want to bring your attention to. It is a \$4.3 billion program, 107 projects over 15 years. We're not going to get there at \$40 million a year. Next slide, please. So that was the USTAF 2050 plan. I told you that the Secretary created a task force. So see, these are some of the open action items that we owe to Secretary Mink. We are currently evaluating courses of action about how to create both the modernization and the sustainment concept. These are in progress. Number one, we're going to refine what modernization means. And 2, we're developing what a sustainment concept looks like to be in lockstep with the Board of Visitors as well as the U.S. Congress on—who have been extremely proactive on both the HASC and the SASC, who have already drafted the legislation in the FY27 NDAA.

The House has already passed it. We are waiting for the Senate to pass the NDAA after— while we're in this continuing resolution period. And then the follow-on is we need your assistance, BOV members, to reach across to the appropriators from the SACD, the HACD, as well as the SACM and the HACM. So both the defense appropriations for that FSRM and the MilCon appropriations to be able to make 2050 a reality. 2 of the, 2 of the 8 key provisions that Representative Pflueger mentioned are listed on the slide that show those 2 capabilities the first being the designation of or establishment of dedicated funding line for USAFA. I just want to be clear that the incredible capabilities of the House Armed Services Committee to create that legislative authority is the first, most essential step, but it doesn't mean anything until we have the second step of the appropriations to go behind it that are then to give the authority and the money to go together. So we owe to the Secretary in turn to deliver to the House Armed Services Committee by December of this year, how we would make that a reality, what the request would be.

The second provision is what was also mentioned earlier today, the public-private investment relationship. And this is applied to all 3 military service academies to be able to allow the private entities like the foundation and the Air Force Athletic Corporation board to be able to implement

on behalf of the Academy faster and less expensively than we can do through government resources alone. So at the bottom of this slide, I have 2 things that are listed from repetitive senior leader visits, including Board of Visitors visits, as well as Department of the Air Force and Department of War senior leader visits. All combined have identified a need for a unified prioritization approach of what Tell us what your requirements are and give them to us and then break them out by fiscal year. We also need to lump them into funding pots. Which do you need? Is it repair funding for existing? Is it military construction for new facilities? Or is it a partnership with a private entity to be able to do an enhanced use lease on land as a part of the Air Force Academy, like the tremendous success story of the Polaris Hotel and the Homer Visitor Center, which was an enhanced use lease that was built by private industry through their investment.

The second piece was to make sure that unfunded manpower requirements— you can't add \$4.2 billion over 15 years into this installation, this institution, without adding manpower both organic manpower for the cadet wing and the airbase wing that supports it, and then also put people that are going to focus just on how to do that facility and energy investment. So that's an unfunded manpower requirement that all of these need to be aggregated together. Next slide, which is my last slide. Having in the funding request clearly articulated and then being able to implement it have to go hand in hand. So coordinating the implementation strategy, what I have listed here are the fact that if we get a dedicated owner's agent, what does that mean? An owner's agent is somebody that can act on behalf of the Air Force Academy with the vision of General Moga and his team to act on their behalf from private industry with private industry perspective and speed. that can then implement this program on behalf of the U.S. Air Force Academy. And then these are the types of authorities that can be utilized. I mentioned at the beginning, we don't have to get appropriated funds to be able to do this alone.

We need appropriated funds, don't let— don't get me wrong, but that can't be the only solution. So the top one is the example of how the Polaris Hotel and Hosmer Visitor Center were done with an enhanced use lease of authority, being able to— the second provision allows the Secretary to work with the Academy Corporation. The third provision is a new one. Thank you again to Representative Pflueger and his colleagues who gave us in FY26 NDAA other transaction authority agreements, which allows us to do other processes outside of the Federal Acquisition Regulations, and we are already proving successful in doing things faster and more cost-effectively. We have several examples of being able to do things 70% faster and 20% cheaper by doing it as an Other Transaction Agreement instead of as a Federal Acquisition Regulation project. The third is again the language that the HASC has already drafted and we're waiting to be passed in the FY27 NDAA and then strategic real estate opportunities are again the 33,000 acres, if I may not have that number right, the acreage on the Air Force Academy that could be potentially utilized by a private corporation to be able to create new capabilities for the institution

as a way to bring in private capital invested into the Academy so it's not appropriated funding and the in-kind consideration that we get back from doing that are capabilities that are for the Air Force Academy to utilize.

So the combination of appropriated funding, private investment, and these authorities is what your 2050 Task Force is trying to bring together into a comprehensive 2050 plan. So thank you for the opportunity to present to you a bigger picture of what the 2050 plan is and how to make it a reality.

### **Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Sir, Colonel Cooper is here to provide some updates on the Usafa Chapel project.

### **Col. Brian Cooper**

Thank you, and I want to thank Honorable Borders for mentioning the chapel at least once in his opening remarks. I'm Colonel Brian Cooper. I am the project manager, the director of the PMO office here that's responsible for the chapel renovation project. So on behalf of Major General Sherman with the Air Force Installation Mission Support Center, Brigadier General Connie Young with the Installation Center, and then Mr. Miller with the Civil Engineer Center. I'll gladly give you your update on the chapel. So approximately this time last year, maybe a little bit sooner, shortly after your last in-person Board of Visitor engagement here on site, I was presented the opportunity to come and join this team and And bring the chapel across the finish line. It was last October that Honorable Lohmeier met here on site with our contractor executive officers, and we had a discussion, and that discussion was, how do we return the chapel back quicker to the cadets, to the community, to the alumni? And so we marched forward from that point with a plan. We called it Acceleration, and that's now kind of the new norm. So out of that meeting, we entered into some negotiations.

We did a contract modification to then increase the manpower, increase the staffing, change the timing. And today we have that top line of What at the time would have been a May '29 opening, we've accelerated to an April '28 beneficial occupancy, which means that's the time that the chaplain staff can come in and start getting the chapel ready for services, to an August contract completion date. So 2028 is our new target milestones with our accelerated approach. It's kind of an exciting time right now. I just toured Honorable Lohmeier earlier this morning inside the structure. There's a lot of activity going on as part of our acceleration. I know it's difficult to see that, that white structure, that box, is— it's a double-edged sword. So it allows us to work longer, harder, faster. In good environmental conditions, but it also doesn't share much with the general population. It leaves a lot to the imagination. And so one of our other efforts out of that last October meeting was to be more transparent with all the activities going on inside the structure. So

currently, the east and west walls, that proud aluminum structure that everyone is sees in every photo, every Google search that you look.

Those are effectively sealed and watertight. We're just doing some final non-destructive, destructive testing of some sealant and some final water testing. But the structure is there. The new water barrier system is installed and in place. The thing that we're waiting on for the exterior envelope is the north and south curtain walls, those famous glass walls that as you enter the steps. Those have not been installed yet, so that's the next milestone that we'll be hitting. The south curtain wall will start there. That'll begin in early December timeframe. With the interior, once we got the The east and west walls complete, we're at full force on the inside of the building. The, at the, the lower level, the Catholic level, there's minimal activities there just because that was a dry space. So the only work that we're doing in that space was some alarm upgrades for fire protection and then audiovisual upgrades and then the Catholic organ and pews. The organ has been restored and is put back in place. The pews are currently being restored right now in Wisconsin. They should be done by the end of this calendar year. And then at the Protestant level, we have about 2/3 of the infamous dalle de verre, or stained glass colored blocks, installed in the building.

And with that, we're allowed to move forward on Interior trim pieces, interior framing, and then plaster installation as well. So all of that is ongoing inside the chapel right now at various stages. And then offsite, we are still producing the curtain glass walls. About half of the south curtain wall is already produced, sitting on a truck waiting to be delivered. And then the rest of the south and then north curtain wall will be just right in line right now in the manufacturing stages. And then, like I mentioned, the Catholic pews are still in restoration mode as well. The Protestant pews have been fully restored. We just can't install any of the pews until the structure is down. The other highlight that I guess I overlooked on the top bullet there that Honorable Borrás mentioned was we are targeting the fabric of the white structure to be down Ahead of the, the class of 2027 graduation. So you'll— everyone will be able to see it from Interstate I-25 and closer. So, uh, as part of the transparency campaign, we've been doing a lot of things. There is a QR code on that web— or on that PowerPoint slide.

It will take you to our public-facing website. We do update that monthly with different stories and updates of our, our progress. And we're also kind of hitting the social media networks as well. So we'll have biweekly posts on Facebook that just highlight some of the different milestones. We're also targeting some of our alumni audience through LinkedIn channels with different stories. There's a— the display was restored in the Hosmer Visitor Center of the 3D model of the chapel. There's also a poster board with links to the website there as well. Locally, we have— you can see the new mesh banner installed on the east face of the wall to help inspire and get folks excited

about the grand opening. And the unveiling, and we'll see that coming soon. And we also have along the construction fences some of our milestone banners. Just, there's so many intricate stories associated with this construction renovation project that it's tough to tell and understand. And so we're trying to get that word out there through our different media outlets. And then just last week, we recorded a podcast that should be aired by the end of the month that kind of tells the story of the chapel's history, why we had to go to the length that we're doing right now for this renovation project, and then the current construction updates as well.

So all that will also be coming to channels really, really soon. And I think that's the extent of my updates on The chapel. I'll stand by for any questions.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Mr. Nikolai.

**Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

Yeah, so I get a lot of, uh, texts and emails about a lot of things at the academy. As you can imagine, the number one is chapel, chapel, chapel. As you can see, our public comments for the meeting, we have 14, and 8 of them are about the chapel. So, uh, on our questions for the record, We submitted an idea to open up the— a phased opening of the chapel, possibly open up the lower portion maybe 6 months early in time for the Christmas season. We got your response. It said it was, uh, too risky. We might put in jeopardy the beneficial occupancy of April 28th. So we understand that, and, uh, thank you for looking at that. Uh, other things, the, um, I guess the scrim you call it on the, uh, White box. Good idea, but it would be nice to do about 6 years earlier. Okay, so I get a lot of that, and it's not all positive. I'll just leave it at that. Okay, the other one is the podcast. I think that's a great idea. I would encourage you, before you post that, get with the USAFA chaplain staff, Colonel Servance, and interweave the spiritual story.

of the Air Force Academy in with that chapel video, I think could be a lot more impactful. And I think a lot of people are interested in that. And finally, your last effort was potential twilight— would you put activities if donor funds become available? Can you expand on that? What are potential twilight opportunities?

**Col. Brian Cooper**

So we were exploring different chapel experiences The chapel is kind of not available to everyone. And so one of those options was a projection system for nighttime display onto the structure. So almost think of it like a drive-in movie theater where you could display any sort of content that

you'd like. So that was something that we were exploring. We landed on the mesh banner that you see today for at least the daytime solution.

**Richard Anderson**

Right.

**Col. Brian Cooper**

The night— the twilight experience was a little bit less appetizing, I think, for the duration and costs associated with that. So again, that would be pending donor funds, but the window is as quickly dwindling as we would all like. Yes, sir.

**Nancy Balkus**

Brian, can you describe the planetarium experience, please?

**Col. Brian Cooper**

Yes, ma'am. So An initial idea or concept to help get the word out there is our IMSC PA team, our public affairs team, did put together a 6-minute video that I know General Moga has shared with various audiences, and it's also available in the planetarium. It just, again, highlights that spiritual component of the Cadet Chapel, what it means to so many different people. And then one of the other chapel experiences that we were considering through donor funds again would be to look at a more professional, longer duration production with respect to the chapel and its spiritual nature, and then also look to potentially upgrade equipment if necessary.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Any other questions for or about the chapel for either? Okay, thank you.

**Lucas Tobler**

Yes, sir.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Very much. And I know we're pushing through, uh, we've got just a few sections, uh, left if we can keep, keep moving. Uh, well, Dr. Rimple, over to you. Good morning, board members.

**Col. Brian Cooper**

Uh, we have 2 open action items.

**Col. Stephanie Silva**

If I can get to the next slide, please.

**Provost Valpiani**

The first is the military professor copyrights.

**Speaker 22**

This is to explore options for securing copyrights for military professors.

**Provost Valpiani**

The second is USAFA 2050, which is the infrastructure plan to modernize, maintain, and replace academy facilities. It should be noted the second action item was created during the July 26th board meeting and emerged the Space Education Center and the update on BOSI USAFA action items. Standing by for any decisions or actions for the action items.

**Larry Card**

Thank you.

**Congressman Pfluger**

I'll ask a question on the first one. Is this something that needs a legislative fix, or can the Department of War, Department of the Air Force solve this?

**Provost Valpiani**

Sir, if it's all right with you, I'm going to phone a friend. You're JAG.

**Public Comment**

Sir, Colonel Nathan Mainstein, JAG, here at USAAF.

**Provost Valpiani**

This would be something that requires statutory authority in order to enact.

**Congressman Pfluger**

I think we— I think the Board would be well served to work alongside the Provost and your team and alongside General Counsel to understand what that verbiage would be. And appreciate Representative Bacon's efforts on the civilian instructor side. And then from a board standpoint, you know, I think adding a champion to this would really help us understand who is going to be the legislative champion.

**Superintendent Moga**

Yeah, that's a good question.

**Dan Clark**

Yeah. Mr. Jag.

**Dr. Nancy Hickson**

Sir.

**Dan Clark**

So is part of the Hiccup predicated on the financial gain if you own your own IP and if you separated those 2. As an author, owning your own copyright and IP would be the most important thing you could do for these professors. If there's some way you could just modify what criterion you're using, because if there's a financial gain, obviously we understand that, but it doesn't make sense at all if you don't give them their own IP.

**Superintendent Moga**

That's right, sir. There's several layers for this to be able to legally do it.

**Provost Valpiani**

One of that is exactly what you just articulated. So you need statutory authority.

**Superintendent Moga**

similar to the civilians. And then for the military members, you also have to address the joint ethics reg requirements.

**Congressman Pfluger**

So I'm in pipe bends. Don Bacon here, calling from Omaha. We did get success getting this out of the House side. We did get some champions on the Senate side. I think we did get this done, but we have traditionally been— some staff members opposed this. I think we got some of our senators We have some excellent senators on the board. What I would propose on the second one to our board members is this. I think the brief that we received today was really good, and what I would recommend for us is that we dig just a little bit deeper and we maybe assign some different tasks. We know one, one of the legislative areas to help with USFA 2050 is already in works. It's passed the House. And, you know, what are the other items that will help us with that? So I think what I would propose to the board members is that we spend the next couple of weeks as we are drafting our next report and getting ready for that, you know, release in the next meeting is that we talk about in the December virtual meeting what those steps are and that we advocate in the NDAA buildup for passage of whatever needs to happen on this.

So I'll look at Dave Nugent as as the keeper of this one, and that we keep both of these open and add a little bit of fidelity to them. And I'll open it up for any discussion. Okay, I don't know if we need a motion to keep these open. Thank you.

**Larry Card**

Great.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Dr. Rimpler, over to you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Okay, sir, we turn over to the, uh, the portion where we have the public comments. Uh, the board received 14 comments, um, that were submitted from the public. And these are categorized according to different topics. I will call on individual members that have submitted their public comments to speak to the board through the microphone closest to your area. You will have 2 minutes to provide this comment, and please note that you are not permitted to address or pose a question to the board, so please maximize your time.

**Congressman Pfluger**

And, and Dr. Rimple, if I can, I was bragging about being ahead of schedule. We're no longer there. So please keep it to 2 minutes. Um, I'm begging that because, uh, I am certain that the

superintendent and his team have additional meetings scheduled, uh, and are probably already late for those.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

First topic is on infrastructure. I call on Mr. Lucas Tobler to provide his comments.

**Lucas Tobler**

Thank you, board, for, um, giving me an opportunity. Um, I would like to raise a concern I have as a civilian. I'm a Swiss-born father, I have 5 kids. I raised my family here in Colorado. My 15-year-old boy already soloed a glider, and he dreams of attending the Academy. And, well, ultimately, he wants to fly the F-22. But I deeply value the Academy's emphasis on character. To me, character is everything. My concern, though, is I don't see spirituality or faith as a visible priority. I mean, to the public, the chapel was covered for years. Chapel, chapel, we heard it. But also on the Academy's character development page, I couldn't find anything encouraging. faith-related. And my concern is, without a transcendent foundation, how does the academy keep moral standards from becoming subjective? Because I want my boy to go into an institution, and I love America. I'm about to become a citizen, and— I wanna know what he potentially has to fight for.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Thank you, sir.

**Larry Card**

That's it.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

We now call on Mr. Dennis Miller for his comments.

**Dennis Miller**

Thank you very much for this, board, and, and I'm the proud father of a graduate from the academy. So, and that's Zach Miller, and you'll hear from him too. But my concern is similar to Lucas's. It really does matter the chapel is here. And it is sad 'cause I was fortunate enough to marry my son as an official there. And the spiritual component of the chapel, which, We talk about character, you talk about morale.

**Larry Card**

Mm-hmm.

**Dennis Miller**

But when, if there isn't, and obviously there is some sentiment, there's a real concern. When I see that it's, you know, that's the budget now is \$400 million on the renovation of that building, there seems to be a problem. And I think that's a big problem in our country. Culture and our government to overspend. And it really is covering up the spirituality because I think if we don't keep our priorities, you know, if we don't have spiritual focus, if we don't really have character, if character is just how strong you are, there's got to be some reasons. So spiritual things like family, And, and, you know, I, the leadership that's here, it's really gonna be lacking if you don't continue to make it a priority. And so I just, just, that's my concern. And I know there's other people that have that. Thank you very much for your time.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you, sir. I now call on Zachary Edwards for his comments.

**Zachary Edwards**

Thank you so much for inviting me to speak today. I just want to say my name is, my name is Zach Edwards, as already stated. And my question is— my comment, I'm sorry. As an individual who once eyed the United States Air Force Academy as a prospective goal, and having spoken with many friends who have once attended this academy, I've discovered that a major part of this institution is missing.

**Provost Valpiani**

Excuse me.

**Zachary Edwards**

Not only a pivotal part, but a deeply desired piece of the educational foundation to the cadet. The United States Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel is an essential piece of the formation of a cadet that has been shrouded and closed. And how can we, as a as a civilian population and as the

leadership, how can we partner to reopen and also add this experience of beauty and the structure of the chapel to the cadet? And on another note, the United—the USAFA 50-year plan, I noticed that there's \$4.2 billion allocated for this, for the upkeep of the United States Air Force Academy, which is an institution of this nation. How can we ensure that the \$4.2 billion is managed correctly in light of how the chapel has been managed thus far? So thank you.

**Shane Kramer**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you. I now call on Mr. Zach Miller for his comments.

**Zach Miller**

Good afternoon, Representative Pflueger, General Moga, and the entire USAFA Board of Visitors and USAFA leadership team and all the Department of the Air Force. My name is Zach Sampson Miller, class of 2004 graduate. I have you, Safa, and I thank you for taking the time to listen and consider the comments of the general public. I think it means so much that we still have a voice in this country. You've heard my own words the last 2 BOV meetings, so this time I want to give you the voice, and I want to give voice to a cadet. These are the words of C1C Bruno Graziano, Class of 2027 from New Jersey, and I have his permission to share these. My generation needs this. I mean my entire generation. The state of the chapel is like the state of America right now, not only as a symbol of USafa that extends beyond USafa, but because the cadets are the leaders of this generation and the spiritual is a cardinal aspect of cadet life. It's usually the number one. Cadet spirituality is highly active, but it is dispersed right now into various rooms built for everyday things. Does the chapel not establish the spirituality?

Does it not turn the heart of someone who simply looks at it? Allocating as top priority, or as priority for the chapel, become the chapel again, would reroute the everyday life and commission of us thousands who carry what we are fed here at USFA to our assignments and the rest of our lives. Therefore, I want to commend the Board of Visitors for the amazing strides we have gained through the established completion date of the chapel. As evidenced by the updated project sign, it's there. It has a date. It has an amount. However, the past 7 years of history—and this is part of American history—dictate that we cannot just hope that this great endeavor will be kept in that timeline and within that budget. Many promises have been made and few kept. Accountability must be established.

**Col. Brian Cooper**

Thank you.

**Zach Miller**

for that accountability. Building on that, therefore, I request that the Board of Visitors send Secretary of War Pete Hegseth a letter requesting the establishment of a commission of accountability for the completion of the cadet chapel with authority to engage with the contractors, contracting officer, USAAF leadership, SAFIE, and other partners to ensure timely, on-budget success. I do recognize that an establishment of a commission is not within the authority of this board, so therefore you would have to appeal to authority But my question is, can you ask for that? I volunteer to write this letter. I volunteer to lead this commission for the sake of my country. I will not rest until this cadet wing can once again worship together in unity within this beautiful, majestic chapel. This will launch the morale of the cadet wing to new heights.

**Zachary Edwards**

Thank you.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you, sir. Can we call on Joshua Smith for the comments, sir?

**Public Comment**

Thank you for having us here today, and, uh, thank you to the board for addressing all of the, uh, problems with the chapel. I just want to say how important it is to me as a younger man to have Christ in and around the places we learn. I went through Christian school for K through 12, and it was a very important and central Having Christ there was very important to me. I would just like to see the class here to have a similar experience, or at least a place they can do that.

**Zachary Edwards**

Thank you.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you. We call on Louis Wolf for his comments.

**Public Comment**

Good afternoon. Excuse me. Good afternoon, members of the USFA Board of Visitors, USFA leadership team. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments. It's been very informational for us to be here today. And my name is Louis Wolf. I am a member of the Colorado Springs community. I'm a proud supporter of our military and love having multiple bases and a large active veteran community and active duty community here within our community, as well as the Air Force Academy, the most visible part of the military here in our community. I visited the chapel with my family on September 1st, 2019, the last Sunday that the chapel was open. And that was over 7 years ago. Now, 3, 3 classes have come and gone from the Academy without the opportunity to visit the chapel. I'm concerned that the missing chapel reflects a lack of priority for the spiritual formation of our cadets and spiritual development of our young people. As context, one of the stated goals of communism is to eliminate all good sculpture from parks and buildings. Substitute shapeless, awkward, and meaningless forms. And while not— while surely not intended, that is exactly what has happened with the chapel.

The beautiful chapel symbolically pointing cadets towards God has been replaced with an ugly and meaningless cube. I'd like to acknowledge the Department of the Air Force commitment to finishing the renovation project, and further, as an engineer, Acknowledge the technical difficulties and the challenge of the degree of asbestos abatement and the challenge of watertight sealing such a complicated geometric structure. But as a business leader who manages teams of engineers, the delays and cost overruns for a project like this are unacceptable. Often projects struggle because of a lack of leadership priority or a lack of communicated priority. And so I would encourage the leadership to continue to make that a visible priority for the project teams. And also, finally, to make the priority that's been implemented with the chapel more recently, have that also be reflected in the level of priority that we give towards spiritual and character formation for our cadets. Thank you.

**Dan Clark**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you. We now change our topic to admissions. We have Dr. Susan Morrow for her comments.

### **Dr. Susan Morrow**

Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity. I am the Director of Service Academy and ROTC Partnerships for the Classic Learning Test. In May of '25, Secretary Hegseth publicly announced that the CLT would be accepted for admissions along with the SAT and the ACT. His stated goal was clear, that our academies need to attract the very best. CLT is an established college admissions assessment accepted by over 390 public and private colleges and universities. It is rooted in the classics of the Western tradition. It provides a new tool for the academies to identify top-tier students. Secretary Hegseth refers to it as the gold standard. On November 25th, 2025, the CLT hired me as an ambassador to provide information, resources, and support to the military service academies. I work with congressional nomination committees, military service academy outreach, with students and with families, parents of candidates. The Academy, the Air Force Academy, has recently added CLT to their admissions portal, and I appreciate that progress. But acceptance on paper means little if candidates are not receiving accurate, consistent guidance regarding admissions. For example, at multiple service academy events, Air Force Academy representatives make no have made no mention of the CLT in their presentations.

CLT customer service relayed a parent's account of a week here at the Academy recently. The message was that the CLT was not competitive, and the student was steered toward the SAT and the ACT. I doubt the Secretary of War would agree that the CLT is not competitive. I have 3 questions for this board. How is the Academy preparing those who advise potential candidates? Are we assessing that, or are you assessing that messaging? Is it accurate and consistent? How will the Academy incorporate the CLT into the academic composite score? I have and will continue to provide information support and resources to all of the academies. And I thank you for this opportunity.

### **Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you. Thank you, ma'am. Switching over to the topic of climate, we have Mr. Jeff Meyer for her— for his comments. Moving on, we will switch over to Mr. Larry Card, who has provided his comments via video.

### **Larry Card**

I addressed the board of visitors 3 months ago and discussed issues of evidence consistent with an 8-sentence synopsis of a phone call that are 3 blocks away when she suspects trespass. The

email where a member of the chain of command speculated about what may have taken place and was presented as fact, and then connected sworn statement by the chain of command. Thank you. Stated that officer told her that card did not commit any disturbance. The school attorney's team was not included in that dispatch that he had his care arrangements. That card admits to the process but said he did not remember making a call to the judge. After the officer was not contacted for further clarification, nor was a transcript or recording of the call made, the legal department dismissed the claim for all all these issues, they considered inadequate. I spent some select training for this with Vice Silverman, Center Command, developed an effective protocol to work with the government in the south. His commander stated he was one of the top cadets in his class, operates at a extraordinary level, displays the discipline and proficiency of a seasoned officer. Commandant still recommends him.

As a service, the Secretary of the Air Force determined that still would take— We find that's guilty of violations, lack of due process, characterized by that discipline system. I respectfully request the Board of Visitors question the Secretary of the Air Force for the current supervision and creative process through which Sir, our final comment will be from Mr.

### **Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Matthew Newgent.

### **Matt Newgent**

Esteemed board members, academy leadership, The public. Um, I'm Matthew Nugent, West Point class of '96, and the CEO and co-founder of Constitution Analytics. Thank you for this opportunity. Sun Tzu said, the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

The United States possesses the most powerful kinetic force in the history of the world, but history and our enemies lead with non-kinetic warfare, utilizing ideas to shift and shape the way we think and our will to fight, including kinetic fighting power. DEI is not just a bad idea. DEI is warfare. America's institutions and its ideological framework around warfare is dangerously skewed, which our enemies have exploited. 2 Chinese officers actually wrote a book about it in 1999 called Unrestricted Warfare. Our enemies know our vulnerabilities, and they've exploited it. Constitution Analytics is building a system to address this national defense vulnerability through technology, strategy, and education. Technology— we built a technology to analyze content at scale. We're talking curriculum, policy, content, any content that will be misaligned with the Constitution. like DEI. Education-wise, we start with the Constitution, provide remediation as necessary, and advanced training on spectrum of warfare, non-kinetic warfare, enemy strategy, and understanding how to identify, defend against, and neutralize non-kinetic threats. In order to win

in the non-kinetic battlespace, critical thinking is vital, which is why we've integrated classical education into our system. So to support the superintendent and the board, we ask that the board consider our staff study and to conduct a pilot with education and training.

Thank you. I'll be happy to entertain any questions if you have any.

**Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

Yeah, Matt, real quick, um, we had a briefing with the Institute of Future Conflict yesterday, and what you— what your saying there is just in line with, uh, in their wheelhouse. Uh, also listening to General Valpiani, um, with his Western civic, uh, emphasis, I think you're on point. So what would be the first, maybe a small practical step you could take to, um, evaluate your approach here at the Academy and maybe start a conversation?

**Matt Newgent**

Um, thank you, Mr. Nikolai. So, um, to echo, uh, the Provost, we talked about citizenship. You cannot have strong citizenship without understanding of the Constitution, which is the foundation of what we do, which is why we recommend as the next step, sir, conduct an anonymous pilot, which, which we can provide for you, and we can provide results which would provide a baseline, and from there we can help you determine what possible shortcomings are that there are at all with that constitutional baseline, sir.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

We have 3 more individuals that are here. They did not submit comments but would like to address the board pending availability of time, sir.

**Congressman Pfluger**

We'll compromise with 60 seconds each, a hard, hard minute.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Mr. Kramer, sir.

**Shane Kramer**

Hello to the board. My name is Shane Kramer, and I will try to make this fast because I'm talking again about the same issue. the chapel. I have always, as a longtime resident of Colorado, admired USAFA and its standards of excellence and character. However, as of recent, I've had

some concerns regarding the state of the chapel. In a recent conversation that I had with a cadet, they voiced that, quote, the ongoing unfinished state of the chapel makes many cadets feel that USAFA is not prioritizing their personal experience of the cadets, nor their personal character and spiritual growth. With this sentiment in mind, I fear for the message that the Academy might be sending to its cadets. Now, I am very grateful for all the work that you have already done in progressing the chapel along in its completion, but with the Academy standing as a front of America and as the place our future leaders are being formed, I wonder if we can put even more priority on the chapel construction. Perhaps this can be one of our institutional changes for the future. I know the standards of excellency that the Academy holds itself to, and I would not want anyone to hold an impression of anything less than that.

Thank you.

**Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Mr. Frye.

#### **Public Comment**

Board of Visitors, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. And so I too have a comment about the chapel. I, I, my family's been in the military for the last several generations, and I have a high respect for the service, service members and our service academies. I ended up deciding not to join the military due to lack of moral and spiritual grounding that I saw. And having spoken with several cadets and people who are involved with the Academy, I've seen the importance of the chapel. I believe that having a designated and dedicated place of fellowship and spiritual growth will lead to moral and inspirational grounding that will aid our next nation's leaders to walk in strength and confidence as we move towards a better future of our nation. Thank you.

**Speaker 16**

Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Thank you, Mr. Brosk.

### Public Comment

Good afternoon, board. Thank you for having me. Um, I'm here on behalf of the chapel as well. Um, my name is Daniel Broski. I've been a resident of Colorado Springs since 2005. Um, I'm concerned about not seeing the beauty of the chapel and what it represents. Um, I remember Back in the day when we were able to go into the chapel and see the beauty of it and how much it was an inspiration, not just for me but my family. My dad was an aircraft maintainer in the Air Force for 27 years, and his last deployment was at USAFA. And so every day we were being— we had the privilege to see the chapel. While I understand that restoration and preservation take time, I'm concerned about how long the chapel has remained closed and the continuing delays in reopening it. I know that the chapel is a place of worship, a place of unity, and a place to teach character-building fundamentals. My main concern is that— has there been a place for the cadets to worship, and has there— and how does that affect our future leaders? Thank you for your time and service.

### Congressman Pfluger

Thank you very much. I believe that was, uh, that concluded the public comments. And let me just say thank you to the public because in my time on the board, this is, uh, this is the best participation that we've had. And your comments and your thoughts are very important, uh, to, to hear. And I think for the institution and the leadership here to understand especially what the residents of Colorado Springs are thinking, but more broadly what the public and the taxpayers who fund this institution are thinking is incredibly important. I'll also mention that there are obviously an overwhelming number of comments about the chapel, and I want you to know, and I hope that you have heard because you've been a part of the public portion of this meeting, the progress that has been made the emphasis that has been placed on this, not only from the Air Force Academy, but also from the Department of the Air Force, the Department of the War, and quite frankly, the President of the United States. I want to highlight to you that a year ago, just over a year ago, we met here in August of 2025.

Mr. Charlie Kirk and Erica, thank you for being here today. That Charlie Kirk asked some of the most important questions about this. And did not necessarily get the answers that— not that we wanted, but that answered the questions of when this project would be complete, how much money that it would cost at the end of the day. And, you know, the phases that would get us, you know, to a solution that allowed the cadets to have the spiritual side, the spiritual component, the foundation. of their spirituality fulfilled. That was very important because that night he called the president and had a conversation that I believe single-handedly led to where we are today. So we hear your comments loud and clear, and I personally appreciate your comments. As a cadet myself, it was such an important part of my journey. Because as we have heard from the

commandant, not every day is the best day. Being a cadet, having a spiritual component and the opportunity to grow in your faith is— it's— I mean, it's so important. It's the most important thing, in my personal opinion. So thank you for that. Dr. Rempelow.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Sir, we're now over to you for board comments, sir.

**Congressman Pfluger**

Okay. I'm going to open it up to the board for your comments. So be thinking about anything that you'd like to say. But I do want to highlight the service of one of our board members, Congressman Don Bacon, who himself was— is a retired Brigadier General, served with character and integrity for many, many years in the United States Air Force, and today is his last board meeting. Don, we thank you for joining us virtually. We thank you for being a part of this board and for helping in passing many pieces of legislation that benefited the Air Force Academy and literally thousands of graduates. And I'll turn it over to you for any comments.

Thank you, Don. I'll open it to board members.

**Dan Clark**

I want to circle back. Uh, I'm catching on, honorable boarders, but because you've championed the chapel, maybe I could call you Your Majesty. Uh, we flip it. Miss Backus, you brought up \$40 million kind of thrown our way. What is the comparative analysis of what the— Uh, What West Point gets and what Annapolis gets, and it seems to me that we're being way underfunded. Don't they get a big chunk of money that's a lot bigger than what we do, and how can we fix that?

**Michael Borders**

So we're conducting that analysis now as we move forward. We heard earlier today about the \$500 million. Our argument would be that there's, there's been multiple funding streams available to both West Point and Annapolis through 250 years. We don't have that. We don't have that superstructure of funding built up. So it's a valid question. We're asking that now. But again, part for us is to not only open up the FSRM, MilCon, but also that kind of niche EUL, enhanced use lease, so we bring in that funding. But we We know we're not funded anywhere near where we should be or have the resources available to us that West Point and Annapolis have yet. But that's the goal, right?

**Col (ret) Stoli Nikolai**

I'll get us rolling on closing comments. First of all, I'd like to say thanks to the USAFA and DAF staff. Impeccable job once again, so I thank you for all your efforts. Um, also want to welcome our new board members, John Hotaling and Erica Kirk. Great additions to the board. And, uh, farewell to Don Bacon, as you mentioned. Um, real quick, in the, uh, admin session, we, uh, got updates on our focus group. So I'm the, uh, chairman of the disciplinary focus group And I got some high-speed lawyers, retired Air Force colonels working with me. And we just, after 6 months of efforts, we have— going to put out an intermediary report and we're going to recommend 3 areas that need expediency to hopefully not create further damage at the Academy to the cadets. So the first one we're recommending is Article 15 suspension. until a review can be made top to bottom on the different aspects of discipline at the Air Force Academy. The other one was the MRR program, which is the mentorship, reevaluation, reappointment of cadets that have been disenrolled. Over the past few years, we at the Board have been approached by over 20 different parents, cadets who've been disenrolled on less than, I call it questionable circumstances.

We just heard one from Colonel Retired Larry Card and his son. So we're looking at to fire up the MRR program and help these cadets out, at least give them one more look to ensure they had due process. And that brings up the due process. So we want to try to correct the USAFA due process deficiencies. Cadets do get a voice in the disciplinary process, but according to the letter of law, it is a little deficient. So we'll be kicking that report out to you, General Moga, as well as Commandant for review. And I will also invite you there, Mr. Commandant, to join in one of our Zoom meetings to get your perspective. So, and with that said, on a high note now, I just say, uh, welcome to the new USAFA leadership. Exceptional. Uh, I'm a fighter pilot, you guys are fighter pilots, so I'm happy to see that. And then as well, and, uh, to Dr. Hicks and to Ms. Block, I know we have an athletic director decision to make And you guys are navigating that challenge. And again, I just hope it's an Academy grad. Doesn't need to be, but I think that goes a long way, as well as that expertise of athletic directorship. So thanks again, everyone, for all the effort, and look forward to next year.

### **Congressman Pfluger**

Okay, we will conclude. I'll start by thanking General Moga, General Valpiani, General Tellez. The day that we had yesterday to experience what it's like to be a cadet, to walk around this great institution, to go to class, I'm so thankful we didn't have to take a GR or get quizzed on anything. Please don't arrange for that next time.

### **Superintendent Moga**

You still got time.

**Congressman Pfluger**

It was a tremendous day. It takes a lot of work to do that, to host us, and we genuinely appreciate it because I think it gives us a perspective of how we can best advocate. I'd also like to thank my staff. I think this is the first time in history that we actually have dedicated staff members, Dave Nugent and Lee Hobson, that are helping with the Board of Visitors. These guys are champions. They're true wingmen, and they've done a fantastic job of helping all of the board members in corralling, whether it's QFRs or different ideas, getting legislation ready to go. So thank you guys, you're doing a tremendous job. Speaking of QFRs, I think we're at the point where you're probably going to see a reduction in the amount of the questions, and they're going to be high quality. And my commitment is that not just to a quantitative reduction, but also to show you that these are very high-quality questions that are intended to work alongside and partner with you. So for the board members, please get these questions into Dave Nugent by the 30th of October, things that you'd like to see, and we will do our best then to get those to the department.

And we would ask the Department of the Air Force to then submit those to us no later than the 18th of December. For the Provost, I'm so heartened to see the focus on American history, the focus on the Constitution, Western values that created Western civilization, that created that Constitution, because when we sign up to take an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, it's nice to know what the history of that is and why we're doing that. And it speaks to the discussion that we had here in August about American exceptionalism and why this is the greatest form of governance and why it's so hard. Thank you for digging back into that, because I think that our society is being challenged from within to some degree, but also especially outside on whether or not this form of governance is possible. And we know that it is, and we're going to see another 250 years. But I think the fact that you're redoing and restructuring the Corps here to teach that, that these young men and women that are going to go out and lead and at some point could give their lives in the defense of this great nation, defending that Constitution, they need to know why they're doing that.

I thank you for that. That's tremendous, and I think it's so important. And our commitment from this board is that we are going to fight to ensure that the Air Force Academy has the resources to train these elite military members. And we're going to commit to enabling the institution to be nimble, to be creative, to be effective. And I want to thank our board members for Voluntarily giving of your time for this cause. I couldn't think of anything greater. It's an honor to be here. Thank you for hosting us. It takes a tremendous amount of resources to do this. And with that, we will conclude the meeting. Thank you.

**Dr. Raquel Rimpola**

Yes, sir. And on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, the sponsor for the ISAF Board of Visitors, I want to thank everyone for their participation and support for this board meeting, as well as continued support for the Air Force Academy. Uh, this meeting is officially closed. Thank you.