



**UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
BOARD OF VISITORS
WASHINGTON DC 20330**

7 Dec 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: USAFA Board of Visitors
c/o AF/AIDO
2221 S. Clark St, Ste 500
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: Semi-Annual Report, United States Air Force Academy Board of Visitors

As Chairman of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) Board of Visitors (BoV), I am pleased to submit this semi-annual report for your consideration as required by Title 10, USC § 9355. This report includes information from BoV meetings in May 2010 and July 2010. The BoV is fully engaged in its charter to provide oversight of USAFA on behalf of the President of the United States and yourself.

The USAFA BoV membership is nearly complete with the addition of three new members, retired Major General Marcelite Harris, retired Lieutenant General Arlen Jameson, and Mr. Alfredo Sandoval. However, membership warrants continued attention as the board still has one vacancy and is projected to lose three more members at the end of December 2010.

The BoV has five subcommittees to review the Academy and provide inputs to help the Academy attain its goal of producing leaders of character. Each of the subcommittees gathers information, discusses progress, and makes suggestions and recommendations for consideration by the full board. I am pleased with the dedication of our members and the insights the subcommittees have shown through their deliberations during this reporting period.

Congressional Nomination Subcommittee

Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez is the chair for this subcommittee. They are committed to developing best practices and reengineering programs to reach underrepresented groups.

In May, all service academies, congressional staffers, and representatives attended a Congressional Nomination Workshop, in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the workshop was twofold: to assist low nomination districts and educate staff members about service academies. A number of existing programs were streamlined for better efficiency, and some new programs were established. A best-practices Nomination Smart Book that USAFA developed to assist

congressional members was a huge success because it captured these efficiencies and provided examples and templates.

As a result, the subcommittee is using similar events as a springboard to improve the nomination process. USAFA continues to track data to ensure congressional districts perform diligently in nominating candidates for service academy programs.

Currently the USAFA Diversity Plan identifies \$1.16 million in O&M funding requirements for USAFA Admissions diversity programs. Only \$250,000 is funded in FY11. This leaves an unfunded O&M requirement of \$910K in FY11, and this does not include civilian pay requirements. If the USAFA Diversity Plan is not fully funded, this will seriously affect the plans implementation and success. The Board will continue to monitor this situation closely.

Character and Leadership

Mr. Terry Isaacson chairs this subcommittee and is a strong advocate for the development of character and leadership. The subcommittee's charter includes, but is not limited to honor and ethics, respect, gender relations, religious tolerance, athletic programs, and graduate relations.

Since the last semi-annual report, the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) approved the creation of the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation (AFAAC) at USAFA, a non-profit 501(c)(3)-type organization whose purpose will be to support cadet athletic programs. The new corporation will eventually replace the existing Non-Appropriated Funds Instrumentality (NAFI) which serves this purpose today. The AFAAC Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws have been filed with the State of Colorado. The Air Force Audit Agency conducted a financial audit on the existing NAFI to ensure it was ready to execute a "clean" hand-off to the AFAAC. USAFA is currently building a transition plan for 2011 that includes recommendations for a nine-member board of directors to be approved by the SECAF.

In response to concerns from the graduate community, the subcommittee asked for a review of diversity and hiring practices within the USAFA Athletic Department. Academy representatives readily acknowledge the need to improve diversity within the department and are making progress toward that goal. Most recently, the Academy hired a head coach for the women's basketball program, as well as two assistant coaches, all of whom are African American. Achieving greater diversity across all departments and within the cadet wing at USAFA remains a high priority both for the Superintendent and the Board, so we will continue to monitor this closely.

Finally, due to concerns expressed by a number of cadets from different classes and responsibilities within the cadet wing, the subcommittee pursued discussions regarding a recent change to the honor system. The Board Sanctions Recommendation Panel (BSRP), implemented in the fall of 2009, results in cadet honor representatives sending a sanction recommendation on individual cases to the Commandant and Superintendent for their consideration as they make their final decisions. The expressed concern centers on the potential for external factors to carry

more weight than the evidence of a case in determining a final sanction. In addition, some cadets voiced concerns that the system could be “gamed”.

The subcommittee has also been told that many cadets do not seem concerned about the honor code unless they personally become involved in a case. Cadets are taught the code and have the handbook, but fewer seem to internalize the associated commitment than in past years. While cadets believe the system is working overall, they desire greater openness and communications from USAFA leadership about the outcomes of individual cases. Because honor is a bedrock of character and leadership development at the Academy, and integrity is a core value for the Air Force, the honor code and system will continue to be an area of interest for the Character and Leadership Subcommittee. .

Academics and Course of Instruction

Ms. Susan Ross chairs the Academics and Course of Instruction subcommittee. The recent discussions of this subcommittee focused on activities associated with faculty.

Cadet participation in the Graduate Studies Program (“GSP”) achieved some significant gains this past year. Ninety-six graduates from the class of 2010 will attend graduate school. In addition, sixty-five members will attend a terminal Masters program. While the number of cadets offered GSP has increased from previous years, this increase came at the expense of other advanced academic degree programs. SAF/MR and A1 have chosen to address the issue through a “No Holds Barred” Advanced Academic Degree Study, assisted by RAND. We still await the results of this study, and we stand by our commitment to sustaining a quality faculty.

Previously, the House Armed Services Committee O&I report indicated the Air Force wasn’t hiring enough “Pure Civilian” faculty, as opposed to civilians with prior military experience. The subcommittee proposed better defining what constitutes a civilian professor, and highlighting which experiences are valued by USAFA. Many USAFA civilian instructors with prior military experience and competitive academic credentials are assessed during the hiring process as being “best qualified.” The subcommittee is concerned that highly qualified candidates might be penalized because they have prior service experience.

Admissions and Graduation

Mr. A. J. Scribante chairs this subcommittee. The committee reviews processes associated with Admissions and Graduation. As a result of some very hard work on the part of USAFA’s Admission Department, USAFA has seen improvement in the diversity of the cadet wing and the strengthening of the candidate pool that applies to the Academy. This includes, but is not limited to the resources necessary to compete successfully against other top universities.

The subcommittee also routinely reviews trends in cadet attrition and graduation, particularly with respect to diversity. Current data suggests that attrition rates across demographic groups are very similar and about the same percentage of cadets from each demographic group graduates. The overall attrition rate for 2010 was 25%. This same

percentage is consistent with the past ten classes. An extra effort to reduce this percentage down to 12% could yield significant cost savings. Improvement is possible with a review of the data outlining the reasons for the attrition.

This year's in-class had an increased number of qualified applicants and was more diverse than other previous classes. Although early in the admission cycle, this positive trend appears as though it will continue with the class of 2015. However, the subcommittee is very interested in how the USAFA Admission Department weights each of the component parts of an application. There is strong concern that high moral character or integrity may not have sufficient weight given that the mission of USAFA is to develop officers of character. The subcommittee chair has recommended a change in the weights from the present 20% for physical, 60% for academic and only 20% for character. A key issue for review is the inability to assess the innate character traits of the candidates with a consistent, scientific and proven interview tool. A tool to achieve this need was introduced to the Board and the Academy. This was the Character Assessment Tool developed by the Gallup Organization. It appears the validation process for this tool was flawed; therefore the tool was not implemented. The subcommittee will discuss this issue further at upcoming meetings.

Finally, there has been some discussion on the effectiveness of Academy Liaison Officers. Some seem to excel at assessing outstanding applicants while others do not. Efforts are being made to identify training requirements and standardize the interview process in order to bring about consistency regarding the assessment of innate character traits resulting in an increase in outstanding officers for the U.S. Air Force.

Infrastructure and Resources

Mr. Robin Hayes is the chairman for the Infrastructure and Resources subcommittee. The primary goal of the subcommittee is to maintain, renovate, and improve the facilities and grounds at USAFA. The greatest challenge is to find cost effective solutions that preserve the historical significance of the campus. Some of the options offer energy solutions that will generate long-term benefits for the Academy. Updates since the last semi-annual report include Vandenberg Hall, which is in its final stages of renovation, and the Center for Character and Leadership Development, which is ready to begin the initial phase of construction.

Additionally, the Academy continues to promote and participate in programs that generate efficiencies. The Academy was selected as a net-zero test base for DoD energy/conservation initiatives. USAFA named the program Falcon Green. The program will highlight conservation, innovation, and education. In addition, a local solution was identified that will generate approximately \$1M in savings. Mitchell Hall, a dining facility, will begin regulating portions to eliminate waste and begin offering an ala carte menu. It will reduce preparation, storage, and increase utilization of foods. All this constitutes change, changes that are making a difference.

Area of Special Interest

No motions were rendered nor voted upon during this reporting period.

Vacancies on the Board of Visitors

At the present time, the BoV has one vacancy; it is a Vice Presidential appointment which must be filled by a U.S. Senator. We are projecting to have another Vice Presidential vacancy as Senator Bennett was not re-elected. I will continue to engage with the Office of the Vice President on this matter. In addition, we anticipate two additional vacancies among our Presidential appointees: The terms of both Ms. Susan Ross and I expire in December of 2010. As stated earlier, the USAFA BoV recently received two new presidentially appointed members and one Speaker of the House member. The Presidential appointees replaced Mr. Richard Tubb and Mr. A.J. Scribante; the Speaker of the House appointee replaced Mr. Terry Isaacson. The Board appreciates the support and attention this matter has received. The members of the Board of Visitors look forward to continuing our work with you, senior Air Force leaders as well as with the USAFA Superintendent, Lieutenant General Michael Gould, and his staff.

After four years as Chairman of the Board of Visitors, I will be resigning from the Board on December 11th, after our final board meeting for 2010, to give the President a chance to fill my vacancy prior to the next board meeting.

Each one of us is given a fleeting moment to rise to the challenge of making a mark on our history. My moment is now at an end, but to those whose moments will soon begin, I wish you wisdom and courage. And I wish for each of you that, one day, when you reflect on your moment, you will know that you have lived up to the honor and responsibility of serving the United States Air Force and the American people.

Respectfully,



CHARLES P. GARCIA
Chairman, USAFA Board of Visitors

cc:

Chairman, Committee on Armed Services of the Senate
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives
Secretary of the Air Force
Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force
Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Manpower and Personnel
Superintendent, USAFA
Members of USAFA Board of Visitors
Designated Federal Officer, USAFA Board of Visitors
Executive Secretary, USAFA Board of Visitors
Chairman, USAFA Academy Board of Visitors