United States Air Force Academy

Strategic Plan

2015

United States Air Force Academy Strategic Plan

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Introduction

VISION: *The Air Force's premier institution for developing Leaders of Character.*

The United States Air Force Academy is a world-class institution providing an immersive, comprehensive developmental experience to produce the world's most innovative, resilient and committed airpower Leaders of Character. We are an elite installation that combines top-tier education, facilities and infrastructure in a superior training environment, with historic and iconic structures that inspire our cadets by linking them to the Air Force's legendary heritage and boundless future.[1] We provide an intensive, immersion in leadership training and officer development that is founded on integrity, built on the pillars of academic, military and athletic excellence, which inculcates in our cadets a spirit of selfless service to our Nation. The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) fosters a culture of commitment and climate of respect and focuses future leaders on innovation and continual improvement. USAFA produces air-minded leaders and career officers with the character, critical thinking skills and strategic agility to lead our Nation's Air Force today and into the future.[2] America is—and always will be—an aerospace nation.[3] We are its Academy.

MISSION: *To educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force in service to our Nation.*

The Air Force Academy's purpose is developing women and men to lead as officers in the United States Air Force. USAFA focuses its efforts on producing Leaders of Character – officers who, above all, exemplify the Air Force's core values of Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence In All We Do. Building on the foundation of integrity, USAFA forges cadets, through academic, military and athletic training, into resilient, innovative airmen, who understand and appreciate the full spectrum application of airpower in air, space and cyberspace and are able to operate and lead in the most challenging environments.

Core Values

First and foremost, our officers must be Leaders of Character who have internalized and exhibit the Air Force's Core Values. These Core Values of Integrity, Service and Excellence are central to everything we do as an institution in developing our future leaders and should focus the efforts of our cadets, faculty, staff and mission elements on a daily basis.

INTEGRITY – Drives us to do what is right even when no one is looking. The moral compass and the basis for the trust imperative in today's military. Encompasses honesty, courage, justice, responsibility and accountability.

SERVICE – Makes us realize that professional duties take precedence over personal desires. Exhibited through rule following, discipline, respect and self-control.

EXCELLENCE – Inspires us to develop a sustained passion for innovation, continuous improvement and superior performance at the personal, unit and institutional levels.

Additionally, Leaders of Character must be trained professionals who have the skills and abilities to excel as operators and leaders in today's Air Force and the agility and resilience to adapt and win in the future global environment.

The Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force identified **education and training as the foundation of America's airpower advantage** and the key enabler to prepare airpower leaders to deal more effectively with the uncertainties of a rapidly changing global environment[4]. **The Air Force Academy lays the cornerstone** of that foundation by providing an exceptional developmental experience which produces superior leaders, mentors and experts who are knowledgeable, innovative, air-minded, principled in discipline and fit to fight.

To support the Air Force's requirement for well-trained professional officers, USAFA will ensure our leaders understand and display the institutional competencies outlined in the Air Force Commissioning and Education Program[5]. These institutional competencies, grouped in three broad categories: Individual Skills, Leading People and Teams and Organizational Leadership form the basis for personal and professional development of all Air Force officers.

To further align with Air Force needs and support officer development, USAFA derived four developmental outcomes under which we organize the Air Force Institutional Competencies:

Lead with Character and Respect

Integrate Knowledge about Human Cultures and the Natural World

Apply agile intellectual skills and habits of mind

Defend our nation in air, space, and cyberspace

By focusing our officer development efforts using measurable outcomes and competencies, we will be better able to develop and produce a Leader of Character with a warrior ethos and expeditionary mindset who is a culturally aware, motivated professional dedicated to serve the Nation and prepared to lead in the 21st century.

Strategy

To execute our mission and achieve our vision, the Air Force Academy must take actions that are grounded in well-considered and fully vetted strategy and supporting plans. Our strategic approach consists of four major lines of effort whose plans are integrated and mutually supporting. Executing these four plans will strengthen our institution, infrastructure and processes, drive us toward continuous improvement and allow us to more effectively develop Leaders of Character.

Strategic Plan. Successful planning relies on achieving six far-reaching strategic goals in the coming years. The Air Force Academy will improve its ability to educate, train and empower the world's most innovative and committed Leaders of Character by reaching these goals.[6]

Installation Master Plan. The installation master plan directs new infrastructure development so that it responds to the values and visions outlined by the Air Force Academy strategic plan. The plan demonstrates commitment to a business-like approach to capital investments by encouraging adaptive re-use, shared use and limited footprint growth in facilities. Finally, the master plan continues efforts to 'Preserve the Heritage' by adhering to these Air Force Academy Planning Principles:

- Protecting previous investment
- Securing the installation
- Transforming and improving the visitor experience
- Improving key academic, athletic, cadet training and dormitory and installation support funcitons
- Enhancing revenue generation capabilities

Communications Plan. This plan describes and synchronizes internal and external communications strategies and messages. It supports the successful implementation of the Air Force Academy's Strategic Plan, Master Plan and Institutional Effectiveness Plan by ensuring an integrated and consistent message across all internal and external audiences in order to best support the USAFA Vision and Mission and promote the singular contributions USAFA makes to the Air Force and the Nation.

Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Institutional Effectiveness (IE) is the process of articulating the mission, setting goals and using data to form assessments in an ongoing cycle of goal setting and planning[7]. Meeting the challenges of the future will require honest, recurring, self-critique[8]. This plan[9] facilitates a culture of continuous improvement by describing and evaluating high-level, measurable indicators of success directly linked to the Air Force Academy Mission. The plan guides assessment of the following key areas:

- Strategic assessment (e.g., Strategic Plan, Installation Master Plan, Strategic Communications Plan, Higher Learning Accreditation, Information Technology Plan, AF Institutional Competencies, Air Force Academy Outcomes)
- Academy Climate and Culture
- Cadet longitudinal assessment
- Faculty and Staff development
- Resource management

Goals

Goal 1: Focus institutional efforts on character and leadership development. All cadet activities and institutional assessments will enhance and integrate character and leadership development within USAFA's focused, immersive environment.

- **Objective 1:** Ensure an integrated course of instruction using our core pillars of academic, military and athletic training to develop character and leadership in our cadets.

- **Objective 2:** Ensure and maintain proper balance between classroom, role modeling, athletic competition, military development and experiential/participatory opportunities supporting character and leadership development.

- **Objective 3:** Establish the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) as the primary agent to integrate Character and Leadership Development (C&LD) throughout USAFA and use it to advance the understanding and development of Leaders of Character in the cadet wing, the base, the Air Force and the Nation.

Goal 2: Produce highly educated and trained Air Force officers. In an institutionally integrated manner, develop officers of character with in-depth intellectual, technical, physical and military skills and competencies for leadership and innovation in air, space and cyberspace for Air Force and Joint operations.

- **Objective 1:** Create integrated learning experiences across all Air Force Academy mission elements to develop the Air Force Core Values and Competencies and Academy Outcomes in cadets.

- **Objective 2:** Develop and implement programmatic and institutional methods for assessing how cadets adopt and exhibit the Air Force Core Values, Air Force Competencies and Academy Outcomes.

- **Objective 3:** Continue to expose all cadets to an operational Air Force environment in order to develop air, space and cyberspace education, programs and leadership laboratory opportunities and foster career active duty service in these core Air Force mission areas.

Goal 3: Strengthen USAFA's communications and reputation. Communicate to the American people the Air Force Academy's reputation as the Nation's aerospace academy and a proud symbol of the Air Force. Maintaining and improving Academy communications processes will support the institution's integration efforts.

- **Objective 1:** Enhance the effectiveness and scope of USAFA's communications capabilities to maintain a positive institutional image and share how it addresses challenges and setbacks.

- **Objective 2:** Support USAFA's overall integration efforts by enhancing internal communication across all mission elements and improving USAFA's reputation with external constituencies.

- **Objective 3:** Promote awareness of Air Force and Academy programs and opportunities including the impact of USAFA research, education and outreach.

- **Objective 4:** Enhance the Air Force Academy's reputation as a valuable national resource/treasure, a good neighbor and a respected academic institution focused on developing leaders of character by actively participating in strategic coalitions at the local, state and national levels.

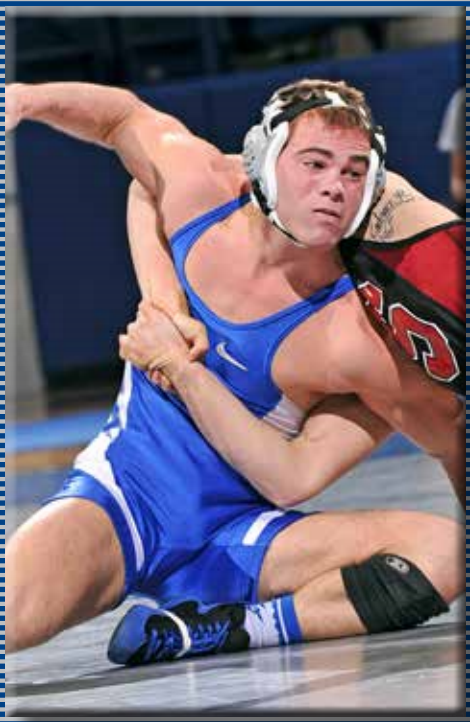
Goal 4: Enhance faculty, staff and cadet diversity. Ensure the Air Force Academy has the faculty, staff and cadet diversity to enrich the cadet learning environment and prepare graduates to lead in a global expeditionary Air Force.

- **Objective 1:** Instruct cadets and staff on the purpose and need for diversity at USAFA and in the Air Force. Develop their understanding of how diversity leads to better decision making and a more effective force.

- **Objective 2:** Proactively support and encourage diversity efforts throughout the Air Force Academy.

- **Objective 3:** Support outreach efforts and foster strategic partnerships to expose diverse populations throughout the Nation to Academy opportunities.

- **Objective 4:** Determine and provide the optimal blend of Total Force expertise.



Goal 5: Develop and motivate the workforce. Provide a well prepared and motivated workforce focused on developing leaders of character and integrating officer development across all mission elements. The Air Force Academy will construct and implement a force development program to attract, develop, retain and support its people and their personal and professional development, so they stay motivated, continue to make meaningful contributions to the mission and innovate new ways of delivering education and training more effectively.

- **Objective 1:** Expand involvement of faculty and staff in developing the Air Force Competencies and USAFA Outcomes among all cadets.

- **Objective 2:** Expand Air Force Academy permanent party education on USAFA's mission during in-processing and throughout their Academy tour.

- **Objective 3:** Provide experiences, challenges, education and training to produce and maintain faculty and staff who possess requisite skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to lead and execute the Air Force Academy's mission.

- **Objective 4:** Promote awareness throughout the Air Force of the developmental value of permanent party assignments to USAFA.

Goal 6: Build and maintain strategic partnerships. Develop and nurture mutually beneficial relationships with capable partners in the local community, industry, academia and Academy alumni to support all four strategic lines of effort and improve developmental opportunities for cadets and permanent party.

- **Objective 1:** Expand outreach to alumni and donors focusing on the exceptional value of USAFA and the return on investment to the Air Force and the nation by supporting the development of Leaders of Character.

- **Objective 2:** Develop links with industry through cooperative research, sharing of ideas and technology and intern/exchange opportunities for cadets and faculty.

- **Objective 3:** Strengthen partnerships with Air Force, Joint Force and civilian institutions through exchange, guest speaker, resident professor and adjunct programs. Collectively, these efforts are opportunities to share ideas, broaden perspectives and improve the diversity of thought that leads to innovation.

Implementation and Assessment

In order to achieve these strategic goals, Academy Mission Elements will propose integrated strategic initiatives to achieve these objectives and their supported goals. Senior leaders will review, prioritize, authorize and resource these initiatives through the corporate process. Supporting units and staffs such as the 10th Air Base Wing and HQ USAFA Directorate of Communications will continue to provide supporting and enabling Base Operations Support and Information Technology capabilities to help execute these strategic initiatives.

The Academy Institutional Effectiveness Program[9] advises senior leaders on progress toward achieving our goals and objectives and ensures the goals continue to support the USAFA Mission and Vision.

Endnotes

[1] America's Air Force: A Call to the Future, Jul 2014

[2] Ibid

[3] Ibid

[4] Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1, 8 Sep 2011

[5] USAFAI 36-2014, Commissioning Education Program, 16 Feb 2012

[6] A Vision for the Unites States Air Force

[7] Grossman & Duncan, 1989

[8] America's Air Force: A Call to the Future, Jul 2014

[9] USAFAI 35-3502, Institutional Effectiveness, 12 Mar 2014

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY