



UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE ACADEMY
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE
2016



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Introduction to Social Media



This guide will help you share information effectively while following Air Force Academy instructions and protecting operations security. These simple, easy-to-follow tips will help you use social media in your professional and personal life. This guide is for informational purposes only and does not replace official Air Force policy.

People of all ages use social media daily. According to December 2015 Pew data, 73% of adults who are online daily

participate in social networking. It's an efficient way to keep in touch with friends and family, connect with people over common interests and get entertainment or news.

You are encouraged to use social media to share your experiences as an Airman and a cadet. You can contact your local public affairs office to see if they can share your story, or you can publish information on your social media accounts. Whether you're sharing information with just your

close friends and family or sharing it with the world in a YouTube video or blog, you're informing people about what it's like to be a part of the world's greatest Air Force. Your stories might inspire someone to attend the Academy, join the Air Force, support the Air Force, comfort a parent or spouse, improve morale or correct inaccurate information.

Air Force families may want to use social media to keep in touch with deployed Airmen, network with other military families and share stories on social media.

Leaders can feel comfortable about using social media and letting their Airmen use social media. It's one of the many tools available to communicate information, and it has a value-added capability of promoting interaction.

If you would like more information about using social media, contact the U.S. Air Force Academy Public Affairs office at usafa.pataskers@usafa.edu or (719) 333-7731; DSN 333-7731.



Social media and social networking have evolved to become the primary communication methods used by today's Airmen, families and leaders. The dynamic nature of social media allows people to interact with diverse audiences in an informal and transparent environment. It's an avenue for leaders to help shape conversations about their units and missions and connect with people on a personal level.

Commanders at major commands will use different social media strategies and social networking tools than wing-level commanders. USAFA public affairs representatives can create a tailored approach to balance the needs of senior leaders with the needs of key audiences. Remember that social media is not intended to push information – it's for sharing interesting content and building relationships with online followers. Social media channels help bridge the information gap for people who know very little about the military in general.

When using social media in an official capacity, it's important to be honest



Social Media for Leaders

about who is posting information on behalf of senior leaders. If you're using social media to keep in touch with family and friends, it might not make sense to allow subordinates access to your personal accounts. Air Force Instruction 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, outlines how leaders can use social networking sites.

All leaders are reminded to maintain appropriate communication and conduct with enlisted personnel, peers, superiors and subordinates (to include civilian superiors and subordinates). If your personal social media accounts are publicly viewable and show your Air Force affiliation, consider what your photos, videos, posts and comments say about you, your values and beliefs and the image you portray of the Air Force.

Air Force leaders can encourage their Airmen to tell their unique Air Force stories. They can also work with their local public affairs office to use social media channels to communicate with their Airmen, stakeholders, news media, families, local community and the public.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Encourage Airmen to tell their unique Air Force stories

{01

Be honest about your unit and mission (without violating OPSEC)

{02

Keep your interactions conversational and informal, yet professional and tasteful

{03

Social Media for Cadets & Airmen

In general, the Air Force views social media sites positively and respects your rights as Americans to use them to express yourself. However, by the nature of your profession, you are always on the record and must represent our core values. Air Force Instruction 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, outlines how Airmen should conduct themselves on social networking websites. Here are a few things to remember when communicating online via social media as an Airman:

1 You are personally responsible for what you say and post on social networking services and any other medium. You can be held in violation of the UCMJ for inappropriate social media posts.

2 Consider how a post can be interpreted by the public. Be cautious about crossing the line between funny and distasteful. If you have doubts about whether you should post something, err on the side of caution. If the post in question concerns the Air Force, discuss the proposed post with your supervisor or your USAFA public affairs office.

3 Maintain appropriate communication and conduct with officer and enlisted personnel, peers, superiors and subordinates (to include civilian superiors and subordinates). Per the CSP, upper-class cadets may not develop relationships with fourth class cadets via social media.



Hashtags

When posting on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, etc., you can use hashtags to help tell your story to a wider audience.

What's a hashtag?

A hashtag categorizes topics in social media. The hashtag symbol “#” is used before a keyword or phrase (no spaces). You can follow specific hashtag topics to see a consolidated list of relevant posts by other social media users.



How can Airmen use hashtags?

You can use a hashtag to mark keywords or topics.

What Air Force hashtags should I use?

The Air Force Academy uses #USAFA and #YourAcademy.



Visit the Air Force Academy's Twitter page:
http://twitter.com/AF_Academy

Social Media for Families

As a family member, you are integral to the success of the Air Force. Without your support, Airmen and cadets wouldn't be able to accomplish the great work they do every day. The Air Force stories you share on social media help maintain the morale of Airmen and educate the public about the Air Force. You're encouraged to use social media to talk about the Air Force and keep in contact with the Airmen in your life. However, you should use it safely and effectively.

It's important for Airmen, cadets, and their families to identify and safeguard critical information about military operations. Be cautious about sharing personal information or communicating with people over social media. Posting too much information could jeopardize the security of Airmen and missions.

Social content shared by Airmen and families is a major target for those looking to gain access to sensitive information in order to impersonate, blackmail or intimidate. While there is a definite benefit to using social media, be wary of the details you provide.

- Don't post the exact whereabouts and activities of deployed Airmen.

- Be general about the dates and locations concerning an Airman and cadet's trip arrival and departure.

- Don't make your vacation dates public on social networks. Criminals may track your activities and know



exactly when to break into your home while you're on vacation.

- Be careful about publicly posting children's photos, names, schools, ages and schedules.

- Consider the image you portray on social media. Think before you share information that could jeopardize you and your Airman's career or reputation.

- Let children know they should seek help for cyberbullying.

You're encouraged to use social media to engage in support networks, such as spouse's clubs, event committees, child care groups or local civic activities. These groups are not considered official Air Force social media, and you don't need permission to form a group of your own. You may want to limit the membership and visibility of the group

to help protect the information exchanged.

You may also want to follow the main Air Force Academy social media accounts (listed on page 14), your local base's accounts or the accounts of your Airman's base for the latest information on the work your Airman does. You can help support their specific missions by sharing their social media content and experiences with your followers and friends.

- If your account has been hacked or you have received threats from unfriendly forces/individuals, report this information to public affairs and the military member's chain of command.

How can I share my experiences as an Air Force family member?

- ✔ Blog about what it's like to have an Airman in the family or give tips about military life
- ✔ Post photos of places you've visited while in the military
- ✔ Share photos of your cadet's graduation
- ✔ Share an Air Force article about your Airman's achievements

Cyberbullying — What it is and how to stop it!

Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience. Airmen and cadets who cyberbully can be held in violation of the UCMJ. You are also held to Air Force standards of conduct, which require you to respect others and do what is right even when no one is looking. People who cyberbully might:

- Pretend they are other people online to trick others
- Spread lies and rumors about victims
- Trick people into revealing personal information
- Send or forward mean text messages
- Post pictures of victims without their consent

Some people don't think it's a big deal, don't consider the consequences, are encouraged by friends or think they won't get caught. Contrary to what cyberbullies may believe, cyberbullying is a big deal and can cause a variety of reactions in people such as revenge seeking, anger or depression.



if you are being cyberbullied you can:

- Block communication with the cyberbully
- Delete messages without reading them
- Talking to a friend about the bullying
- Report the problem to your chain of command

Do the following to prevent others from cyberbullying:

- Refuse to pass along cyberbullying messages
 - Tell friends to stop cyberbullying
 - Block communication with cyberbullies
 - Report cyberbullying to your chain of command
- If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online. Delete cyberbullying. Don't write it. Don't forward it.

Common Social Media Platforms

Facebook

Promotes social interaction among users through posts, commentaries, links, photos and videos.

Twitter

A platform that began as a microblog has evolved into a social messaging, event coordinating, news reporting and marketing utility.

Meerkat

A live streaming app that links with a Twitter account, letting a person on one side of the phone stream a live video feed of whatever they're looking at — or a video selfie. Because Twitter credentials are used to sign into the app, all the commentary moves through the social network.

Periscope

Enables user to "go live" via a mobile device anytime and anywhere. The app enables you to become your own "on the go" broadcasting station, streaming video and audio to any viewers who join your broadcast. Once a broadcast is over, others can watch a replay, and even provide feedback, within Periscope for up to 24 hours. App owned by Twitter.

Yik Yak

A location-based anonymous social network - users can comment and vote on other users' posts, but only within their community. You can "peek" on the activities of other communities, but you can't interact with them.

Whisper

App lets you upload your anonymous confessions in meme-like block letters over stock photography.

Snapchat

A photo and video messaging app that allows users to send photos and videos — called snaps — to friends. Those videos and photos will disappear after 10 seconds of viewing.

Instagram

A mobile app that enables its users to take photos and videos and share them on a variety of social media platforms. Key features are the filters available to enhance photos and videos prior to sharing.



1 No classified information

Don't post classified, sensitive or For Official Use Only information (For example, troop movement, force size, weapons details, etc.). If in doubt, talk to your supervisor, AMT or AOC.

2 Stay in your lane

Discussing issues that are related to your life as a cadet or your career field in the Air Force is acceptable and encouraged, but you shouldn't discuss areas of expertise where you have no first-hand knowledge or experience.

3 Obey applicable laws

You must keep federal law, Department of Defense directives and instructions, Air Force instructions, Cadet Sight Picture and the Uniform Code of Military Justice in mind when using social media in official and unofficial capacities. As an Airman, you are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

4 Differentiate between opinion and official information

Yes, tell them what you think... just make sure you state that it's your opinion and not that of the organization's.

5 Use your best judgment

What you write may have serious consequences. Once you post something on social media, you can't "get it back." Even deleting the post doesn't mean it's truly gone. Ultimately, you bear sole responsibility for what you post.

6 Replace error with fact

When you see misrepresentations made about the Air Force Academy in social media, you may certainly identify and correct the error. Always do so with respect and with the facts. When you speak to someone who has an adversarial position, make sure what you say is factual and respectful. Don't argue, just correct the record.

7 Be aware of the image you present

Any time you engage in social media, you're representing the Air Force. Don't do anything that discredits you or our service.

8 Be cautious with information sharing

Maintain privacy settings on your social media accounts, change your passwords regularly and don't give out personally identifiable information. Be cautious about the personal details you share on the Internet.

9 Avoid the offensive

Don't post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially or ethnically hateful or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.

10 Don't violate privacy

Don't post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy or personal rights of others.

12 Don't violate copyright

Don't post any information or other material protected by copyright without the permission of the copyright owner.

13 Don't misuse trademarks

Don't use any words, logos or other marks that would infringe upon the trademark, service mark, certification mark or other intellectual property rights of the owners of such marks without owner permission.

- The official Academy seal, emblem and coat of arms can be downloaded at usafa.af.mil. The Academy is in the process of developing a new branding image with usage guidelines. All documents, websites and social media sites will be updated once finalized.

14 No endorsements

Don't use the Air Force Academy name to endorse or promote products, political positions or religious ideologies.

15 No impersonations

Don't manipulate identifiers in your post in an attempt to disguise, impersonate or otherwise misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any other person or entity.

16 Don't promote yourself for personal or financial gain

Don't use your Air Force Academy affiliation, official title or position to promote, endorse or benefit yourself or any profit-making group or agency. For details, refer to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5, Volume 3, sec. 2635.702, *Use of Public Office for Private Gain*, in the Joint Ethics Regulation or Air Force Instruction 35-101, *Public Affairs Responsibilities and Management*.

17 Follow Air Force EO policies

The Air Force policy requires equal opportunity and treatment for everyone irrespective of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or age. This policy applies to official and personal social media posts. Acceptable example: "I wish the government would make stricter immigration laws" Unacceptable: "The U.S. needs to kick all Mexicans out, they are like roaches."



What's geotagging?

Geotagging adds geographical identification data to photos, videos, websites and text messages through location-based applications. This technology helps people find images and information based on a location from a mobile device or desktop computer.

How should Airmen use geotagging?

Airmen should be cautious when enabling the geotagging feature on mobile, location-based apps because they could potentially create personal and operational security risks. Disable geotagging at sensitive or deployed locations.

How can Airmen and Cadets tell their stories ?

Airmen already use social media to tell their friends and families about their Air Force Academy experiences, but what are the best ways for sharing text, photos and video on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter? Read the fictional scenarios below to see how Airmen can leverage these social networking sites to tell the Air Force story.

SCENARIO

Maj. Josh Henderson, air officer commanding, and Tech Sgt. Shaun Lyle, academy military trainer, are proud of their service and the Academy mission. They use social media to tell others about their Air Force job and experiences. See how Henderson and Lyle use YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter to tell the Air Force story.

YouTube



1. Uses interesting video that highlights mission.
2. Uploads a three-minute video, which is the ideal length.
3. Video includes good description, title, tags and keywords.
4. Video resolution is 720p or 1080p.



Flickr



1. Uses action shot.
2. Includes relevant and descriptive tags that will help users find the photo through search engines.
3. Photo has caption identifying Air Force people and resources.
4. Photos don't violate regulations or compromise OPSEC.



Facebook



Josh Henderson

Pretty awesome experience today! The 4th degrees are greeting perfectly in week 1 of the fall semester. Check out the Air Force Academy's page to learn more about how we train cadets.



Daily life at the Academy
go.usa.gov

5 minutes ago · Like · Comment · Share

Post with photo album attached

1. Discusses mission in general terms (no specific dates, locations or OPSEC violations).
2. Tags the Academy to link readers to the base's official Facebook page.
3. Attaches album of releasable photos (call your local public affairs office for more guidance on releasable photos).
4. Keeps post brief and concise for mobile and tablet users.
5. Uses enthusiastic and positive messages to describe his job and experience.

Twitter



Shaun Lyle @shaunlyleusaf

1 day

Looks like an awesome day to mentor cadets. It's really great to help them see the role enlisted play in the AF. @AF_Academy #AirForce

Tweet



Shaun Lyle

1 day

RT @AF_Academy working as a team! Shout out to the AMTs and AOCs who teach cadets to be humble, approachable and credible. #USAF

Retweet

1. Keeps tweet under 125 characters to allow followers to retweet his post (140 characters is the maximum allowed on Twitter posts including hyperlinks).
2. Mentions "AF_Academy" using @ symbol to link readers to Academy's official Twitter page.
3. Uses shortened URL (e.g., <http://go.usa.gov>) to save characters. Shorten URLs at websites such as bitly.com or tinyurl.com.
4. Links tweet to Air Force Academy's official hashtag by using # symbol (hashtags help group tweets by keywords and topics).
5. Retweets a tweet from the Academy to give followers more information about the mission.

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Who do I contact if I want to set up a USAFA organization Facebook, Twitter or Instagram page/group?

A: The official base Facebook page should be limited to wing-level or higher. This allows the official page to display all relevant base information on one cohesive space, rather than have the information spread out among several pages. Closed Facebook groups are permitted for smaller, more specific organizations such as cadet clubs, faculty departments, sports teams etc. All USAFA organization/department social media pages, to include Instagram and Twitter must be approved by USAFA Public Affairs.

Q: How do I get my information out to my base or official Air Force social media platforms?

A: Public affairs offices love to hear from their Airmen and families about potential stories or military-related events. They can assist you with coverage and share your stories when appropriate. However, public affairs offices are not allowed to advertise or appear to make official endorsements, so there are limitations to their support. For sharing material with the official Air Force Facebook, Twitter, Blog or other platforms, contact your Academy public affairs office.

Q: What regulations apply to an Airman using social media platforms?

A: All regulations that normally apply—you are always an Airman. You represent the Air Force in all of your words and actions. Simply put, as a member of the military, you are held to a higher standard than your peers. This applies to photos involving alcohol or risky behaviors, sharing questionable or inappropriate material, fraternization/unprofessional relationships, and speaking disrespectful words in violation of the UCMJ. Always consider the consequences before you send your post into cyberspace. You are ultimately responsible for what you post. You are entitled to your opinions, but be clear in your statements that you are expressing your own opinions and not those of the Air Force.

Q: Am I allowed to develop a mobile application?

A: Any Airman who develops an app for official purposes must consult with his or her supervisor and the Academy Public Affairs Office, who will consult with Air Force Social Media Division for guidance.

Q: Can I post photos or videos of myself in uniform on social media?

A: Airmen can post photos or videos of themselves on their personal social media pages as long as they do not imply endorsement of commercial or non-profit

organizations and comply with Air Force Instruction 36-2903, *Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel*. Airmen and cadets must not portray the military/USafa in a negative or disgraceful manner.

Q: Am I allowed to access social media sites while I am at work?

A: Yes, social media sites can be accessed for official purposes. In general, Air Force members are not prohibited from accessing personal social media accounts at work. However, the following must be remembered:

- Personal accounts are not covered by the terms of service agreements established with the Department of Defense. The DoD is not responsible for individual obligations or agreements established during personal use.
- Do not use official contact information to establish personal accounts. Personal accounts should be established using personal telephone numbers and/or email addresses.
- Personal accounts should not be used to conduct official DoD communication, except when official communication channels are not available. Personal accounts may be used to participate in professional networking, development and collaboration related to, but not directly associated with, official mission.

Q: What do I do if someone creates a fake social media presence?

A: If there is a fake account, you may report it to the social media platform's help section, and contact Academy Public Affairs for help at usafa.pataskers@usafa.edu.

Q: What should I do if I am contacted by media members through my private social media account(s)?

A: Airmen should refer the media to the Academy public affairs office, and spouses may also contact the Academy public affairs office for assistance. It is not appropriate for media members to solicit opinions or official quotes through social media without first working through public affairs. You are not obligated to answer their questions; however, if you are interested in completing an interview, your public affairs office will be able to assist you with preparing and setting up a formal interview.

Q: What should I do as a family member if I see sensitive information posted on social networking sites?

A: If you find that someone has posted sensitive information on a social media platform, politely ask the individual to remove/edit his or her post. If unsuccessful, you can contact your local public affairs office or use your family member's chain of command for assistance.

Have more questions? Contact the Academy public affairs office at (719) 333-7731 or email Usafa.pataskers@usafa.edu

References

The following DoD and Air Force publications contain information to consider when using social media. DOD Web policies are viewable at <http://www.defense.gov/webmasters>, and Air Force instructions are accessible at <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil>.

DODI 8550.01, *DoD Internet Services and Internet-Based Capabilities*: Covers applicability, definitions, policy, responsibilities and releasability regarding Internet-based capabilities.

AFI 35-101, *Public Affairs Mission*: Covers the overall public affairs mission and how to correctly implement it.

AFI 35-107, *Public Web Communications*: Addresses the Public Web and Social Media programs.

AFI 35-113, *Internal Information*: Section 15 covers social media.

AFMAN 33-152, *Communications and Information*

USAF Academy Instruction 33-115 *Communications and Information*

AFCWM 36-3501, *The Cadet Sight Picture*

New social media terms

Here are a few new terms used on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Meme - An idea or concept that is shared between people online.

Filters - Instagram and Snapchat offer many filters, which are used to change the effect, color or exposure of a photo before posting it.

Snapchat story- A string of Snapchats that lasts for 24 hours. Users can create stories to be shared with all Snapchatters or just a customized group of recipients.

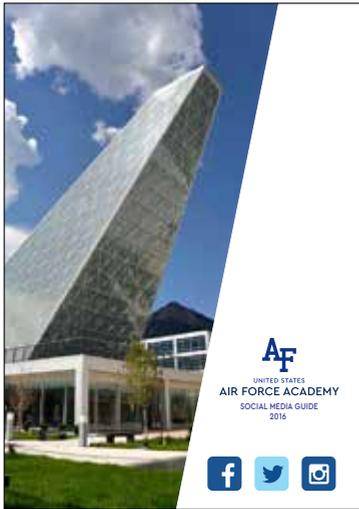
Hearts -A feature of the Periscope app that measure popularity and act as virtual thumbs up and appreciation of the broadcaster.

Reach - A data metric that determines the potential size of audience any given message could reach. It does not mean that that entire audience will see your social media post, but rather tells you the maximum amount of people your post could potentially reach.

Scope- A live broadcast session created through periscope.

Scoper- A nickname for a periscope user.





Check out what the Academy is doing on social media!

The Academy social media program includes key social networking websites where the Academy engages with Airmen, families and the general public. Here are a few links to official Academy social media pages:

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/USAFOfficial>

Twitter

http://twitter.com/AF_Academy

YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/USAFOfficial>

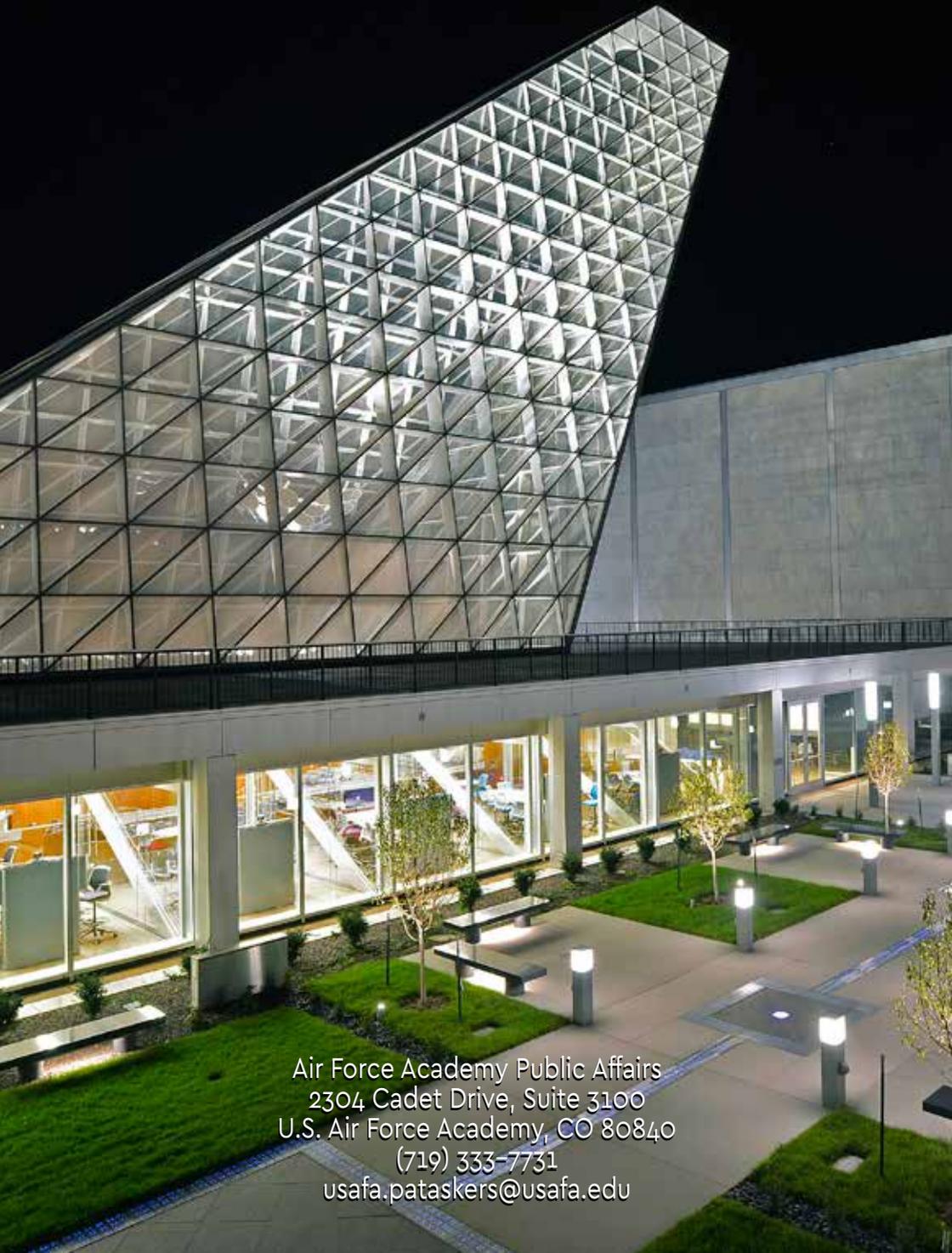
Instagram

http://instagram.com/af_academy

Air Force Social Media Directory

<http://www.af.mil/AFSites/SocialMediaSites.aspx>

U.S. Air Force Academy Public Affairs



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