

AOG Chapter Presidents Meeting 28-29 August 2019 - Wednesday, 28 August - AOG only

The meeting convened at the Academy Planetarium. The Planetarium, dormant and used for storage for over 15 years, has been completely renovated and modernized through a generous donation of a member of the Class of 1970. It was reopened on March 4 of this year and has been playing to packed crowds ever since. The huge star projector in the center has been removed and replaced with state of the art 360 projection, and the seating has been completely replaced with full recline seats to enable a premium experience. We were treated to *Black Holes*, a production of the Denver Planetarium, narrated by Liam Neeson. The Planetarium will be used to conduct cadet classes, the first being calculus classes this year. In addition, it will be used for outreach to Front Range schools, and as well as public planetarium shows. There are plans, yet to be funded, for a classroom addition to the back of the building, to for classrooms and labs to enable Cadet classes and outreach STEM programs a complete one stop shop without having to move to Fairchild Hall.

We then moved to Polaris Hall, where we conducted the rest of our meetings for Wednesday. Our first presentation was from the Chairperson of the AOG Board, Cindy McClain '82. Cindy thanked everyone for their support in getting out the vote for the Spring election. The board is working to craft the job description for the new CEO in preparation for the recruiting effort, which will commence late fall/early winter, with the hope of having the new CEO in place by Spring 2020. The board is also working on a new organization purpose statement:

- Serve all graduates in each phase of their lives
- Work with the Academy to support the cadets in their growth to achieve the high standards of our institution
- To continue to serve our country and community
- To preserve and share our history and to document and share the achievements of our graduates.

The board is looking at a variety of approaches to make ALL graduates a member of the AOG and all new graduates a member of the AOG on the day of graduation. They are trying to find a way to do it without a major change to the bylaws, so this can happen quickly. They recognize that the current fee based membership does not work, as many grads are not members, and much effort is spent to acquire the membership revenue realized from annual members. A great deal of study has been done on the subject, looking at the what other institutions (service academies, universities and colleges) have done to make this work and replace the revenue. Expect to hear something soon.

The next presentation was from Mike Gould '76, CEO of the Endowment. Key points: We give less, as a percentage of graduate population, than the other service academies (AF 12%, Navy 35%, Army 24%) and other competitive institutions (Princeton - 55%). Mike reviewed the projects the Endowment has funded, as well as some projects that are in play now and in the future. Mike and his team realize that there is a lot of donor confusion (7 different Foundations) and is working to bring it all together in a single effort to remove this confusion over time. An article on the move forward will be in the December Checkpoints.

The next speaker introduced ZoomieLink, a new online tool to connect with other graduates. This online community provides several different ways to connect:

- Person to person
- Person to event
- Sharing between chapter presidents/officers/board members across chapters

The ZoomieLink platform pairs with LinkedIn, so if you are a LinkedIn user, you can use that profile as your profile on ZoomieLink. If you don't use LinkedIn, or don't wish to pair your LinkedIn profile, you can establish and maintain a separate profile.

The platform allows you to quickly find and match up with other people who could help you with your question, or talk with about an idea or topic.

The platform is designed to host some or most of what we do with our chapter websites. It will be introduced in September, and we will look at it closely to determine the best way to integrate our current capability with it. I will be meeting with the project manager in the near future to begin the analysis and test drive, so that I can provide the board with an evaluation and recommended course of action. Key points to consider so far:

- Free hosting and use (reduced cost)
- Potential reduction of more technical work on local resources
- Better protection against hackers
- Continuing development and expansion at no cost to the local chapter
- Can we support our triservice needs?
- Can we maintain our ability to be responsive to local needs.
- More contact with the good ideas of other chapters (less reinvention of the wheel).

The next presentation was on the Career Center, which is aimed at some of the same goals as our triservice employment and education sites. The areas covered by the site include:

- Job openings
- Resource guide
- Education opportunities
- Resume Writing Assistance
- Self Employment resources
- Recruiter

The challenge to us is to evaluate the AOG offerings in these new and enhanced online tools, and determine if, how and to what level to integrate them into our existing offerings. The key objective in doing this is to eliminate confusion and duplication of services, while providing the best and most relevant service to our chapter.

We then broke into workshops to focus on specific topics. The first one I participated in was focused on generating fresh ideas for events to engage members, especially younger grads. We spent some time in a guided discussion of key considerations for these events:

- Younger grads
- Single - young officer, new to the area, lower paid, try to find and build a group of friends locally
- Married - newly married, no kids, may also be new to the area, may have more income
- Family - Family with small children, probably tight on income and time.

Each of the above is a distinct constituency, which may not be interested in the same things as the others. We need to understand which of these we have, and what their needs and desires are. Watch parties and dinner cruises may not appeal to these groups as much as we might think. We should tailor an event or two to each of these constituencies to start to show them there is a place for them. Some ideas:

- Singles - Cooking classes, brew pub, sports event,
- Young couples - Class (art, craft or cooking) date night, unique experience date night, wine or brew pub experience, especially if we can get discount/groupon. Look at things unique to our area.
- Families - Activities which are more local, and would include and focus on the children. Good ones include service events which include kids in the service, an art or craft experience involving kids and parents, parent/child cooking classes, family zoo day.
- Women only events for female graduates.

We should look to leverage our "group" status to secure discounted deals for these events, giving the member an advantage over doing it on their own. We probably could leverage this

better if we could get some participation from Army, Navy and any Coasties to get our buying power up.

We should also consider looking at how to hold events in other parts of our region - how to get someone to be the host in that area (Duluth, for example, or Rochester).

With Service events, the key to a good experience is where the event is:

- Meaningful to the members
- Has positive impact, not necessarily scale, but to the people or organization served.
- Likeability - something people can do and enjoy
- Memorability - something that people will remember.

Some ideas:

- Participation/float in Veteran's Day Parade - One chapter does a float and has WWII and Korean War Vets ride on the float. Members participate in building float and driving it. A great experience.
- Participation in Memorial Day ceremonies at National Cemetery
- Habitat for Humanity
- Family event making and loading kids backpacks.
- Events at Veteran's Homes.

We should be looking to conduct 2-3 new events this next year, with at least one of them being a service event.

The second breakout session was on Growing our Chapters w/Alumni Parents, hosted by Bill Preston. Bill started the session by giving credit to Rick and Susan for their great presentation on club partnership last year.

Our goal should be to work with the Parent's Club, not just to help them navigate and support their child's 4 years at the Academy, but into their career as an Air Force Officer. In other words, we need to help them become an Air Force Family. 62% of the class of 2023 parents had no prior military service. We need to help them understand what this new life is all about, and how important their support is to their young cadet, and the young officer they will be. So we need to be their landing place after their child graduates, as affiliate or associate members, so we can help them support their son or daughter through their career.

Senior Leadership Session - This session was a panel question and answer period with General Edmondson, the new Commandant, Col. Letendre, the nominee for Dean and Chief Johnson, the command chief for the Commandant.

General Edmondson has been on board 3 months, she is a graduate of the University of Florida (ROTC - Aerospace Engineering). Her early career was in Space Operations, including command assignment at the Squadron level, and Command assignments in Training Command at the Group and Wing level. Her last assignment before becoming Commandant was Director, Space Policy, National Security Council, Executive Office of the President, Washington, D.C.

Col Letendre is a 1996 graduate of the USAF Academy, with a degree in Astronautical Engineering. She served in acquisition assignments before completing law school at the University of Washington. She comes to the position of Dean after serving 4 years as Permanent Professor and Head of the Law Department at the USAF Academy.

Chief Johnson is the command chief for the Commandant. He is a Loadmaster for both C-5 and C-17 aircraft with over 6700 flight hours. He holds two masters degrees. His previous

assignment was as Command Chief Master Sergeant of the 71st Flying Training Wing at Vance AFB.

The Commandant was very engaged and enthusiastic about upcoming Parent's Weekend. Eight to ten thousand family members are expected to attend, and the staff is going all out to ensure a successful event. Parent's weekend is no longer just for the 4th class, as many upper class parents attend and more upperclassmen stay on campus for the weekend. Key subjects in the Commandant's remarks:

- Staffing of two AMT (Academic Military Trainers - NCOs focused at assisting the AOC and Cadet Leadership in each squadron) is progressing, with the goal of being at full strength with 2 per cadet squadron this year.
- With her training expertise, she is looking to work with her team and Cadet leadership to build a logical, training goals and outcomes driven connection between basic cadet training, 4th class academic year training and recognition.
- Wants to examine the current two class system (4th class/upper class) and make the necessary changes to move it to a true 4 class system, with specific training objectives and performance for each class.
- Looking hard at what kind of second lieutenant we are delivering to the Air Force, and making changes to align that to what the Air Force really needs.
- Examining how to better educate parents on how to help their sons and daughters to successfully prepare to become cadets.

Colonel Letendre talked at some length about the recent renewal of the Academy's accreditation, which is good for 10 years. This was a rigorous review of the Academy's program and we did very well, with no adverse findings and many compliments. It was achieved through a number of intentional changes that have been implemented and sustained over a number of years, including:

- A core curriculum of 29 courses, aligned to 9 key objectives.
- Majors of 15 courses.
- Proper staffing and sustainment of the faculty, despite sequestration
- Continuing Innovation in the curriculum
- Strong program of research, funded from in and outside of the Air Force, making our Academy the #1 undergraduate research institution in the nation
- Learning for the future.

[Observation - The curriculum for the Class of 1975 was 54 academic courses, not including PE and Military Training, 36 in the core and 18 in the major. The Superintendent's reception on Wednesday evening afforded me the opportunity to pose questions to several Permanent Professors regarding the reductions in course load. Much of this was due to sequestration, and 29 and 15 represent the current situation, which is a recovery a few courses from the lowest level. The new Dean and all of the Permanent Professors are on the same page about trying to move the course load closer to earlier levels. They feel that it is part of the value proposition for the Academy, differentiating it from conventional college/ROTC commissioning route.]

One interesting question from the audience concerned the initiative of the Space Force, announced by President Trump, directed at General Edmondson. The General gave the President significant credit for putting the subject on the table, as it has elevated and expanded the conversation regarding issues of defense of our space assets, both civilian and military, enabling the standup of a command to focus on the issue. She related that previous to the President raising the idea, the conversation was very much in its formative stages, and making very slow progress.

Strategic Communications (Mike Peterson) - A part of the Supt's shop, the marketing arm of the Academy, staffed by civilian government employees. They are responsible for:

- Legislative liaison
- Superintendent's speech writer
- Graduate liaison
- Branding/Marketing activities

Nicole Cox '09, is the graduate liaison person, and as such, she is the gateway to working with anyone on the government paycheck at the academy. You can avoid a lot of hassle if Nicole is the first person you contact, after the AOG. Nicole is the key go to person for the following things:

- Requests for speakers (Anyone from the Supt on down - Use the Speaker Request Form)
- Anything to do with working with cadets, speaking to cadets, etc.
- Academy liaison to AOG
- Address alumni questions and concerns
- Conduit to provide alumni viewpoints to Academy staff
- Assist class reunion planning and execution and coordinate Academy support
- Administer Jabara Award for Airmanship
- Assist AOG with annual Academy Founders' Day planning and execution

Nicole was the lead person to make the Graduate March Back from Jack's Valley happen this summer. Soon, they will be publishing a master calendar showing all of the schedules for Cadet Teams and Clubs, so we can see and plan for visits to our area.

Process to make things happen:

- Contact the AOG first. If they can make it happen, they will. Otherwise,
- Contact Nicole Cox
 - usafa.graduateliasion@usafa.edu
 - 719-333-8827
- Nicole will get you connected to the right POC.

Reunion Scheduling - Lots of heated discussion on class reunion scheduling. The major issue is that recent classes (30 years and less) resent being told that the 45-50-55 year reunions have precedence on the best dates. They would like to see some preference given to the 20 or 25th, when many grads have retired from the AF and have a chance of returning or having all reunions done the same weekend. The reunion team has done a lot study on the issue and here are the facts:

- Colleges and Universities that do a single reunion weekend rarely do it at homecoming. Often it is done just after graduation week, or some other time when all students are not present, to enable use of dorm rooms for accommodation. Just after graduation enables the college to keep a good number of undergraduate student workers to support the events, using work study funds. USAFA does its reunions with a small team from the AOG and Strategic Communications.
- Most classes request a reunion weekend that includes briefings from senior staff, contact with cadets and a home football game. This severely limits the number of weekends available. Couple that with requests to have the entire class stay in the same hotel, and for the class banquet to be held at or directly adjacent to the hotel, and you have narrowed the field to a handful of hotels on a handful of weekends, one of which is Parent's Weekend, and some of which are bound to be in cold weather.
- That said, most classes get their 1st or 2nd choice from the available weekends that meet their criteria. Class reps often do not pass this along, but throw the AOG under the bus.
- Key to getting a weekend you really like - focus on what you really want and "break the mold". For example, '69 is celebrating its 50th this year at USAFA, Navy game weekend. Since Navy is away at Navy, they will not have senior staff briefings, and they will view the game on big screen in a nice venue. They still get golf, being with classmates and seeing

cadets - they will probably have easier access to lunch with the cadets. Some other classes have done their reunions at different times of the year.

Thursday 29 August - Joint Session with the Parents Club Presidents.

After a few welcoming remarks by Mike Peterson (aka WebGuy), we commenced with the senior staff briefing, led by the Superintendent. Participating with him were the Commandant, the Dean nominee, Colonel Joel R. DeBoer, Commander, 306th Flying Training Group, and Mr. Nathan Pine, Director of Athletics.

Speaking first, General Jay Silveria '85, conveyed the following:

- The Association of Graduates and the Parent's Clubs, together as a team, are the support network for cadets, graduates, their parents, and their families. This role is vital to the success of cadets and grads. For the 62% of the Class of 2023, neither of their parents has served in uniform, so they have little knowledge of the military life, its rewards and sacrifices. There are 89 parent's clubs around the world.
- It is very important that we continue to make the Academy relevant to the Air Force, its current and future problems and needs.
- Today's parents are different from previous generations of cadets. They are more involved. Examples - 4000 parents and family members attended the Acceptance Day parade. Eight to ten thousand parents and family members are expected to participate in Parent's Weekend. The Class of 2023 inducted about 1150 basic cadets in June. An informal poll I conducted in the hotel breakfast room showed 6 cadet families - 2 doolie families, 2 3 degree families, 1 2 degree family and 1 firstie family, with their firstie. The Supt related that the Academy does not judge this behavior, but accepts and embraces it as it is, and will use it to the cadets and Academy's advantage.
- Class of 2019 Statistics
 - 528 are going to Pilot Training
 - 54 are going to Cyber Operator Training
 - 31 are going to Space Operator Training
 - 40 are going to Remote Pilot Training
 - 65% of the class are in Operations
 - 2 Rhodes Scholars
 - 110 immediate graduate school
 - 2nd most successful intercollegiate athletic year ever
- RUMOR CONTROL
 - Closed circuit video cameras are being installed in Vandenberg and Sijan Halls. They are ONLY being installed in common areas (hallways, stairwells, common rooms - not bathrooms or cadet bedrooms) for safety and security. The cameras will eventually be installed in other common areas such as Fairchild Hall.
- New Stuff
 - Uniforms - new utility uniforms (OCP - Operational Camouflage Pattern) will replace the ABU (Airmen Battle Uniform) for all cadets. The uniforms will be issued over the next year to the various classes as the supply is shipped, but the uniforms will not be worn until the entire Cadet Wing has received their issue. Then a changeover date will be set, and the old ABU worn no more.
 - New Visitor Center planned. Outside the North Gate, between the gate and I-25, is a piece of land being leased to a developer, by the government. The developer, AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE, will develop the land. Included in the development, AT NO EXPENSE TO THE GOVERNMENT, the developer will build a visitor center for Academy use.

- Chapel closes on September 4th for a four year renovation. The contractor will build a protective envelope around the chapel, and it will be stripped down to the frame, and essentially be rebuilt. It is believed this will eliminate the leaking problems that have plagued the Chapel since it opened.
- Plans are going forward on the Cyber Center which will be on the south side of the Parade Ground, and the east side of Fairchild Hall.
- Sijan Hall will begin renovation late next year. It will be done section by section, in phases, to allow cadets to be properly housed. The plan is to free up space in Vandenberg and Sijan, shift the squadrons to free up the first section, do the work on that section, ready it for occupation, move a unit in, and repeat.
- Cadets can now bring their own device (laptop/desktop) and connect it to the network. They are still being issued computers, and they do not need to bring their own, but are allowed to.
- The Academy will undertake a major upgrade to its fiber access including redundant paths via the North and South gates to the I-25 corridor fiber. This upgrade will provide better access to collaborate with other colleges and universities from Pueblo to Laramie. A new scheduling system will also be implemented in the near future and it will provide more flexibility for academic scheduling past the traditional M and T scheduling still being used. No decision has been made to change scheduling at this time.
- The Academy is not immune to societal issues such as gender and race relations. The policy of our Academy is to face these issues head on, and deal with them upfront. The Academy current has 1197 women enrolled in its 4 classes, and we are working to grow those numbers further. The Supt emphasized that he and his staff are dedicated to working these issues vigorously and completely. It is important to note that the Commandant, the Dean and the Superintendent's Command Chief are all women, with outstanding records of performance.

The Commandant and the Dean each spoke, and essentially covered the same topics as our discussion with them yesterday.

Nate Pine, the Athletic Director, spoke next. It is important to note that he is not a government employee, but rather an employee of the Falcon Foundation. This job structure allows him to act and operate more like a Division 1 Athletic Director, which is a significant change. He is excited about the program and the quality of the cadets he serves.

Finally, we had some brief remarks by the Flying Training Group Commander. He reviewed the current program as follows:

- Glider Program - all cadets get 4 orientation rides, some cadets get glider pilot training
- Parachute - Jump training to rating is conducted at FT Benning and the Academy, Jump Team is very active. Twin Otters are used for jump training at the Academy.
- Powered Flight training is conducted at the Academy. Many cadets complete enough that they do not need to go to IFT at Pueblo. The Flying Training Group is also responsible for the operation at Pueblo.

Interesting fact - Active duty service commitments for graduating cadets are 5 years for non-flying, 10 years for flying. congress has been asking questions about retention and cost effectiveness (cost of education vs return on investment). The questions are driven by the total cost (Academy plus UPT, Type training) and current retention rates in an economy that has been growing for nearly 10 years.

Mike Peterson, aka WebGuy, and head of Strategic Communications for the Superintendent, made a few remarks covering the same topics as yesterday. Important additions:

- The marketing division is working with a company to write the cadet story for the new Visitor's Center, and to design the exhibits around that story.
- The team is also looking at the possibility of bus tour for visitors, not only to reduce the traffic issues, but to provide a better visitor experience. No further details are available at this time.

The next presentation was a short one by the two principals of the Dennis P. Rando Cadet Humanitarian Fund. The Rando Fund is named in honor of C1C Dennis P. Rando, one of several cadets in the 1990s who perished before graduating in flight training accidents. When an honor guard of his classmates had to pay their travel expenses to his memorial service from their own pockets, a group of Massachusetts parents founded the Rando Fund to meet this need. Since 1997, the Rando Fund has raised private support to provide the means for cadets' travel to represent the Academy at services of their fallen colleagues. In a typical year, the fund pays out about \$25,000 for this travel. In 2012 the USAFA Endowment assumed the collection and management of such gifts, with no change to the Rando Fund mission. We as a chapter should consider making an annual gift to this fund. More information can be found at the following address: <http://www2.usafa.org/Give/rando>

KAFA can be listened to live at: <http://streamdb7web.securenetsystems.net/v5/KAFA>

After a break for lunch, the Parent's Club Presidents and the AOG Presidents moved into separate breakout groups. We had a presentation by Dr. Rita Murray on generational differences, giving some great insight in how the different generations think, communicate and engage. The video of this talk will be available soon and should be viewed by the board. The bottom line, the generations do these things differently, and that directly affect what approaches will be successful in engaging them in alumni activities. One size will not fit all, and we will only be successful if we tailor our activities to each.

We then had a short presentation of the activities undertaken by the Kansas City chapter, conducted by Greg Shuey '68. Their goals were to get good participation and achieve their chapter purpose through the following approach:

- Think outside the box
- Be innovative
- Team with local organizations
- Get the public involved

They have a small graduate community, so they have opened their activities to their Army and Navy groups. They have done a lot of big events, but not by themselves, but by teaming with bigger organizations such as the Commemorative Air Force and the Airlines History Museum. Greg's slides are attached.

The last breakout session focused on the Chapter Handbook. We made a number of suggestions for changes, which the AOG team captured. They will collate, refine and provide the proposed changes back to the Chapters for review and approval. Specific changes recommended were:

- Provide the \$500 travel reimbursement to new chapters as well as distinguished chapters. If you want to form new chapters and get them off on the right foot, having the chapter president to the meeting in their first year would be very helpful.
- Provide more flexibility on the date of Founder's Day - Spring is a very busy time for venues, high school seniors, etc.
- Encourage Parent Club chapters to have a New Appointee Brunch and have AOG chapters participate.
- Make a Service Project a requirement for Distinguished Chapter status

The meeting then concluded.