Meeting Minutes – Class Advisory Senate, 13 October 2026 – FINAL

1. Call to Order: CAS President John Cinnamon, '91, called the meeting to order at 1700.

2. Members in Attendance: See Attachment 1

3. **Others in Attendance**:

Cathy Almand, '90, Chairman, USAFA AOG Board of Directors

Chris Bennett, '93, USAFA AOG Executive Vice President, Alumni Relations

DT Thompson, Gen (ret), '85, USAFA AOG/Foundation Capital Campaign

Naviere Walkewicz, '99, Senior Vice President, USAFA AOG Engagement

Michele Bergeman, Director of Heritage, USAFA AOG and Foundation

4. Previous Minutes:

You can log into the AOG website to find copies of minutes by:

https://www.usafa.org/class-advisory-senate

5. John Cinnamon, '91, President Class Advisory Senate.

John opened the meeting, greeting all attendees and describing the agenda and goals for the meeting. He reminded all that our CAS priorities are: (1) to Support the Alumni, (2) to Support the current mission on the Hill, and (3) to Preserve our Heritage.

Today's agenda will include briefings on the recent AOG Graduate Survey and the AOG/Foundation Capital Campaign.

John then asked Chris Bennett, '93 to begin by briefing the recent AOG Graduate Survey.

6. Chris Bennett, '93, USAFA AOG Executive Vice President, Alumni Relations:

- Chris stated that there were about 9,000 graduates that participated in the recent AOG Graduate survey; they received about a 20% response. This is about 3% higher than the survey received in 2022.
- There is a clear pattern in the data, suggesting that pride rises around what USAFA did for them and falls when grads perceive that USAFA is no longer living up to what they believe it should be. Expectations vary because grads were shaped by different eras.
- See slide #6 for data sorted on pride by decade.
- The AOG's opinion is that about 15% of grads have a negative opinion of the USAFA.
    - NOTE that this is 15% of the 20% that actually responded.
    - One senator asked that because this is such a small representation of the graduate population, if this opinion can be considered statistically valid.

    - Another senator asked if the 15% was in the last decade or two, first decade, or a valid cross-section of all graduates.

- Additional survey data was provided in the follow-on slides.
- The joint mission of the USAF Academy Association and Foundation is to (1) support the Academy, (2) serve our graduates, and (3) preserve the heritage of the institution and the Long Blue Line. 47% of respondents said they were "somewhat familiar," and 27% said they were "not very familiar" with the AOG/Foundation joint mission and activities.
- With respect to graduate views on Advocacy, 76% of survey grads responded that the AOG's time should be devoted to Service and 24% to Advocacy.
- 50% of respondents stated that "Any kind of AOG advocacy should remain focused on graduate services and supporting the Academy." "80% prefer either no advocacy or advocacy limited primarily to graduates and USAFA."
- Selected quotes from the graduates in the Graduate survey are provided on Slide #22.
- "Different generations often describe the AFA through the experiences that shaped them." "They may reflect different experiences of the same institution."
- Graduates frame the AFA through either an External Political Lens or an Intuitional Lens. "They appear more likely to find common ground when discussing the Academy's mission and values than when discussing broader political narratives."
- A Stewardship Model for the AOG's Role: "where and when advocacy occurs, grads want it closely aligned with USAFA, Cadets and the Long Blue Line. Grads appeared more interested in the AOG serving as a steward of the institution than as a participant in broader political and social issues."
- The attached slides have much more detail on the Graduate Survey.

7. DT Thompson, Gen (ret), '85, briefed the AOG/Foundation Capital Campaign Workshop.

- The previous capital campaign, called "Defining Our Future" raised $300M, benefitting the Madera Center, Athletic Teams and Facilities, Cadet Clubs, Endowed Chairs, IFC, AOG/Graduate programs and others.
- The new campaign goal is $500M.
    - The Planning phase is 2026 to 2027.
    - Period of Performance is 2027 to 2032.
    - It is led by Foundation Co-Chairs Gen (ret) Mark Welsh and Mr. Matt Young.
    - Space Force and AOG Board Liaison is DT Thompson.
- The beneficiaries are the Academy and the Graduate Community.
- The donors are the AFA Alumni, Industry, Philanthropic Organizations and others.
- Sample Needs and Projects include:
    - USAFA Warfare Center;
    - Integrated Engineering Center;
    - Space Education Center;

    - Carlton (Supt's) House;
    - Sijan and Arnold Hall renovations;
    - Classroom modernization;
    - CCLD and IFC;
    - Academic /Research/Study Endowments;
    - Falcon Foundation and other Scholarships;
    - Heritage projects;
    - Enhanced use Lease/Land development along I-25 corridor;
- There are several AOG Board inputs thus far:
    - Doolittle Hall renovation;
    - Cadet Leisure Center in Arnold Hall with free pizza, snacks, games;
    - Endowment to fund Next of Kin support;
    - Increase /fund endowment for reunions and tailgates;
    - Increase Endowment to fund AOG operations and budget;
    - Selected A&F intern programs;
    - Inputs are not limited to items within AOG span of control;
- The next steps include processing through the AOG Board, establishing a Planning Committee to finish collecting inputs and outreach to benefactors, and AOG/Foundation advocacy, engagement and execution.
- A preliminary list of potential projects and financial goals is provided. The attached slides have more details.
- Gen (ret) Thompson asked the Class Senate for other ideas for them to consider.

8. John Cinnamon,'91 President, Class Advisory Senate.

- John reminded everyone that the deadline for volunteering for or for nominating someone for one of the CAS Officers positions or the Executive Committee is 30 October 2026. He then asked anyone who wishes to run for a position to speak for a few minutes, explaining why they wish to run for office. Ski Wagasky, '72 volunteered for President, AJ Ranft, '73 volunteered for Vice President, and Tom Hayden, '74 volunteered for Secretary. Dan Beatty and Heidi Schlagheck volunteered for the Executive Committee. Others interested may contact John before 30 Oct 2026.
- John stated that there are 21 candidates that have applied for a position on the AOG Board of Directors for the upcoming Board election.

9. Other Business/ Round Table:

- John asked for any other new business and suggestions. Several senators offered suggestions:
    - The AOG Next of Kin (NOK) coordinator should become a committee.
    - To more easily be able to send information and inquiries directly to their respective classes, the AOG should set up a separate account for each senator to

log into and access the AOG database for their class only. Senators are already provided access to their respective class contact information, but must go through the AOG to send any emails to their classes as a whole.

- Every senator should encourage their classmates (who are AOG members) to vote in the upcoming AOG Board of Directors election. The AOG election will be held from February 2 to March 2, 2027. AOG members should educate themselves on who is running and then vote. Candidate information will be available to view on January 1, 2027. NOTE that anyone can become an AOG member at no cost and then be able to vote three days later.
- It was suggested that the Senate might consider each of the 21 candidates for AOG Board of Directors position elections be asked to address the Class Advisory Senate. Others suggested that this might be too cumbersome.
- Nominations are being accepted for the annual AOG awards and are due by 18 December 2026. The AOG website has details for award nominations at: usafa.org/2027election. Awards include: (1) The Distinguished Graduate Award (AFA classes 1959-1986); (2) The Leadership Achievement Award (AFA classes 1987-2010); (3) The Young Alumni Excellence Award (AFA classes 2011-2026).

10. John Cinnamon,'91 President, Class Advisory Senate.

- John closed the CAS meeting and thanked Senators for their continued support and participation in today's discussion.

11. Next Meetings:

- AOG Board, 18 February 2027
- CAS Executive Committee, 12 January 2027
- CAS, 16 February 2027
- CAS Schedule: https://usafa.org/media/Documents/AOG%20Board%20of%20Directors%20Meeting%20Minutes/CAS%20Documents/CAS-Schedule-26to27updated1May26.pdf

12. Close/Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 1851
Minutes submitted by: Tom Hayden '74, CAS Secretary
Minutes approved by: John Cinnamon, '91, CAS President

Attachments:

1. Members in Attendance
2. Graduate Survey Slides
3. Capital Campaign Slides

ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

AS OF: 13 October 2026

Atch 1: Members in Attendance:

59 Ed Montgomery
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61 Dean Jones
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63 John Borling
64 Doug Jenkins
64 (Jay Kelley – G)
65 Jim Vick
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68 Hartsel Beckett
69
70 Gerry Shaw
70 (Roger Hill – B)
71 Tom Berry
72 Ski Wagasky
72 (Andy Gessner – B)
73 **A J Ranft –Vice President**
74 **Tom Hayden – Secretary**
75 Bruce Mitchell
76 Dan Beatty
77 Joe Niemeyer
78 Wayne Hermandorfer
79 Randy Helms
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82 Jim Ratti
83 Court Collier
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87 Tim Matson
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90 Oliver Washington
91 **John Cinnamon – President**
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93 (Chris Bennett – G)
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97 Pete Arnold
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03 Heidi Schlagheck
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05 John Tamisitis
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[Names in ( ) are non-senators]
["B" = Backup]
["G" = Guest]