



EMBRACE CULTURE. EMPOWER PEOPLE. #NCLS2024

VALUING HUMAN CONDITIONS, CULTURES, AND SOCIETIES

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2024



NATIONAL CHARACTER
& LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

WELCOME LETTER

E M B R A C E C U L T U R E . E M P O W E R P E O P L E .



On behalf of the 21st U.S. Air Force Academy Superintendent, Lieutenant General Richard M. Clark, and our entire Center for Character and Leadership Development team, welcome to the 31st Annual National Character and Leadership Symposium!

NCLS is the Academy's premier character and leadership event, which highlights our number one strategic goal to **Develop Leaders of Character** across all aspects of the Academy experience. This year's NCLS theme focuses on our efforts to **Embrace Culture** and **Empower People**, based on our institutional outcome of **Valuing Human Conditions, Cultures, and Societies**, as we prepare leaders for the future fight and service to our nation. We are excited to have you join us to explore these topics.

Our speaker lineup was put together from nominations across the Academy and beyond. We have carefully crafted an agenda with a diverse group of leaders from all walks of life, balancing their viewpoints to offer a wide range of topics and perspectives. We challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and listen to at least one speaker who approaches leadership through a different point of view. Also, maybe most importantly, be sure to engage with your fellow participants to continue the conversation and challenge each other, possibly applying new ideas as part of your own personal and professional development. Your best experiences at NCLS will likely involve engaging with those around you, especially when they don't think like you.

Thank you for taking time to participate in NCLS! If this is your first visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy, we hope you enjoy this beautiful location as part of your symposium experience. Be sure to download the NCLS 2024 app by scanning the QR code in the program for the latest updates, announcements, and schedules. Our NCLS team is standing by to assist you at their command center in the Falcon Club (719-333-7001) and at information desks in both Arnold Hall and Fairchild Hall. Thank you again for your participation and willingness to **Embrace Culture** and **Empower People** at **#NCLS2024!**

KURT A. WENDT, Colonel, USAF
Director, Center for Character and Leadership Development

A LEADER OF CHARACTER...

Lives Honorably
... Consistently practices the virtues embodied in the Core Values

Lifts Others
... To their best possible selves

Elevates Performance
... Toward a common & noble purpose

Honesty, Courage, Accountability, Duty, Loyalty, Respect, Humility, Mission, Discipline, Teamwork

Challenge, Support, Develop, Inspire

Always Better, Always Higher

AF NATIONAL CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM
CENTER FOR CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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GENERAL INFORMATION



CONNECTING TO WIFI

1. Open your device's WiFi
2. Connect to **AF_ACADEMY_GUEST**



PARKING INFORMATION

Parking in the Cadet Area is restrictive, and there is limited public parking available at Arnold Hall. All guests are required to check in at Falcon Club and take the shuttle into the Cadet Area.



DOWNLOAD THE NCLS APP

NCLS attendees can easily manage schedules, access event content, stay updated, network, and engage with sessions before, during, and after NCLS.



Scan to download the NCLS App



TRANSPORTATION

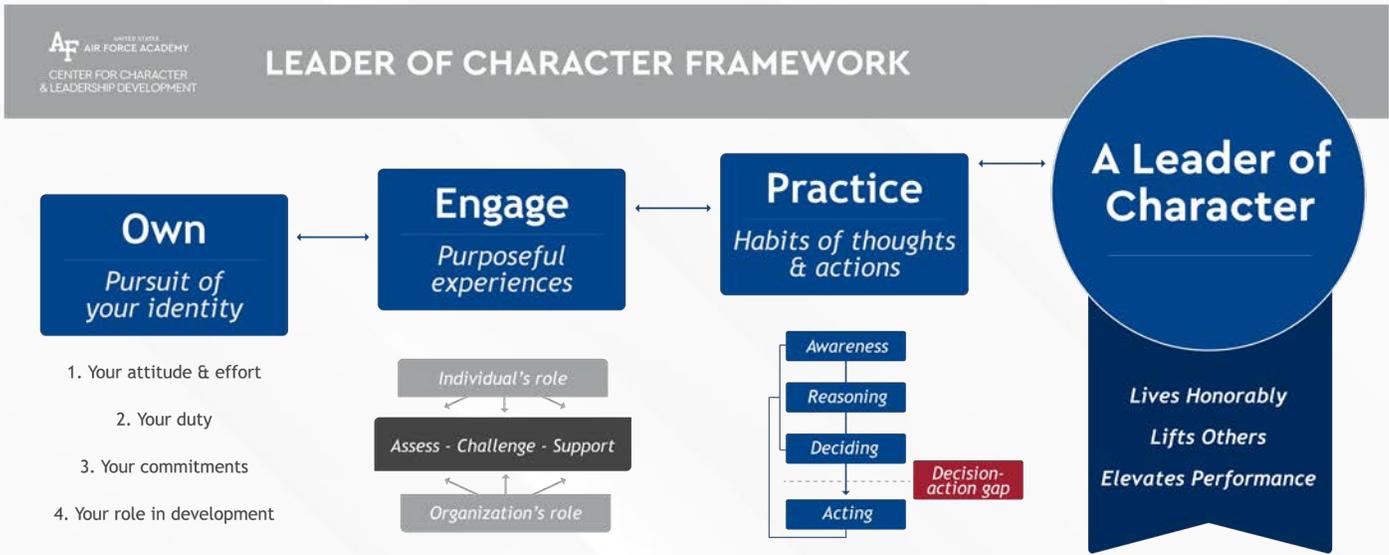
Shuttles will run continuously during the symposium. Bus stops are located at Arnold Hall, Fairchild Hall, and the Falcon Club. Shuttles will run from 7:15 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. Additionally, there will be shuttle vans on the Terrazzo to transport attendees to and from the various venues.

For guest departures on Feb. 23rd, shuttles will depart from the Arnold Hall Circle and from Base Lodging to the Colorado Springs Airport every 30 minutes 5-9 p.m. For guest departures on Feb. 24th, shuttles will depart from the Arnold Hall Circle and from Base Lodging to the Colorado Springs airport every 30 minutes from 4-11 a.m. Please note, NCLS does not provide transportation to Denver International Airport.

MAKING THE MOST OF NCLS

Developing Leaders of Character at the U.S. Air Force Academy

The mission of the Academy is to educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead Airmen and Guardians in service to our nation. Our Leader of Character Framework (below) guides the development of Academy graduates who possess the attributes necessary to fulfill the nation's expectations in their service as officers and citizens. It underpins and reinforces each of the U.S. Air Force Academy Institutional Outcomes and provides a platform for the growth of life-long leadership. The Leader of Character Framework's purpose is to provide all Academy personnel, military and civilian, with a deliberate, flexible, and foundational conceptual framework to use in developing themselves and others as leaders of character who live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance.



A “Leader of Character” is defined as someone who respects the dignity of others and practices habits consistent with the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Force Core Values by: (1) Living Honorably; (2) Lifting Others; and (3) Elevating Performance. A leader of character:

1. Lives Honorably...Consistently Practices the Virtues Embodied in the Core Values (Integrity First). Our values and associated virtues serve as a compass which points to our “true north” and keeps us on a path expected of those who serve in the profession of arms. Ten virtues underpin our Core Values: Honesty, Courage, Accountability, Humility, Duty, Loyalty, Respect, Mission, Discipline, and Teamwork.
2. Lifts Others...To their Best Possible Selves (Service Before Self). Each one of us has the capacity to pursue the best of who we are, our best possible selves. Leaders help others become their best possible selves by recognizing, supporting, and lifting their strengths, talents, aspirations, and diverse perspectives. Lifting others is about valuing human dignity and recognizing the inherent worth of everyone.
3. Elevates Performance...Toward a Common and Noble Purpose (Excellence In All We Do). A leader of character goes beyond the minimum standard of expected performance and transforms how things are done. They focus on the common good instead of self-interest. Always striving to be better, a leader of character continually seeks to improve the mission.

How we develop as a leader of character:

Development is a process experienced by an individual, but never an end state. Our organization seeks to do the work of development, by engaging leaders of character in purposeful experiences that assess, challenge, and support. In doing so, we influence their identity, and arm them with the competencies to better practice habits of thoughts and actions in the context of the leadership work to be accomplished for their current and future roles.



Scan to learn more about our Leader of Character Framework.

NCLS 2024

Our NCLS 2024 theme of “Valuing Human Conditions, Cultures, and Societies” explores our understanding of what it is to be human and what qualities good citizens and leaders should have. Our speakers will focus on the common experiences, emotions, and challenges we all share as humans. As citizens of unique societies and cultures, we examine how both our commonalities and our different perspectives come together to create effective teams. In our global and interconnected environment, we must understand that success results from understanding ourselves and others, and that teams work best when all members feel valued and respected.

We hope that you utilize the following pages to document your observations and lessons learned during NCLS so you may reflect on your overall experience and ultimately grow as a leader of character – a leader who lives honorably, lifts others, and elevates performance in every team you encounter. Please take time to provide session ratings, testimonials, and complete the comprehensive event survey after your event experience. We welcome your input, feedback, and speaker suggestions through the NCLS 2024 app.

A LOOK BACK

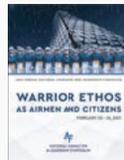
EMBRACE CULTURE. EMPOWER PEOPLE.



2023
Leadership, Teamwork, and Organizational Management



2022
Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity



2022
Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Citizens



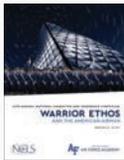
2020
Valuing Human Conditions, Cultures, and Societies



2019
Leadership, Teamwork and Organizational Management



2018
Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity



2017
Warrior Ethos and the American Airman



2016
Professionalism and the Profession of Arms



2015
Serving Our Nation: Our Calling, Core Values and Commitments



2014
Character Overcoming Conflict: Individual Stories, Global Impact



2013
The Silver Lining: Courage through Adversity



2012
Walk the Walk: Leaders in Ethical Action



2011
Strength Within, Leadership Throughout



2010
Guardians of Trust: Leaders in the Modern Era



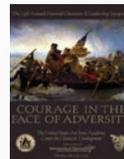
2009
Answering the Nation's Call: Our Legacy in the Making



2008
Impressioned Citizenship: Can One Make a Difference?



2007
All Created Equal: Human Dignity & Respect



2006
Courage in the Face of Adversity



2005
Leading Positive Change: Raising the Standard of Excellence



2004
Teamwork: Working Together to Achieve Excellence



2003
Moral Courage and Servant Leadership in Modern Times



2002
Undaunted Leadership: Unassailable Integrity, Increasing Service, Uncompromising Excellence



2001
Integrity First: Reflection, Inspiration & Aspiration



2000
Service Before Self: Heroes, Hymns and Hardiness



1999
Integrity First: Courage, Competence, & Commitment



1998
Excellence in All We Do: Personally and Professionally



1997
Service Before Self



1996
Integrity in the Profession of Arms



1995
Strength through Diversity



1994
Women in Leadership

SPECIAL THANKS

The Superintendent, faculty, staff, and Cadet Wing of the U.S. Air Force Academy would like to thank the following groups for their generous support:



USAF Academy Class of '59



USAF Academy Class of '73
NCLS Flagship Sponsor



USAF Academy Class of '74



USAF Academy Class of '77



USAF Academy Class of '93



Muse Family Foundation
Lt Col (Ret) Earl A. Enix '77 and Mrs. Candy Enix
Land of the Free Foundation

The 31st Annual National Character & Leadership Symposium would not have been possible without the following organizations and individuals who graciously gave their time and talents:

10th Communications Squadron
10th Civil Engineering Squadron
10th Force Support Squadron
U.S. Air Force Academy Strategic Communications
U.S. Air Force Academy Protocol
Fairchild Hall Facility and AV Support
Arnold Hall Facility and AV Support
U.S. Air Force Academy Admissions
Mitchell Hall and Staff
Permanent Party and Cadet Speaker Escorts

U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School
U.S. Air Force Academy Commandant of Cadets
U.S. Air Force Academy Davis Airfield
U.S. Air Force Academy Dean of Faculty
U.S. Air Force Academy Department of Athletics
U.S. Air Force Academy Chaplain Corps
Aleut Management Services
Beechwood Productions
2nd AV Squadron, Hill AFB

Contents of the event guide, and the words and presentation materials of the speakers are not the official views of, or endorsed by, the US Government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

VALUING HUMAN CONDITIONS, CULTURES, AND SOCIETIES

CADET WING KICKOFF



Jose Sarduy

Comedian
Lt Col, USAF

Lieutenant Colonel Jose Sarduy, Class of '99, is a Reserve officer in the U.S. Air Force. Born in Cuba, he was deported because of his father's political prisoner status and came to the U.S. at a young age. As an accomplished aviator, Sarduy is a veteran, having served in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He's been featured in the Air Force Times and was selected for the 2007 Latino Laugh Festival in Los Angeles and the Lucky 21 Contest at The Comedy Festival in Las Vegas.

His comedy career started in New York and Philadelphia, gaining stage experience anytime he wasn't serving. He's been on CNN, CBS, Fox, and Lifetime, was the co-host of NUVO TV's "Stand Up and Deliver," appeared on Fox TV's "Laughs," and his comedy specials on Dry Bar Comedy are some of the most viewed. He has also showcased his valuable knowledge and experience in aviation and aeronautical engineering as an aviation expert on "Mysteries Decoded" on The WB and "Weird Earth" on The Weather Channel.

Cuban Pilot

Lieutenant Colonel Jose Sarduy gathers material from a wealth of life experiences and takes comedy audiences on the rollercoaster ride that's been his life, including his time as a U.S. Air Force Academy cadet and U.S. Air Force pilot. He performs all over the world now, an audience favorite for his ability to make life-threatening moments hysterical.

COLVIN KEYNOTE LECTURE



Bryan Stevenson

Executive Director, Equal Justice Initiative

Bryan Stevenson, the Equal Justice Initiative founder and executive director, led the human rights organization to win major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill, and aiding children prosecuted as adults. Stevenson has argued and won multiple cases at the U.S. Supreme Court, including a 2019 ruling protecting condemned prisoners who suffer from dementia and a landmark 2012 ruling that banned mandatory life-imprisonment-without-parole sentences for all children 17 or younger.

Stevenson has initiated major new anti-poverty and anti-discrimination efforts that challenge inequality in America. He led the creation of two highly acclaimed cultural sites that opened in 2018: the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. These new national landmark institutions chronicle the legacy of slavery, lynching, and racial segregation and the connection to mass incarceration and contemporary issues of racial bias.

He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government. Stevenson has received over 50 honorary doctoral degrees, including degrees from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, and Oxford University. Stevenson is the author of the critically acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller, *Just Mercy*, which was named by *Time Magazine* as one of the 10 Best Books of Nonfiction for 2014. Stevenson's work has won him numerous awards including the prestigious MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Prize. In 2023, he was awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Joe Biden.

American Injustice: Mercy, Humanity, and Making a Difference

Bryan Stevenson, human rights advocate, will share his experiences and perspective from his work to protect basic human rights for the most vulnerable Americans.

CLASS OF '59 LEADERSHIP LECTURE

This year, we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the formal establishment of the U.S. Air Force Academy, signed into law by President Eisenhower on April 1, 1954. This legislation paved the way for the construction of the Academy's campus and the entrance of our first class, the Class of 1959, the following year.



Dr. Kjell N. Lindgren

Astronaut, NASA

Dr. Kjell N. Lindgren, Class of '95, was selected in June 2009 as one of nine members of the 20th NASA astronaut class. After two years of training and evaluation, he was assigned technical duties in the Spacecraft Communicator Branch and Extravehicular Activity Branch. Lindgren served as the lead spacecraft communicator for Expedition 30.

Lindgren flew on Expedition 44/45 and logged 141 days (about four and a half months) in space. He participated in two spacewalks and more than a hundred different scientific experiments. He also served as commander of NASA's SpaceX Crew-4 mission to the International Space Station, returning home on Oct. 14, 2022.

At the U.S. Air Force Academy, Lindgren was a member of the "Wings of Blue" parachute team, where he served as an instructor, a jumpmaster, and a member of the Academy's intercollegiate national championship team.

Lindgren received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the U.S. Air Force Academy (1995), a Master of Science degree in Cardiovascular Physiology from Colorado State University (1996), and a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Colorado (2002). He completed a three-year residency in Emergency Medicine, a National Library of Medicine Post-Doctoral Fellowship and Master of Health Informatics, a two-year residency in Aerospace Medicine (2008), and a Master of Public Health (2007). Lindgren is a board-certified physician in Emergency Medicine.

Beyond Borders: How Space Exploration Brings Us Together

Dr. Kjell N. Lindgren shares how his journey from U.S. Air Force Academy cadet to NASA astronaut has helped him appreciate the diversity of human cultures and how we all have a role to play in protecting our planet and each other. Lindgren has had the privilege of seeing our planet from a unique perspective. From space, it is clear how interconnected our world is and how we all share the same home. Working with people from all over the world in the space program, he has learned that despite differences in culture, language, and beliefs, we all share a common humanity and have the same basic needs.

THE FALCON FOUNDATION WILLIAM “BUD” BRECKNER LECTURE



Scott Kirby

CEO, United Airlines

Scott Kirby, Class of '89 and chief executive officer of United Airlines, has spent the past three decades working in the airline business. He was appointed to this position in 2020 just as United Airlines faced the worst crisis in its history caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under his leadership, United Airlines made strategic investments to execute the company's strategy, including a United Next growth plan, a commitment to be 100%-green by 2050 without relying on traditional carbon offsets. United Airlines' strategic plan also offers action on diversity, equity, and inclusion with the opening of the United Aviate Academy. The Academy hopes to train about 5,000 new pilots by 2030, including at least half women or people of color.

Prior to United Airlines, Kirby's 30-year career in aviation included time at US Airways and American Airlines where he also served in presidential roles. He is data-driven, focused on strategy, and motivated by culture and people. Kirby, a well-known industry veteran, can navigate uncertain times and has a bold vision for establishing United Airlines as a top airline in the history of aviation.

Kirby earned his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Operations Research from the U.S. Air Force Academy and a Master of Science in Operations Research from George Washington University.

Why Culture Matters

Scott Kirby shares impactful moments from his journey from cadet to CEO of United Airlines. His leadership during United Airline's organizational cultural change shows us that good truly does lead the way, and leaders cannot shy away from making the tough decisions that put people first.

MUSE FAMILY FOUNDATION

KEYNOTE LECTURE

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Missy Franklin

Olympic Swimmer

Missy Franklin, a competitive swimmer since she was 5 years old, won four gold medals and one bronze medal at the 2012 Olympic Games. Franklin’s performance in the 200-meter backstroke broke the world record and marked the first time that an American won the event in 40 years. She followed her Olympic success by winning six gold medals at the 2013 FINA World Championships, and, at the time, became the most decorated female swimmer in history at a single world championship. In 2014, she released a documentary, “Touch the Wall,” captivating viewers with a behind the scenes look at the intense preparation required to compete at such an elite level.

Franklin was awarded the 2015 Collegiate Woman of the Year and the Honda Cup for her collegiate athletic achievements. She was named “World Swimmer of the Year” and “American Swimmer of the Year” by Swimming World Magazine and earned the ESPY for Best Female Olympian in 2013 and Best Female College Athlete in 2015. Franklin brought home her final gold medal from the 2016 Rio Olympics for her performance in the 4x200-meter relay.

Retired in 2018, Franklin completed her bachelor’s degree in Psychology and a minor in Education at the University of Georgia and shifted her focus to speaking engagements, brand partnerships, and philanthropy. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame and appointed to the Board of the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation where she provides oversight and guidance for the organization’s global work, which includes funding more than 250 Sport for Development programs worldwide. Franklin advocates for topics, such as mental health awareness, female empowerment, and overcoming failure.

The Importance of Culture and Connections: An Olympian’s Perspective

Missy Franklin discusses how culture, connection, and the human condition were a part of her journey to Olympic gold and beyond. Franklin will share her story of resilience and inspire audiences to continue reaching for their own dreams.

CLASS OF '93 KEYNOTE PANEL

12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year, 2023

Join us as representatives from the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2023 share how they experience valuing human conditions, cultures, and societies in their careers. These Airmen were selected from across the U.S. Air Force as enlisted members who exemplify superior leadership, job performance, and personal achievement. Audiences will better understand how to utilize each team member's unique strengths and experiences after hearing from these Outstanding Airmen.

Panelists are subject to change due to individual availability and mission needs.



TSgt Jennel L. Edwards

Technical Sergeant Jennel L. Edwards is a Security Forces Evaluator for the 91st Security Forces Group, Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota.

Edwards is responsible for conducting evaluations for security forces members across four squadrons supporting the 91st Missile Wing's mission of global deterrence by defending America with the world's premier combat-ready Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force. Additionally, Edwards is responsible for scheduling, records management, coordinating, and executing Higher Headquarters and Commanders Compliance Inspections. The 91st Security Forces Group consists of four squadrons, protecting 150 Minuteman III ICBMs, 15 missile alert facilities, and 150 remote launch facilities covering an 8,500-square-mile area in central North Dakota.

Edwards entered the U.S. Air Force in January 2007 and has an associate degree in Criminal Justice and a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Social Work.



MSgt Michael Galindo

Master Sergeant Michael Galindo is the Chief of Weapons and Tactics with the 502nd Security Forces Group, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas.

Galindo's leadership as the Senior Enlisted Leader for the 324th Training Squadron resulted in the successful graduation of 328 Air Force and Guardian flights. His interim role as a Security Forces Squadron Senior Enlisted Leader was equally commendable, overseeing the safety and security of 660,000 visitors during five base events, including the largest air show in Texas history. Galindo's leadership skills were critical in leading two flights of 161 Airmen and Soldiers through 338 criminal responses, the largest law enforcement mission in the U.S. Air Force. Furthermore, he integrated the local school district into active shooter training and operationalized Air Education and Training Command's first installation self-entry gate at Army North Command. Finally, Galindo's innovative approach to establishing the first law enforcement-focused weapons and tactics section with advanced technologies, cemented his status as an exceptional leader.

Galindo is from Texas and entered the U.S. Air Force in 2007. He has a bachelor's degree in Management.

CLASS OF '93 KEYNOTE PANEL



SrA Kostiantyn Khymchenko

Senior Airman Kostiantyn Khymchenko is a Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVAC/R) Journeyman at 633rd Civil Engineer Squadron, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

Khymchenko is assigned to the HVAC/R shop and is responsible for the installation, operation, and execution of preventive and corrective maintenance of 13,000 HVAC/R systems across 614 facilities totaling 6.8 million square feet valued at 3.5 billion dollars.

Khymchenko grew up in Ukraine and entered the U.S. Air Force in 2020. He has an associate degree in Construction Technology, a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Administrative Management, and an associate degree in Mechanical and Electrical Technology.



MSgt Kimberly Mastrocola

Master Sergeant Kimberly Mastrocola is the Chief of Logistics for Rapid Capabilities Development, Air Force Special Operations Command at Headquarters U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command in Hurlburt Field, Florida.

Mastrocola is from New York and entered the U.S. Air Force in 2009. She has an associate degree in Applied Science, Aerospace Ground Equipment Technology, a bachelor's degree in Aeronautics, and a master's degree in Aeronautics and Space Studies. Mastrocola manages science and technology portfolios for emerging capabilities and directs the center of innovation across the command. Throughout her career, Mastrocola has served in numerous technical and leadership positions at the squadron and wing levels.

ENIX HERITAGE KEYNOTE LECTURE

Senior Leader Discussion Panel

The U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Force senior leaders will discuss how the two services work together while maintaining their own unique cultures through the lens of valuing human conditions, cultures, and societies.



Gen David W. Allvin

23rd Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force

General David W. Allvin, Class of '86, is the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force. As Chief, he serves as the senior uniformed U.S. Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training, and equipping of 689,000 active-duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the General and other service chiefs function as military advisors to the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the President.

Allvin commanded the squadron and wing levels, including the 97th Air Mobility Wing, Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma. He has held major command staff assignments and served on the Joint Staff.

Allvin is a command pilot with more than 4,600 hours in over 30 aircraft, including 800 flight test hours and 100 combat hours.



Gen Michael A. Guetlein

2nd Vice Chief of Space Operations

General Michael A. Guetlein is the Vice Chief of Space Operations of the U.S. Space Force. As Vice Chief, he is responsible for assisting the Chief of Space Operations in organizing, training, and equipping space forces in the United States and overseas, integrating space policy and guidance, and coordinating space-related activities for the U.S. Space Force and the Department of the U.S. Air Force.

Guetlein was commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Oklahoma State University in 1991. His acquisition experience spans air and space capabilities and systems across special operations, global power projection, missile warning and detection, and counter-space mission areas. Guetlein has commanded and led the flight, squadron, division, directorate, Program Executive Officer, and Field Command levels. Notable assignments include serving as the Commander of Space Systems Command, Deputy Director of the National Reconnaissance Office and Commander of the Air and Space Force Element, and Program Executive for Programs and Integration at the Missile Defense Agency.

ENIX HERITAGE KEYNOTE LECTURE



CMSAF JoAnne S. Bass

19th Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, and as such, provides direction for the enlisted force and represents their interests, as appropriate, to the American public and those in all levels of government. She serves as the personal advisor to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, proper utilization, and progress of more than 600,000 Total Force Airmen. Bass is the 19th Chief Master Sergeant appointed to the highest noncommissioned officer position.

Bass was raised as an Army dependent, living in several overseas and stateside locations, before entering the U.S. Air Force in 1993. Throughout her career, she has held a variety of leadership positions, serving at the squadron, group, wing, and major command levels. Before this assignment, she served as the Command Chief Master Sergeant, Second Air Force, Keesler Air Force Base, Mississippi.



CMSSF John F. Bentivegna

2nd Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force

Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force John F. Bentivegna serves at the highest enlisted level of leadership and provides direction for the enlisted force representing their interests to the American public and those in all levels of government. He acts as the personal advisor to the Chief of Space Operations and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, proper utilization, and development of the U.S. Space Force.

Bentivegna entered the U.S. Air Force in 1994 and has served in both the Maintenance and Space Operations career fields. He has held positions at the squadron, division, group, wing, Numbered Air Force, Field Command, and Headquarters Air and Space Force levels and has served as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief Operations Officer. He is also the Enlisted Space Systems Operations Career Field Manager, Headquarters Space Force, Washington, D.C. Chief Bentivegna entered the U.S. Space Force on Sept. 1, 2020.

SPEAKERS



Warren Acuncius

GEO Team Lead, Civil-Military Disaster Operations Division, USAID

Warren Acuncius serves as the geographical team lead for the U.S. Agency for International Development Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance in support of the Office of Field and Response Operations and its Civil-Military Operations Division. Acuncius, the former U.S. IndoPacific Command lead humanitarian assistance military advisor, was awarded the Department of Defense’s Joint Civilian Service Commendation Award, the highest-ranking joint civilian service award. Additionally, as the technical operations branch chief, he coordinated the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance’s chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives portfolio.

In addition to these primary duties, Acuncius facilitates 12 Joint Humanitarian Operations Courses (JHOCs) each year, educating American military colleagues on the U.S. Government’s best practices, policies, and procedures for conducting overseas humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. He has taught JHOCs in academic and diplomatic settings around the world and co-facilitates the UN’s Civil Military Coordination Course for an international audience. Acuncius also teaches graduate-level humanitarian coursework at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington.

Acuncius holds a bachelor’s degree from Western Washington University and graduated from the University of Washington with a master’s degree in Public Administration and an International Development Certificate. He was also a 2018 Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security— Emerging Leaders in Bio-Security Fellow—and has a 2023 graduate certificate in Global Health from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

Saving Lives and Alleviating Suffering: Humanitarian Assistance and the Unique Community Supporting It

Warren Acuncius discusses the history and evolution of principled humanitarian assistance and the diverse community tasked with providing lifesaving assistance to those most in need—before, during, and after disasters.

Earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, the conflict in Ukraine and Gaza, wildfires, droughts, infestations, super typhoons, refugees, and the internally displaced are a few examples of humanitarian emergencies the global community has sought to address through coordinated disaster relief efforts.

Acuncius draws on his operational experience supporting Ebola outbreaks in West Africa; the Nepal Earthquake; and disasters in Micronesia, Lebanon, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. He will also discuss how non-governmental organizations, governments, the United Nations, American Red Cross, the private sector, and international militaries can work together for a common cause.

SPEAKERS



Ellie Adelman

Executive Director, The Village Institute

Ellie Adelman, The Village Institute founding director, serves as an international community development and social innovation specialist. The Village, a holistic family development center, is designed for refugee and immigrant women and youth. Adelman works with community members, partners, and investors to build an innovative housing and services program for female-led refugee families. Using a human-centered design approach, Adelman collaborates with leaders in the refugee community, refugee services, and affordable housing to design and launch housing, mental health, and job training programs for single mother refugee families. Her efforts integrate social enterprise opportunities onsite, including a multicultural childcare center.

Adelman has spent 20 years working in international community development, peacebuilding, gender equity movements, and trauma therapy. Previous work included leading reproductive health and gender equity programming with Peace Corps in The Gambia and managing an innovative multimedia campaign promoting gender equity across five countries with Women and Girls Lead Global.

She holds a bachelor's degree in International Conflict Resolution and Spanish from Salisbury University, a master's degree in International Peacebuilding from the University of Notre Dame, and a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Denver.

From Village to Village - On Cultural Humility

Ellie Adelman shares hard-learned lessons about cultural humility drawing from her experience that includes spending two years in a small West African village as a Peace Corps Volunteer, working on a documentary project with communities all over the world, and building The Village Institute—a refugee family center in Colorado. When Adelman moved to India at 19, she didn't realize she would have to re-learn how to read, write, dress, eat, or even use the bathroom. This was the first of many experiences that taught her all she had to learn.

SPEAKERS



Timothy Alexander

Founder, Inspired by TA

Timothy Alexander, the founder of Inspired by TA, is a growth mindset inspirational speaker who has dedicated his life to motivating and inspiring others. Despite a life-changing car accident that left him paralyzed from the neck down in 2006, Alexander found his purpose through his unwavering faith and determination to inspire others.

Encouraging a strong, meaningful message that resonates with leaders in schools, students, athletes, and businesses alike, Alexander’s powerful story of resilience and perseverance serves as a testament to the strength of the human spirit. Through his work with Inspired by TA, Alexander uses his platform to inspire others to overcome adversity and reach their full potential.

As an Emmy Award winner, minister, keynote speaker, and graduate of the John Maxwell Certification Program, Alexander has been recognized for his leadership and perseverance. He received the Colonel Leo Thorsness Courage Award from the Youth Leadership Development Program and was also awarded the Challenge Coin from Command Sergeant Major Bennie Adkins. Alexander inspires others with his message of hope and determination and is dedicated to making a significant difference in the lives of those around him.

Alexander earned bachelor’s degrees in Criminal Justice and Communication Management and a master’s degree in Business Corporate Communications from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he became the first paraplegic to receive a football scholarship.

“We don’t need it to be easy; we just need it to be possible”

Timothy Alexander knows what it takes to beat the odds. No matter the obstacle that comes his way, he is determined to persevere and endure until the end. His drive helped him become a college football player when many believed that dream was impossible due to a car accident that left him paralyzed from the neck down. During Alexander’s session, he will tell his story and challenge those in attendance to live a life of resilience. He is a living example of his quote, “We don’t need it to be easy; we just need it to be possible.”

SPEAKERS



Dom Angiollo

Attorney, Policy Writer, U.S. Air Force Academy

Dom Angiollo, a U.S. Air Force Academy attorney-advisor specializing in military justice and policy, teaches an upper-level legal studies course titled Law 414: Race, Sex, and Justice. Angiollo also directs the legal office's cadet internship program. He has co-authored various policies, including the Academy's original Safe to Report policy, which was subsequently adopted by Congress and implemented across the Department of Defense. His work on the U.S. Air Force Academy Transgender Working Group and the DoD Service Academy Dependency Policy Working Group led to removing the barriers to service for many cadets. He is also the legal advisor to Falcon Athena (formerly the Women's Initiative Team) at the Academy and a Reserve JAG assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona.

Angiollo served on active duty as an Air Force judge advocate from 2005-14, deploying in 2008 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He received an ROTC commission as a second lieutenant upon graduating from the University of Notre Dame and attended Notre Dame Law School.

Angiollo currently serves on the Board of Directors and Policy Advocacy Committee for Inside-Out Youth Services, a local non-profit organization that builds access, equity, and power with LGBTQIA2+ young people.

Angiollo graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Government from the University of Notre Dame and earned a doctorate from the University of Notre Dame Law School.

Lessons in Allyship

Dom Angiollo discusses lessons learned in allyship by sharing successes and failures through the macro lens of military engagements and an individual lens using his personal experiences advocating on behalf of survivors, cadets, and the LGBTQIA2+ community. Allyship plays a critical role in warfighting, with a prime example as NATO whose charter speaks to the essence of allyship. An attack against one is an attack against all. Historically, we have also seen the role of allies in fighting against the oppression of marginalized communities. Regardless of the context, leaders of character have a critical role to play as allies.

SPEAKERS



Anthony Dickman

CWO3, U.S. Navy, Retired

Anthony W. Dickman, a veteran with 30 years of distinguished service as a Navy SEAL, served on active duty from 1991-2021. Dickman served in various leadership roles, including pilot, sniper, SEAL operator, assaulter and breacher, combat assault dog team leader, and special warfare training officer in charge within three different SEAL teams and in special warfare training and development units.

In addition to multiple special warfare schools and qualifications, Dickman is a rated multi-engine air transport pilot and flight instructor. He served our nation through seven combat deployments for Operation Enduring Freedom and two combat deployments for Operation Iraqi Freedom and earned three Bronze Stars with Valor, three Purple Hearts, and three Joint Service Commendation Medals with Valor awards. Dickman retired in 2021 to Chesapeake, Virginia.

Since retiring in 2021, Dickman has remained with Naval Special Warfare Training Detachment as a contractor, teaching the next generation of SEALs in tactics, techniques, and procedures that were lessons learned in combat. Dickman will leave his position with the detachment for a full-time position with Tomahawk Strategic Solutions. He will serve as the senior instructor and teach law enforcement and corporate security firearms, active shooter response, and close quarters combat techniques.

Dickman graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Colorado in 1991.

U.S. Navy SEALs and the Importance of Culture

Anthony Dickman shares experience from his career as a Navy SEAL and discusses how culture is a key component in a cohesive unit. Each military service, unit, and specialty has its own unique culture. He examines how collaborations are supported by essential understanding and valuing of unique cultures and units.

SPEAKERS



Dr. Kimberly Dickman

Assistant Professor, U.S. Air Force Academy

Dr. Kimberly Dickman, Center of Character and Leadership Development human relationships education assistant professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy, has worked as an educator and a mental health counselor for active-duty military members and their families. Her current role as an educator leverages her skills and talents to engage audiences to use science to impact their personal and professional lives. She leads in the areas of healthy relationships, emotional intelligence, high-quality connections, compassion in the workplace, inclusion and diversity, and positive psychology.

Dickman was the Academy's sexual assault prevention and response analyst for four years. Previously, she was the Air Force Chief of Training and Development at the Pentagon. She worked as a sexual assault response coordinator for the 70th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing/National Security Agency, RAF Mildenhall, and RAF Alconbury before becoming the Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program chief of education and development at the Pentagon. Previously, she worked for the Department of Defense Schools at Andersen Air Base in Yigo, Guam; Misawa Air Base in Misawa, Japan; U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul, Korea; and the Department of Psychiatry at Darnell Army Community Hospital at Fort Hood, Texas.

Dickman received a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Psychology from the University of Colorado, a Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling from Texas A&M University-Central Texas, a doctorate in Education from Argosy University, and a master's degree in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.

High Quality Connections

Dr. Kimberly Dickman describes the science of how high-quality connections (HQCs) impact us mentally, physically, psychologically, socially, and cognitively, including how they influence our work mission. Researchers describe loneliness as an epidemic that impacts personal wellbeing, organizational functioning, and social division. You can be surrounded by thousands of people and still be lonely. The antidote? HQCs. However, knowing science is not enough. Attendees will participate in some of the best-known ways to create HQCs, taking connections into their personal and professional lives.



Dr. Kimberly Dickman and Anthony Dickman

Warrior Heart and Warrior Mind in Each of Us

Can two vastly different individuals have a positive relationship and even love? What do a Navy SEAL and a professor of love, emotions, and relationships have in common? In this case, they grew up in the same home but developed different views about most things. Hear this brother-sister pair discuss their differences and the bond that helps to bridge them. Can we move from tolerating differences to embracing them as part of human connection?

SPEAKERS



Rosalyn Durant

Executive Vice President, ESPN

Rosalyn Durant, ESPN executive vice president, programming and acquisitions, leads programming, media rights deals, ESPN+, ESPN International, Andscape, and ESPNW. Durant spent the past three years in Orlando as senior vice president of Disney Springs, Water Parks, and ESPN Wide World of Sports.

While at the parks, she oversaw Disney Springs, Walt Disney World’s shopping, dining, and entertainment destination; both Walt Disney World water parks; the resort’s sports operations, including ESPN Wide World of Sports complex; and the workforce management, operations training, and business transformation teams. She took on the role in March 2020 and played a critical role in helping restart the 2019-20 NBA season in the “Bubble” at ESPN Wide World of Sports during the pandemic. Before her stint with Disney Parks, Durant most recently served as senior vice president of ESPN’s College Networks, overseeing ESPNU, SEC Network, and Longhorn Network, and was a central member of the cross-functional leadership team that successfully launched the ACC Network.

Durant graduated in 1999 from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor’s degree in Broadcast Journalism and a minor in Marketing.

Making an Impact in Sports Leadership

Rosalyn Durant speaks about her many life experiences leading in the sports and entertainment industries. She will inspire you with her journey from an ESPN Intern to now leading all of ESPN’s rights deals around the world as executive vice president for programming and acquisitions. Durant has challenged the status quo throughout her career with a positive attitude, and she will inspire young leaders to do the same.

SPEAKERS



DeLovell Earls

Entrepreneur, Author

DeLovell Earls, Class of '15, is the founder of the Goodr Giving Company, a philanthropic fundraising service and business platform that works with online donation registries for non-profit organizations. Earls has evolved from careers as a two-time basketball team captain, assistant men's basketball coach, military training officer, and project manager in the U.S. Air Force Space Command to a versatile, creative leader within his community and self-published author of the children's book "What If."

Since departing from the military in 2019, DeLovell has explored diverse career paths—cybersecurity, fitness product invention, paper delivery, ice cream, teaching, basketball coaching, and varied technology driven startups.

DeLovell attended the U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School in 2011 and graduated in 2015 from the U.S. Air Force Academy with a bachelor's degree in Business Management and Marketing. DeLovell confidently looks to the future and wields his creativity as a superpower. Committed to creating a better world, he aims to inspire others to harness their abilities for positive change and to add value through product, business, and mentorship opportunities.

What If: Empowerment Through Creativity

DeLovell Earls shares his journey as a Division I player turned coach and officer turned entrepreneur. His story is filled with peaks and valleys, and "rerouting" after life changed his plan. He believes that creativity is an empowering force accessible to all. . . we exist creatively any time we use our unique voice to contribute to connect with others or overcome an obstacle or problem. His children's book "What If" is an elixir for creative confidence, inspiring readers and leaders of all ages to use their imaginations to craft change and be persistent in their journey because we are all capable of changing our world for the better.

SPEAKERS



Dr. Alison Fragale

Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Dr. Alison Fragale, an award-winning professor, studies the determinants and consequences of power, status, and influence in organizations, conflict resolution and negotiation, and verbal and nonverbal communication. Fragale teaches courses on effective leadership and negotiation skills to undergraduates, graduate students, and executives. She has taught or consulted on leadership and negotiation for executives in numerous organizations, including ExxonMobil, Bayer Crop Science, Eastman, the National Multi-Housing Council, AvalonBay, Post Properties, the U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Navy.

Fragale's research has appeared in the *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, and *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. Fragale worked as a management consultant for McKinsey and Company, Inc. Based in Chicago, she advised numerous companies in the automotive and financial services industries on issues of corporate strategy and change management. She serves on the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Public Policy and the Social Sciences Board of Visitors at Dartmouth College.

Fragale received her doctorate in Organizational Behavior from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Economics from Dartmouth, graduating magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa.

The Psychology of Power: Why You've Had Bad Leaders and How You Can Be a Great One

Dr. Alison Fragale combines science and stories to explain how power affects all of us and provides tips for how leaders can lead better than they were once led, as well as how organizations can create cultures that foster excellent leadership. Lord Acton said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." We know what he means. Everyone has a "Bosszilla" story to share. Although we may chalk up our misfortune to a leader's poor disposition or training and vow that we would never submit others to the same mistreatment, evidence from psychology suggests that this is hubris. The experience of being "in charge" changes how individuals think, feel, and act, often for the worse.

SPEAKERS



Col Bree Fram

Former President, SPARTA

Colonel Bree Fram, an aeronautical engineer in the U.S. Space Force, is the co-editor of *With Honor and Integrity: Transgender Troops in Their Own Words*, the co-author of the forthcoming *Forging Queer Leaders: How the LGBTQIA+ Community Creates Impact from Adversity*, and host of the podcast *Forged in Fire: LGBTQ+ Leadership*. She is also the former president of SPARTA, a non-profit organization that advocates and educates about transgender military service.

Fram leads acquisition policy development for the U.S. Space Force. Prior to recommissioning into the U.S. Space Force in 2021, she served in many U.S. Air Force positions, including a research and development command position and leading Air Force security cooperation with Iraq.

She came out publicly on the day the transgender ban in the military was dropped in 2016. She served through the re-imposition of a ban from 2019-2021 and is currently one of the highest ranking out-transgender officers in the U.S. military.

Fram has appeared on ABC, NBC, NPR, and PBS News. She is a featured speaker on leadership, diversity, and inclusion at corporations, universities, and government organizations. She's also a member of the State Department's Speaker program that connects foreign audiences with American experts.

Fram received a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota in Aerospace Engineering, a Master of Science degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology Graduate School of Engineering and Management, and a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

From Firsts to the Future: The Inclusion of Imperative

Colonel Bree Fram addresses the history of inclusion in the armed forces as a prologue to sharing her personal story and the rollercoaster ride of amazing opportunities and resilience challenges that transgender service members have endured. The presentation encourages people to challenge their stereotypes or long-held beliefs about leadership and inclusion in the military. Fram concludes by sharing a view on why inclusion is a national security imperative and provides a call to action in the development of inclusive leadership that ensures we create the conditions for individuals and teams to perform at their best.

SPEAKERS



2nd Lt Madison Marsh

Miss America 2024

Second Lieutenant Madison Marsh, Class of '23, and current graduate student at Harvard, was crowned Miss America 2024, making her the first active-duty military member to serve in that role. After her mother's passing from pancreatic cancer in 2018, she began the Whitney Marsh Foundation with her family. As president and founder, she has raised more than a quarter million dollars for research with her leadership team at the foundation.

Marsh graduated with a bachelor's degree in Physics and is currently a graduate intern with Harvard Medical School to utilize artificial intelligence to detect pancreatic cancer. She is now pursuing her master's degree in Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School with her national Truman Scholarship.

Our first active-duty Miss America: Breaking Stereotypes by Serving Country and Community

Second Lieutenant Madison Marsh shares how her time as a U.S. Air Force Academy cadet prepared her for success in the national Miss America competition that seeks to amplify women's voices and demonstrates that stereotypes can and should be broken. She inspires leaders to ask themselves, "How can I help my teammates to realize and reach their potential?"

SPEAKERS

Polaris Dawn Panel

Humanity in Space: A New Frontier for Cultural Understanding

The Polaris Dawn crew discuss how the lessons learned from space exploration can be applied to promote cultural understanding and cooperation on Earth. This moderated discussion will be an excellent opportunity for audiences to learn about the importance of valuing human conditions, cultures, and societies in the context of space exploration and beyond.

E M B R A C E C U L T U R E . E M P O W E R P E O P L E .



Jared Isaacman

Mission Commander

Jared Isaacman, CEO of Shift4 is an entrepreneur, pilot, philanthropist, and commercial astronaut. His company is a leader in integrated payment processing solutions.

Isaacman is an accomplished pilot and astronaut with over 7,000 flight hours of aviation experience, including ratings in multiple experimental and ex-military aircraft. He was the commander of Inspiration4, the world's first all-civilian mission to space that helped raise over \$240 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to help eradicate childhood cancer.

Isaacman also holds several world records, including two speed-around-the-world flights in 2008 and 2009 that raised money and awareness for the Make-a-Wish Foundation. He flew in over 100 air shows as part of the Black Diamond Jet Team, dedicating every performance to charitable causes. In 2011, Isaacman co-founded what would become the world's largest private air force, Draken International, to train pilots for the U.S. Armed Forces.



Scott Poteet

Mission Pilot

Lt Col, USAF, Retired

Scott "Kidd" Poteet, has served 20 years in various roles, including commander of the 64th Aggressor Squadron, U.S. Air Force Thunderbird 4 demonstration pilot, USAF Weapons School graduate, operational test and evaluation pilot, and flight examiner. Poteet is a command pilot with over 3,200 flying hours in the F-16, A-4, T-38, T-37, T-3, and Alpha Jet. Poteet has logged over 400 hours of combat time during Operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Joint Guardian, Freedom's Sentinel, and Resolute Support.

Following his Air Force career, Poteet served in various roles to include director of Business Development at Draken International and vice president of strategy at Shift4. He most recently served as the Mission Director of Inspiration4, the world's first all-civilian mission to space that helped raise over \$240 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in an effort to help eradicate childhood cancer.

SPEAKERS



Sarah Gillis

Mission Specialist

Sarah Gillis, a SpaceX lead space operations engineer, is responsible for overseeing the company's astronaut training program. This includes the development of mission-specific curriculum and training execution for NASA and commercial astronauts who fly aboard the Dragon spacecraft. She prepared NASA astronauts for the first Demo-2 and Crew-1 missions, and most recently directly trained the Inspiration4 astronauts, the first all-civilian crew to go to orbit. Gillis is an experienced mission control operator, who has supported real-time operations for Dragon's cargo resupply missions to and from the International Space Station as a navigation officer and as a crew communicator for Dragon's human spaceflight missions.

Raised from a young age to be a classical violinist, Gillis changed directions when a mentor, former NASA astronaut Joe Tanner, encouraged her to pursue a degree in Aerospace Engineering. In 2015, while studying Engineering and Dance at the University of Colorado, Gillis started an internship at SpaceX, working on human-in-the-loop testing of the Dragon spacecraft interior, before moving into the astronaut training program full-time.



Anna Menon

Mission Specialist and Medical Officer

Anna Menon, a SpaceX lead space operations engineer, manages the development of crew operations and serves in mission control as a mission director and crew communicator. During her tenure at SpaceX, she led the implementation of Dragon's crew capabilities, helped create the crew communicator operator role, and developed critical operational responses to vehicle emergencies such as a fire or cabin depressurization. Menon served in mission control during multiple Dragon missions, such as Demo-2, Crew-1, CRS-22, CRS-23, Crew-3, Crew-4, and Axiom-1.

Prior to SpaceX, Menon worked for seven years at NASA as a International Space Station biomedical flight controller. In this role, she supported space station crews from mission control, helped integrate international partner engineers and medical care, and led the planning and execution of all biomedical operations for Expedition 47/48. She received her bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Spanish from Texas Christian University and her master's degree in Biomedical Engineering from Duke University. Menon supported the World Health Organization water and sanitation response and has volunteered with the Engineers Without Borders and Engineering World Health organizations.

SPEAKERS



Todd Simmons

Founder and Chief Vision Officer, Courageous Leadership Alliance
CMSgt, USAF, Retired

Todd Simmons, a distinguished educator, culture influencer, international keynote speaker, and accomplished business leader, is renowned for his unwavering commitment to fostering a society of courageous leaders. As the Courageous Leadership Alliance founder and chief vision officer, Simmons has dedicated his career to building a coalition of change agents who share a common vision: to empower individuals and organizations with the tools needed to thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of leadership.

With a diverse career, Simmons is a 25-year U.S. Air Force veteran who left an indelible mark on global institutions and businesses alike. His expertise has been sought after by esteemed organizations such as NASA, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Space Force, Robert Trent Jones Golf, the Professional Golf Association, Amazon, and many others. Notably, as the Air University command chief, Simmons inspired and guided 50,000 resident and 120,000 non-resident Air Force-affiliated students annually. His authentic voice in the leadership arena is characterized by a profound ability to build top-performing teams and reshape organizational culture to achieve maximum effectiveness. Simmons's mission is to translate his extensive experience and wisdom into actionable insights that assist the leaders of tomorrow in deciphering the art of leadership.

The Strategic Imperative

Todd Simmons provides an enlightening journey that unravels the vital role of culture in shaping the future of organizations and their ability to thrive in an ever-evolving landscape. To achieve enduring success, the path forward requires the embrace of a culture characterized by connection, cohesion, and purpose. In this transformative lecture, delve deep into the strategic imperative of cultivating a vibrant organizational culture. Discover the profound impact of culture on performance, innovation, and resilience. Explore strategies to foster a culture that nurtures meaningful connections, promotes seamless cohesion among teams, and fuels a shared sense of purpose.

SPEAKERS

The Youth Documentary Film Panel

The Youth Documentary Academy (YDA) supports youth in locating and amplifying their voices through the art of documentary film. These youth storytellers empower people of all generations to communicate courageously, authentically, and empathically.

Audiences will enjoy watching two short films that expand on the concept of culture and engaging in follow-up questions with two filmmakers. In “Out of Our Heads,” Shaienne Knox explores how African American girls and women style their hair, offering robust racial observations regarding weave and relaxed hair as commodities that eschew conventional standards of beauty. By interviewing her mother, grandmother, and friends, Knox reveals personal, nuanced, and sometimes blistering views on what comprises “good hair” among African Americans. In “Leaving Africa,” filmmaker and Congolese refugee, Rose Nsey, recounts the harrowing odyssey of fleeing her homeland and the complex process of refugee resettlement as she finds safety reuniting with her grandmother in Colorado.



Shaienne Rosechel Knox

YDA Filmmaker

Shaienne Rosechel Knox, a Colorado Springs native, graduated from Mesa Ridge High School in 2018 and earned her bachelor’s degree in Documentary Film from Spelman College in 2022. Noteworthy films in her student portfolio include “Protect and Serve” (2020), linking her military service to her family’s legacy, and “Pole to Pole” (2022), a senior thesis exploring pole dancing as both art and athleticism. In 2016, she received a fellowship from YDA, leading to the creation of “Out of Our Heads,” a film delving into the history and commodification of black hair. The documentary earned accolades at the All-American High School Film Festival and Short Circuit Film Festival, later broadcasting nationally for two seasons on PBS’s “Our Time.” Currently stationed with the U.S. Coast Guard in Morgan City, Louisiana, Knox continues to contribute to the world of documentary filmmaking with her multifaceted exploration of personal, cultural, and artistic themes.



Rose Nsey

YDA Filmmaker

Rose Nsey, born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, graduated from Cheyenne Mountain High School in 2021. At age 2, she and her family were forced to flee the country when her grandmother was targeted by government officials for housing and protecting Rwandan refugees. For 10 years, Rose lived in a refugee camp in Zambia, until the United Nations conferred her refugee status to be reunited with her grandmother in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Nsey tells her story in “Leaving Africa”, a film she produced and directed for the YDA. The film traces her grandmother’s activism and how each had to flee their home countries in search of safer lives. Rose’s determination to learn English and graduate from high school has led her now to the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs where she is studying Criminal Forensics. “Leaving Africa” placed second in the documentary category of the All-American High School Film Festival in New York City and has screened in numerous film festivals around the U.S. The film was broadcast nationally on the PBS series “Our Time” in 2023.

INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS



Dr. Kimberly Dickman

Assistant Professor, Center for Character & Leadership Development, U.S. Air Force Academy

Dr. Kimberly Dickman, Center of Character and Leadership Development human relationships education assistant professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy, has worked as an educator and a mental health counselor for active-duty military members and their families. Her current role as an educator leverages her skills and talents to engage audiences to use science to impact their personal and professional lives. She leads in the areas of healthy relationships, emotional intelligence, high-quality connections, compassion in the workplace, inclusion and diversity, and positive psychology.

Dickman was the Academy's sexual assault prevention and response analyst for four years. Previously, she was the Air Force Chief of Training and Development at the Pentagon. She worked as a sexual assault response coordinator for the 70th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing/National Security Agency, RAF Mildenhall, and RAF Alconbury before becoming the Air Force's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program chief of education and development at the Pentagon. Previously, she worked for the Department of Defense Schools at Andersen Air Base in Yigo, Guam; Misawa Air Base in Misawa, Japan; U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan in Seoul, Korea; and the Department of Psychiatry at Darnell Army Community Hospital at Fort Hood, Texas.

Dickman received a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Psychology from the University of Colorado, a Master of Science in Mental Health Counseling from Texas A&M University-Central Texas, a doctorate in Education from Argosy University, and a master's degree in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Building High Quality Connections

Across the board, research shows that relationships are key to happiness at the individual level, productivity at the team level, and mission accomplishment at the organizational level. It also shows that we are experiencing an epidemic of loneliness across the nation. This workshop will present the science of human connection, what happens when we don't have it and when we do. More importantly, it will offer opportunities to learn how to make positive connections to practice after you leave. Get ready to move and make some connections!

What's Sex Ed Got to Do With it?

Colleges, universities, and military academies are trying to reduce sexual violence on their campuses. Prevention science shows that there are multiple levels and efforts needed to address these crimes. What role does sex education play in this endeavor? This workshop will address some of the science surrounding this approach to prevention and will present sex education at the same time. Note: This is not your typical middle school sex ed class. Come prepared to learn and discuss.

INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS



Dr. Robert S. Hinck

Associate Professor of Leadership, USAF Air War College's Leadership and Innovation Institute

Dr. Robert S. Hinck is an associate professor of leadership at the U.S. Air Force Air War College's Leadership and Innovation Institute. He currently serves as the Deputy Director of Air University's Quality Enhancement Plan, where, over the past four years, he has co-lead Air University's efforts to enhance curriculum on strategic ethical leadership. Hinck has published widely in the areas of strategic narratives, leadership development, ethics, and political argumentation. He earned a doctorate in Communication from Texas A&M University and holds certificates in Servant Leadership and Business Ethics from Cornell University. At Air University, he teaches Leadership and the Profession of Arms, Leader Development for Squadron Command, electives in global media and propaganda, and professional development workshops in empathy and ethical decision-making. Before coming to Air University, he served as co-department chair at Monmouth College as well as serving as Coordinator for the Public Relations major and Co-coordinator for the Asia Studies minor.

Ethical Decision Making

Ethics is not only vital to our Profession of Arms but also serves as a strategic resource contributing to the lethality of the U.S. Air Force. And yet, typical briefings on ethics emphasize only the former and do so by stressing the regulations Airmen must follow else risk punishment or reprimand. Rather than viewing "ethics as compliance," this workshop reframes the ethics curriculum as "one of aspiration" by re-focusing agency on Airmen's ethical decision-making skills and character development, both at the individual and organizational levels. Taken together, it presents a vision of ethics as grounded in personal accountability and growth while emphasizing the role of ethics in successfully preparing the U.S. Air Force to compete and win in an era of great power competition.



Dr. Jacqueline "Jackie" Hooper

Assistant Professor, Center for Character & Leadership Development, U.S. Air Force Academy

Dr. Jacqueline "Jackie" Hooper is an educator, organizational development leader, published author, and certified coach with extensive experience helping individuals, teams, and organizations succeed. She accomplishes this by delivering distinctive skill-building and development experiences that contribute to a culture of excellence, wellness, and improved engagement. She is passionate about helping others be the architect of their sustained success. Hooper takes a strengths-based and "what's-right" approach to her work with individuals and teams and believes that leveraging individual and collective strengths drives engagement and performance more so than merely focusing on "what's wrong."

Leverage Strengths to Drive a Winning Culture and Elevate Organizational Performance

Cultivating and using your strengths can foster a "good life"—greater happiness, more productivity, enhanced well-being, and greater collaboration. In this workshop, you will:

- Learn about two popular strengths-based assessments
- Understand how day-to-day work and even larger projects benefit from intentional applications of strengths
- Value the strengths that others bring
- Be encouraged to use strengths in new ways

INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS



Paul Huffman

Workshop Facilitator, U.S. Air Force Academy
Col, USAF, Retired

Paul Huffman, Class of '86, currently serves as a Professional Development Programs Instructor at the U.S. Air Force Academy's Center for Character and Leadership Development. Huffman is primarily responsible for facilitating workshops in support of the Academy's #1 strategic goal of developing leaders of character. He also works extensively with cadet leadership teams to enhance their leader of character journey and leads teambuilding workshops for staff and cadet groups.

Huffman is a U.S. Air Force veteran and during his 28-year active-duty career, he served as an aviator; commander; and educator primarily as Northwest Region Commander for AFROTC, as department chair, AFROTC detachment commander, and professor of Aerospace Studies at the University of Portland; as vice wing commander of the 57th Wing at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada; and as division chief, weapons, HQ Air Force Legislative Liaison at the Pentagon. He has accumulated over 4,000 flight hours primarily in the OV-10 Bronco, F-15C Eagle, and F-16 Aggressor aircraft, including 250 combat hours in Southwest Asia.

Elevate Culture: The Leader of Character Approach (with Dr. Jackie Hooper)

We agree that culture is an excellent measure when it comes to organizational performance and resiliency. But how do we impact and take ownership of the culture we all want for our teams? Join us as we explore this theme through the lens of our strategic imperative to develop ourselves and others as leaders of character. When our integrity has us aligned, whole and complete in our identity as leaders of character, we are living our core values, able to energize our teams with high standards, and foster the vital ingredient of trust in our organizations. Learn about these key tenets, as we engage with each other and discover the power to change and build a culture that elevates performance.



Dr. Sara R. Kitsch

Assistant Professor of Leadership, USAF Air War College's Leadership and Innovation Institute

Dr. Sara R. Kitsch is an Assistant Professor of Leadership at the U.S. Air Force Air War College's Leadership and Innovation Institute. She serves as the Co-Director of Faculty Development for the Leader Development Course for Squadron Command and is a member of Air University's Quality Enhancement Plan committee, specializing in the competency of Empathy. Kitsch has a PhD from Texas A&M University in communication and holds a graduate certificate in Women's and Gender Studies. She has published multiple academic articles and a co-authored book, with her research interests spanning topics including rhetoric and public affairs, strategic narratives, empathy, leader development, and public memory. At Air University, she teaches courses at AWC, ACSC, the Ira C. Eaker Center, as well as several professional development workshops in empathy, conflict management, and communication. Before Air University, Kitsch was an Assistant Professor of Communication at Monmouth College and the Director for Undergraduate Research at Knox College.

Leading with Empathy

Empathy is fundamental to the human condition, creating inclusive environments, and even maintaining lasting peace. In a professional setting, empathy behaviors are related to improved feelings of belonging, engagement, care about work, and motivation. In the Profession of Arms, empathy is linked with fostering cohesive teams and making decisions in novel environments, while a lack of empathy has led to difficult cross-cultural relationships and has the potential to erode lasting peace. Yet the concept is largely misunderstood. This workshop connects the academic underpinnings of what empathy is with the practical application needed for successful leadership in our current global environment.

INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS

Five Voices (with Dr. Robert Hinck)

Five Voices is the code for unlocking your capacity to have honest conversations and build deeper, more authentic relationships with your teams, your families, and your friends. To lead others effectively, we need a true understanding of ourselves, our natural tendencies, and patterns of behavior. In learning what your leadership voice sounds like to others, you will discover what it feels like to be on the other side of your personality, as well as how to hear and value others' voices. Once you understand your own leadership voice, you'll discover how best to communicate with other voices, which will transform your communication at every level of relationship, both personal and professional.



Dr. Justin Stoddard

Assistant Professor, Center for Character & Leadership Development, U.S. Air Force Academy

Dr. Justin Stoddard serves as Assistant Professor and Chief of Innovation and Prototyping at the Center for Character and Leadership Development. Stoddard enlisted into the U.S. Army as a combat medic and then commissioned from the Army ROTC program at the University of Colorado, Boulder with a bachelor's degree majoring in both Philosophy and Russian Studies. As an Army officer, Stoddard served in a variety of assignments including rifle platoon leader in Afghanistan, Headquarters Company Commander, and Senior Intelligence Division Chief. Stoddard earned a master's degree in 2011 from the University of Texas – El Paso in Leadership Studies and Intelligence and National Security Studies, and a PhD in 2019 from the University of Colorado – Colorado Springs in Higher Education Leadership and Research. Stoddard began instructing at the Academy in 2015 and completed his doctoral research on the resiliency of cadets and the important role of adversity in building character. His experience, expertise, and academic research provide the backdrop for his workshops that explore the role of adversity, the process by which we overcome it, and the framework used to build our resiliency as we grow and learn to thrive.

Building Connection for Resilience

As global challenges increase in number, complexity, and frequency, research from the U.S. Surgeon General indicates we have become more disconnected than ever. Building our resiliency through connection is one way to face these challenges and thrive. Resilient individuals, teams, and organizations are key to building the ability to overcome challenges and keep moving forward. This workshop uses interactive online activities, small and large group discussions, and “how-to” interactions to build a resilient mindset and increase connection as we experience adversity together.

NCLS PERMANENT PARTY STAFF

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Kevin Beechwood

Patrick Bennett

Capt Alexa Berstler

TSgt Brittany Block

Blaire Brush

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Tali Burress

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MSgt Cherie Coale

Wendy Cook

Lt Col Bret Cove

Irina Damy

Lt Col Walter "Trey" Darnell

MSgt Tai Do

TSgt Eric Duffy

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Cadet-in-Charge

C1C Rachel Parillo

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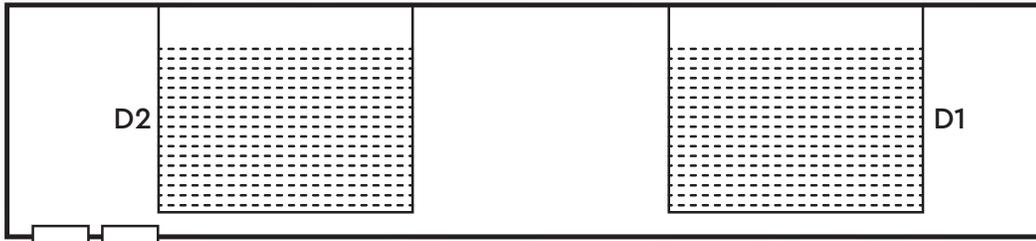
C2C Weiss Yuan

C1C Kiana Rae Baruela
C1C Lauren Blackwelder
C1C Holly Boudreau
C1C Aniya Cosby
C1C Kadya Craigle
C1C Sydney Day
C1C Emilee Denslow
C1C Liliana Glancy
C1C Daniel Jeong
C1C Regina Kim
C1C Shira Litman
C1C Maya Mandyam
C1C Ethan Nguyen
C1C Hilary Nolen
C1C Angelica Noyola
C1C Joshua Quarterman
C1C Payton Rawson
C1C Keeley Shaughnessy
C1C Hannah Wingo
C1C Joshua Wodrich
C1C Kelly Yoon

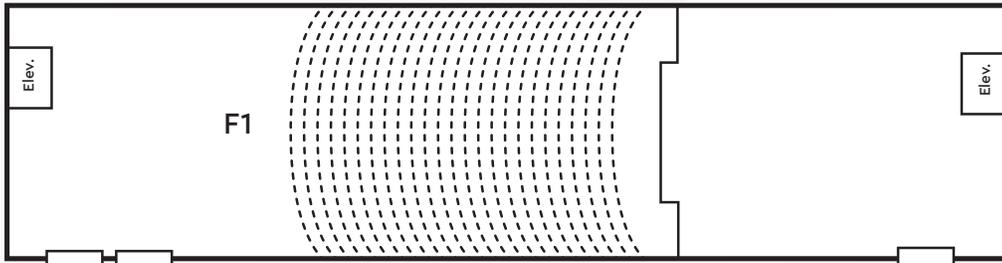
C2C Anjulina Abdon
C2C Michelle Cabonce
C2C Reginaldo Capati
C2C Charlotte Choo
C2C Dilan Cinta
C2C Freedom Cody
C2C Rebecca Collins
C2C Lino De Ros
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C2C Minjae Kim
C2C Selena Little
C2C Margaret Meehan
C2C Geun Hyung Park
C2C Hailey Ramos
C2C Julia Razzino
C2C Yujin Shim
C2C Mayson Slaughter
C2C Sawyer Stone
C2C Madelynn Streng
C2C Kylie Swartz
C2C Tobias Temple
C2C Samantha Welstead

C3C Georgina Buchanan
C3C Elizabeth Canfield
C3C Kirsten Cannon
C3C Jayde Crowe
C3C Te'Anne Dailey
C3C Campbell Dorsey
C3C Fallon Eggett
C3C Parker Fitzgerald
C3C Griffin Greenwood
C3C James Holcomb
C3C Amanda Li
C3C Maeve Linscott
C3C Chinonye Mbanugo
C3C Brayden Moll
C3C Christopher Pombo
C3C Jaime Snyder
C3C Destiny Speltz
C3C Mark Tang
C3C Lilliana Turra

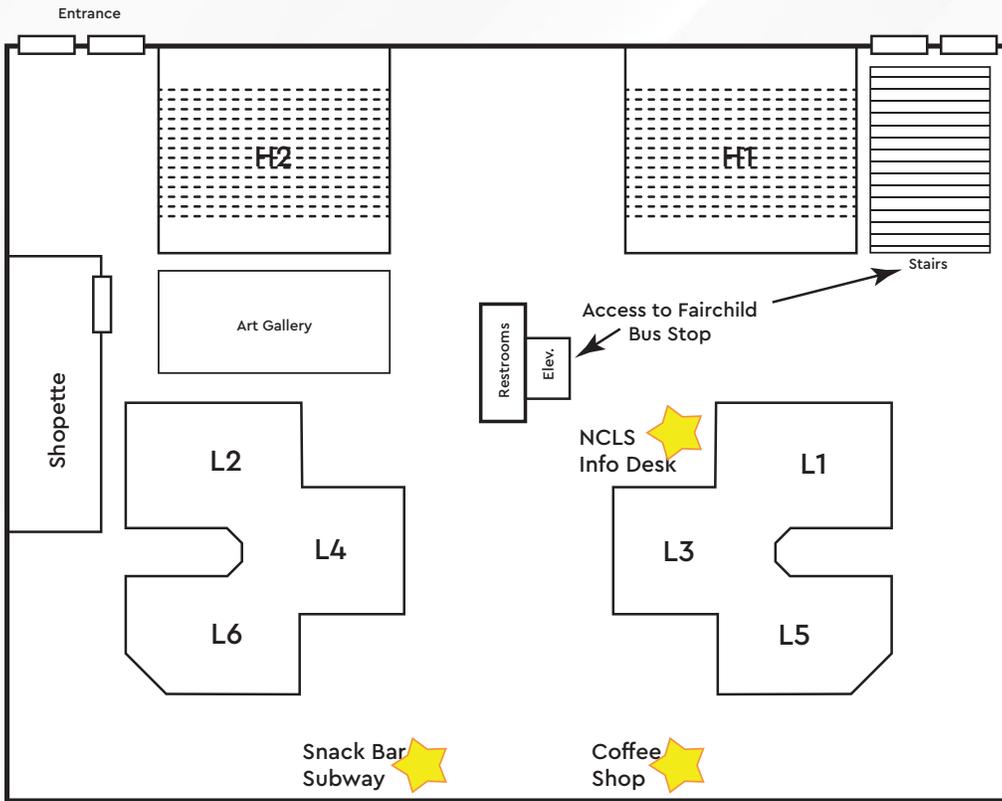
MAP OF FAIRCHILD HALL VENUES



Entrance
Terrazzo (outdoors)



Entrance
Terrazzo (outdoors)



Snack Bar
Subway ★

Coffee
Shop ★

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

	Arnold Hall Theater	Polaris Forum	Fairchild Hall F1	Fairchild Hall H1	Arnold Hall Ballroom	CCLD Director's Conf Room	Polaris Seminar West	Polaris Seminar East	Fairchild Hall L2	
Wednesday 21 Feb	8:00 - 12:30									
	12:30 - 1:30	Cadet Wing Kickoff: Sarduy	Character Summit							
	3:50 - 4:50	Colvin Keynote Lecture: Stevenson								
Breakfast (Falcon Club)										
Thursday 22 Feb	6:30 - 7:45									
	8:30 - 9:00	NCLS Opening Ceremony: Superintendent								
	9:30 - 10:15	Class of '59 Leadership Keynote Lecture: Lindgren	Earls							
	10:30 - 11:15	Fragale	K. Dickman	Simmons						
	Lunch (location registration dependent)									
	12:30 - 1:30	Alexander	Angiollo	YDA Film Panel		Workshop: Stoddard	Workshop: Hooper & Huffman	Workshop: Dickman	Workshop: Kitsch & Hinck	
	1:45 - 2:30	Marsh	Fram	Acuncius						
	2:45 - 3:30	Falcon Foundation Bud Breckner Keynote Lecture: Kirby	Adelman	A. Dickman						
	3:30 - 4:30	Speaker Meet & Greet - Book Signing (Haps)								
	5:00 - 6:00	Class of '74 Walkin Award Muse Family Foundation Keynote Lecture: Franklin								
6:00 - 6:40	Symposium Dinner Social Hour (McComas Lounge)									
6:40 - 8:10	Symposium Dinner (Arnold Hall Ballroom)									
Breakfast (Falcon Club)										
Friday 23 Feb	6:30 - 7:45									
	8:00 - 9:00	Polaris Dawn Panel	Fram	Fragale						
	9:25 - 10:25	Franklin	Alexander	Angiollo						
	10:50 - 11:50	Sarduy	Durant	Class of '93 Keynote Panel: 12 DAY	Earls					
	Lunch (location registration dependent)									
	12:10 - 1:00	Enix Heritage Keynote Lecture: Senior Leader Panel	Adelman	A. Dickman & K. Dickman						
	2:15 - 3:30	Acuncius	Simmons	Lindgren	Student Consortium	Workshop: Hooper	Workshop: Hinck	Workshop: Kitsch	Workshop: Dickman	
	3:45 - 4:30	Challenge Ceremony								
	5:00 - 7:00	Dinner (Falcon Club)								

Keynote lectures
For select audience (by invite only)
Workshops



NATIONAL CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM