

Meeting Minutes – Class Advisory Senate, 16 April 2024

1. Call to Order: Randy Helms '79, called the meeting to order at 1700.

2. Members in Attendance: See Attachment 1

3. Others in Attendance:

Cathy Almond, '90, Vice Chair, USAFA AOG Board of Directors

Dr. Thomas D. Torkelson, Col (ret), USAF '92 Deputy Director, Center for Character
Leadership Development

Mark Hille, '97, President, USAFA AOG & AFAF

Naviere Walkewicz, '99, Senior Vice President, USAFA AOG Alumni Relations and
Business Development

Thomas Lenneberg, AFA Foundation Executive Director of Development

Mike Barnes, USAFA AOG Senior Director of Alumni Relations

4. Previous Minutes:

<https://aog-websites.s3.amazonaws.com/usafa-org/documents/aog/governance/CAS/CAS+Minutes+-+16+Jan+2024.pdf>

5. Randy Helms, '79, President Class Advisory Senate:

- Randy introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Thomas D. Torkelson, Col (ret), USAF '92 Deputy Director, Center for Character and Leadership Development. He is the new Acting Director of the USAFA Center for Character and Leadership Development.

6. Dr. Thomas D. Torkelson, Col (ret), USAF '92 Deputy Director, Center for Character and Leadership Development (See attached Slides):

Dr Torkelson began his remarks by describing the USAFA Developing Leaders of Character Program.

- Character Development is the number one priority at USAFA. It exists to develop mission-ready Airmen who possess a mix of skills needed for USAF operational mission readiness. It encompasses every Mission element. Some Education -Training - Experiences (ETEs) are experienced by all Cadets, other ETEs as elective-optional opportunities.
- He described Leaders of Character virtues.
 - Lives Honorably, Lifts Others, Elevates Performance – always better, always higher.

- The Leader of Character Framework goes across all classes, not just the fourth class.
 - Own – pursuit of your identity
 - Engage – Purposeful experiences. The Academy owes all Cadets a purposeful experience.
 - Practice habits of thoughts and actions
 - A Leaders of Character Lives Honorably, Lifts Others, and Elevates Performance.
- Dr. Torkelson stated that Character Development starts at BCT with a “firehose” approach. There are 8 lessons in BCT from Character/Honor Officers and NCOs, and 36 hours of character-related CE across four years.
 - There are two Character and Leadership Lessons per year, eight total per class over four years.
 - In the Core Academic Curriculum there is Behavioral Science 110, Philosophy 210 (ethics), and Leadership 100, 200, 300, 400 with other character ETEs aligned to institutional outcomes.
 - A big part of this program is the NCLS (National Character and Leadership Symposium).
 - It is Cadet-Led and includes 156 participating universities (320 visiting faculty and students), and typically has 6,700 registrants, and has typically 124 engagement opportunities.
 - This past 2024 NCLS had a \$150K shortfall. Although they try to get speakers for free, there are honorariums that usually must be paid (some ask for travel expenses only).
 - All speakers must be nominated (by any grad); there are 200-300 names nominated each year.
 - The form used to nominate a speaker for NCLS is located at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCLSNOM2>
 - The 2025 NCLS will have as its theme: “Warrior Ethos as Airmen and Guardians;” the theme for the 2026 NCLS will be “Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity.”
 - The Superintendent makes final approval of all NCLS speakers.
 - About 90% of the speakers allow themselves to be recorded.
 - The general rule is to have speakers that are not at either extreme.
 - When a question arose about George Takai at last years symposium, Dr Torkelson explained that they wanted to get his speech about his family being interned in the USA during WWII as Japanese Americans. The premise was “learn how to treat people as they are.”
 - He said that the controversial presentations “make people think about themselves, and how they fit into it.”

- Cadets have the NCLS as a two-day event on their calendars, and they must fit the presentations into their schedule.
 - Dr Torkelson explained that Enhanced Character Development time provides a “purposeful experience” to provide “practice.” It gives the Cadet more practice in character development time.
 - They develop a connection, unit cohesion, and positive relationships. It is offered in 8 lessons per year at the squadron level.
 - This is Healthy Relationships Education. It teaches the Cadets not only about connections, but also boundaries and vulnerabilities. How to connect, then attract, then consent or reject; it includes for example, comprehensive sex education, ending relationships, loss, and supporting others. He said, “Cadets very much want this!” It is offered once annually at each class level.
 - There is an Outdoor Leadership Complex which has elements of combat survival training and is offered four times per semester to selected Cadets.
 - There are some ETEs that are available to only some Cadets: Healthy Relationships Training, Student Athlete-Advisory Council, Team Captain Enhancement Program, Cadet Character and Honor staff positions, Cadet Leadership Enrichment Seminar, Cadet Mentoring Program, Cadet “Ropes” Program (4 colors – different functions), 14 Affinity Clubs.
 - The Prep School has 45 hours of character/values/honor education.
 - The Supt has also established a program for Faculty and Staff to attend Leaders of Character workshops on Character Development time, emotional intelligence, grit and resistance, dynamics of change, and leadership-Team assessment training to name a few.
 - They also have Professional Coaching for USAFA Senior Leaders, Senior Enlisted and AOCs.
- Dr Torkelson also gave an update on the Honor Code.
 - They have had an all-time low on reported honor violations and think it is due to a disengagement with the Honor Code due to the Toleration Clause. They think it is due to the debate between “loyalty to a friend” versus “loyalty to the institution.”
 - The CCLD took ownership of this problem in 2023. The Character and Honor staffs were merged at that time. Unknown to most grads, the Toleration Clause has changed 5-6 times in the past, and involved a great deal of debate and discussion. Today it is a Confront-Only clause for three and four degrees (although reporting is also encouraged). It is Confront and Report for Firsties and two degrees.
 - There is a desire to expand program expectations, and feedback is solicited from AOCs, SPEAs and Cadets. Dr Torkelson stated that changes are coming.

- The CCLD is also developing a Social Media Campaign. He stated that they know they have a void here that needs to be filled. There is a great deal of research being done to identify cultural indicators (such as racial discrimination behaviors and sexual assault).
 - The purpose is to design a program to help educate Cadets on appropriate behavior in an anonymous digital space and to help permanent party personnel respond to instances of threats of harm to self or others.
 - There are bad actors in the social media world, and they have discovered examples of cyber-bullying and harassment.
 - The CCLD has hired a social media contractor to help with capacity and expertise to better understand the social media environment and to help shape the character development curriculum.

7. Cathy Almond, '90, Vice Chair, USAFA AOG Board of Directors:

- Cathy briefed that there is an upcoming election in 2025 for the AOG Board of Directors.
- A popular comment after the last Board election was that there were too many candidates. Grads had difficulty reading about all of the candidates before their session timed out.
- She said that they are looking at how to solve that problem.

8. Naviere Walkewicz, '99, Senior Vice President, USAFA AOG Alumni Relations and Business Development (See attached slides):

- Naviere briefed that Graduate Membership is currently at 69.37 %.
- The 2024 goal is a 3% increase.
- There is a current reconnection effort underway for previous communication opt-outs.
- She said that there is now a Next-of-Kin website (usafanextofkin.org); spouse connections are made through the AOG Next of Kin support specialist, Terri Davis.

9. Thomas Lenneberg, Executive Director of Development, AFA Foundation: (See attached slides):

- Mr. Lenneberg briefed slides on Foundation's "1 Day - 1 USAFA" Giving Program:
 - There is a new date – 8 May 2024 (moved from August). Their goal is 3,000 donors (2,000 grads).
 - He presented various statistics about the 2023 "1 Day – 1 USAFA" event (see slide).
 - The key here is participation. There is class Giving /Class Competition this time:
 - There will be two winners: one for the highest percentage of grads who make a gift; and one for the class between 2020-24 that has the highest percentage of grads who make a gift.
 - The winning classes each will receive \$1,000.00 to their class agency fund.

- Mark Hille, '97, added that there are 148 different funds in order that participants can support whatever they want. He emphasized that if someone donates to a particular fund, that is where the money goes.

10. Other Business / Round Table:

- Several Senators made Round Table Comments:
 - John Borling, '63
 - Wayne Hermendorfer, '78
 - Joshua Lapso, '10
 - Dave Holt, '62
 - Tom Berry, 71

11. Randy Helms, '79, CAS President, gave brief closing comments:

- Randy announced that he does not plan to run for Senate President again. "Everyone should start thinking about it now."
- There are twelve classes with senators that have not participated in three years. He wrote a letter for the AOG to send to the respective class presidents, asking them if they want to appoint a new senator that will be able to participate in the CAS.
- The Long Blue-Gray Line event was a big success.
- With the Class of 2024 graduating soon, he will need a class senator appointed. He has asked the AOG to assist and contact the 2024 Class President.
- **CARRIED FORWARD FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND NOT DISCUSSEDD AT THIS MEETING:** Randy asked all senators to think about two issues for the next meeting:
 - Should the Class Advisory Senate change its annual schedule to mirror the changes recently made by the AOG Board, to change to only three annual meetings, or is it fine as is?
 - Based on a past poor showing at Senate meetings, should there be an institutionalized minimum attendance requirement for Senators to attend Senate meetings? Normally there has been an average of about 30 senators or backups at a CAS meeting.
- He thanked Senators for their continued support. He then adjourned the meeting.

12. Next Meetings:

- AOG Board, 19 April 2024
- CAS Executive Committee, 18 June 2024
- CAS, 16 July 2024
- CAS Schedule: <https://aog-websites.s3.amazonaws.com/usafa-org/documents/aog/governance/CAS/CAS+Schedule+Jan+2024.pdf>

13. Close/Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 1855.

Minutes submitted by: Tom Hayden '74, CAS Secretary

Minutes approved by: Randy Helms '79, CAS President

Attachments:

1. [Members in Attendance](#)
2. [Character Development Briefing](#)
3. [AOG Alumni Relations Update](#)
4. [AFAF Class Annual Giving Update](#)