

Transparency and accountability

By Lt. Col. (Ret.) Cathy Almand '90, Association of Graduates Board Chair



The Association of Graduates proudly and diligently serves the more than 56,600 graduates of YOUR United States Air Force Academy.

Young men and women, hailing from across our nation, choose a more difficult path and commit to pushing their limits to develop as leaders of character and contribute to a cause greater than themselves as members of the profession of arms. That's what our Academy is about. It's who we are as grads. And it's what our Association of Graduates represents.

At the heart of a thriving AOG, committed to serving our grads, supporting our Academy and preserving the growing heritage of the institution and Long Blue Line lies the unwavering commitment of its board of directors to transparency and accountability. Transparency and accountability aren't just buzzwords; they constitute the bedrock upon which trust is built, ensuring the board effectively governs our AOG and remains responsible to the membership.

In this letter, I want to be candid in addressing some challenges we have faced. Recent events, such as the proposal and withdrawal of motions in our Oct. 17 board meeting to posthumously honor Mr. Charlie Kirk, a presidentially appointed member of the Academy's Board of Visitors at the time of his tragic assassination, underscore the importance of open communication and a willingness to listen. Upon learning of the motions — one sought to recognize Mr. Kirk as an honorary member of the AOG, and the other recommended him for an honorary degree — nearly 1,500 graduates wrote and called in to make their voices heard. Perspectives varied.

While differing viewpoints are an inevitable part of any community, we

ought to never let them fracture our collective spirit. Instead, these moments, however hard they can be, present an opportunity for us to demonstrate, despite our differences, how we can come together, find common ground and set an example of thoughtful, civil discourse for the entire nation.

Indeed, in the Oct. 17 meeting, the AOG board ultimately passed a modified motion that gives our Association some needed time to explore appropriate opportunities — with member inputs in mind — to recognize Mr. Kirk's service on the Academy BOV. We expect to consider recommendations at the Feb. 19 board meeting.

Our strength as the Long Blue Line stems from active engagement. But engagement is a two-way street, requiring the board's commitment to transparency and the membership's willingness to participate.

To foster greater transparency and participation, the AOG board of directors is excited to announce that, beginning in February, board meetings will be livestreamed, allowing members direct insight into the decision-making processes and discussions that guide and shape our Association. This initiative has been in the works for several months and is a crucial step in ensuring that every member feels connected and is heard, and that our board has a new opportunity to listen.

Additionally, the staff will increase efforts to make sure members are aware of meeting agendas and minutes as they post to our website. We have heard from many graduates who want this information, and we are glad to make sure you know when it posts. Fortunately, we have a new website that makes accessing this information easier to do.


In closing, as we think about the two-way street of active engagement, I have a few asks.

First, please encourage any classmates who are not members of the AOG to join. Joining the AOG is not just a formality and benefit of being a graduate; it is a commitment to being an informed and active stakeholder. There is no cost to join, and it is easy to do on our website.

Additionally, consider engaging with your local chapter, where you can connect with fellow graduates and contribute to local initiatives. If you don't have a local chapter, the AOG can help you start one.

Provide your valuable inputs to your class advisory senator. Or, for those with a deeper commitment, volunteer to serve as your class's senator if that position is open. The CAS was chartered to represent every class and advise the AOG board. The CAS president serves on the AOG board and is an active and outstanding contributor.

Finally, for any thoughts, suggestions or concerns, please utilize the "Contact Us" form at usafa.org/contact. Your voice matters, and your engagement empowers the AOG to fulfill its mission to support the Academy, serve our graduates and preserve the heritage of the institution.

I wish you and your family a happy, healthy holiday season. 

Sincerely,

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Cathy Almand '90