

Meeting Minutes – Class Advisory Senate, 16 January 2024 - FINAL

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:**

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

Thomas Lenneberg, AFA Foundation Executive Director of Development

Donna Bajek, Director of Business Development

4. **Previous Minutes:**

<https://aog-websites.s3.amazonaws.com/usafa-org/documents/aog/governance/CAS/CAS+Minutes+-+17+October+2023+meeting+-+FINAL.pdf>

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

- Randy introduced the guest speaker, Brig General Gavin Marks, Commandant of Cadets. He has been the Commandant for six months, and has experienced in-processing, Basic Cadet Training, and a first semester at USAFA.

6. **Brig General Gavin P. Marks, '96, Commandant of Cadets, USAF Academy.**

BGen Marks began his informative briefing on the many similarities and differences between what older graduates remember and what exists today.

- After being in place for six months, he stated that he is impressed with the many things that they are doing exceedingly well:
 - In-processing, Basic Cadet Training, the process to select Cadet leaders, Cadet involvement in Cultural Change, integration of the Space Force (10%), summer programs.
 - He stated that the way they interact with each other “can stand some tweaking.”
 - Military Training can also use some improvement: they need to focus more effort on standards, adherence to standards, and accountability.
 - While 4-degree training time is important and is well done, they need to create some additional level of rigor for the upper three classes. Training needs to be across all four years.
- BGen Marks has proposed developing a transition between the current Fourth Class system to a four-class system.

- He believes that Cadets need to have a better understanding of the Profession of Arms when they graduate.
- His goals are:
 - Advance accountability,
 - Develop our teammates – advance dignity and respect for one another,
 - Address the requirements of the Profession of Arms.
- BGen Marks addressed increasing SAMIs (Saturday Morning Inspections), increasing AMIs (daily inspections), training on the Honor Code, and Standards of Duty.
- They now have a good 4-degree recognition program, and this needs to be expanded across all four classes. They need to improve the Cadet performance and appraisal system, improve on the methods to discipline Cadets, and improve training of the AOCs.
 - He wants to improve the Spirit of the Commitment Dinner to also further the Profession of Arms.
- As the 31st Commandant of Cadets, BGen Marks considers that he is in his “dream job.” He then added information as he took questions:
 - Training Cadets to be warfighters:
 - He will build a 47-month program of training with specific milestones.
 - It will be built around the USAF Commissioning program and experiences in USAF training programs; there are many experiences and opportunities to be tapped.
 - Academy Cadets already have three Cadet-operated satellites in Space.
 - There is already a Ready Airman Training program for skills needed in the USAF; He intends to re-focus the Commandant’s military training time on RAT so that Cadets will have a proficiency in their competencies to lead others as commissioned Air Force officers.
 - He was asked how we, as the graduate community, can help in creating an atmosphere of dignity and respect. His answer was to “Spread the word” that dignity and respect apply to everyone, including the lowest ranks.
 - It is difficult to grow unless you are challenged.
 - Spread the word that standards are not being lowered.
 - DEI training: it is imperative for Cadets to understand that they will be exposed to diversity in their future organizations and commands. They currently have 16 hours of DEI training over four years versus over 1,000 hours of other military training in those same years. The USAFA “is just as dedicated now about training and preparing our force as we have always been.”
 - When questioned about Cadets not wearing Service Dress at football games (reference the game against Army), his answer was that they are looking at that policy – i.e. how frequently they should wear service dress; to date, they have looked at Cadets wearing BDUs or flight suits when considering cold weather

- (are warmer), and the Cadets being to relax more at the pregame tailgates (for 2-3 hours) in less formal wear. Cadets are required to stand for the entire game.
- Cadet Dorms are showing their age. Sijan will require \$590million over ten years to renovate. Vandenberg Hall was renovated in 2009-2014 at a cost of \$190million.
 - They are going to re-introduce the O-96 form (BGen Marks wants it back). It was eliminated some time in the past; 96% of the comments were not helpful, and 50% were rude. Mitchell Hall manning is also a concern as they can only support one mass meal per day.
 - With regard to insuring safety of female Cadets, they have a “Let’s be Clear Campaign” that addresses the “plague of harassment” and holds everyone accountable to the maximum degree. It is not gender based.
 - They also have a Open Door Policy: if there is anyone in someone else’s dorm room from TAPS to release of Quarters, the door must remain open. And they have instituted a Dorm Duty Officer that is to walk around the dorms from six PM to six AM on Friday and Saturday nights.
 - A CCQ Program was brought back to look for signs of personnel distress in the dorms duringt nights and on weekends.
 - He stated that he knows they have some issues with the Honor Code. Cadets become close to roommates and develop other close friends, and some 60% of candidates arrive at the Academy having cheated in high school. He believes that it needs to be treated “developmentally”, going from zero at entrance and developing all virtues by end of four years. He knows they have work to do.
 - He doesn’t think that Cadet qualifications have changed (SATs, ACTs). The Academy has not changed its standards.
 - While USAF hair standards have changed, BGen Marks wants to have a higher standard at USAFA.
 - Pilot slots have decreased over the past few years. Some selectees wait 18 months before reporting -- it is an AF through-put issue due to several USAF factors. Class of 2024 pilot slots are at 33% now (327 slots); they have 90 Space Force slots (most in AF, and also in overall military).

7. Naviere Walkewicz, '99, Senior Vice President, USAFA AOG Alumni Relations and Business Development, and Donna Bajek, Director of Business Development: (See attached slides)

- Naviere briefed the AOG awards program: there is a new Leadership Achievement Award for those 16-39 years past graduation, the Distinguished Graduate Award, and the Young Alumni Award for those 1-15 years past graduation.
- She said they are trying to bring Grads together; they will develop more awards to celebrate accomplishments.

- She briefed the upcoming “Save the Dates” for upcoming programs, including new Long Blue-Gray Line socials in San Diego, Colorado Springs, and Chicago.
- Donna briefed the AOG Travel Program:
 - They include many trips on land, sea, and air; from 4-days durations to 2 week trips.

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

- Mr. Lenneberg briefed slides on Foundation Giving programs:
 - The purpose is to keep the Senate informed.
 - Their goal is to increase graduate giving.
 - They are trying to develop their approach to tell the story a little better and describe specifically where the donations are going.

9. Other Business / Round Table:

- Several Senators made Round Table Comments:
 - Pat Buckley, '61
 - Tom Morris, '64
 - Larry Bagley, '66
 - Doug Jenkins, '64
 - Roger Hill, '70
 - Ski Wagasky, '72
 - Jim Ratti, '82
 - Tim Matson, '87
 - Rick Bailey, '92
 - Ashley Fregley, '08

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

- Randy announced that he does not plan to run for Senate President again. By the time of the next election in the Fall, he will have completed 4 years as President and 2 years as Vice President. “Everyone should start thinking about it now.”
- **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.

11. Next Meetings:

- AOG Board, 21 Feb 2024 (zoom meeting)
- CAS Executive Committee, 19 March 2024
- CAS, 16 April 2024
- CAS Schedule: <https://Schedule+July+2023.pdf> (aog-websites.s3.amazonaws.com)

12. 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. AOG Alumni Relations
3. AFAF Class Annual Giving