

TO: Members, TCA AOG
FROM: Terrence F. Flower, Class of 1964
RE: Summary of President's Conference, 2016

It was my pleasure to represent the Twin Cities Area USAFA Association of Graduates at the Presidents Conference, 15 – 16 September 2016.

At the conference, attended by about 25 - 30 chapter representatives, I had the chance to meet and interact with many fine graduates. We heard from William "T" Thompson, CEO and President of the AOG, as well as Gary Howe, the Executive vice President. They emphasized the working relationships with and between various chapters around the world. Their functions are twofold, those directly serving graduate Events and Heritage Events themselves. Graduate events include, among others, tailgate parties at football games, Golf, Career Conferences, Reunions and, of course, Scotch Tastings. Heritage Events include Plaza Dedication, Next of Kin Receptions, Homecoming Memorial Ceremony, Jabara Award, Founders Day Dinner and the BCT Heritage Briefings.

Times have changed as the Academy and its graduates have matured. In comparing with both West Point and Annapolis graduates, in the past we had far fewer chapters and far fewer graduates. Today, we are nearing comparable numbers of living graduates. That gives our numbers comparability in strength of numbers and what we are able to accomplish for our members, and for the larger community. In 2010 we had 31 chapters and today there are 85. We have about 48,000 living graduates.

A new AOG website will be installed this fall to better serve all of us. One of the goals, modeled, I suspect, at least in part after our own Tri-Service Employment Hub, is to increase SACC participation. Beth Wade is in charge of careers programs. Go to www.usafa.org/careers. They will need a volunteer career liaison in each chapter. Talk to Tom Wilson if you are interested and he will call Beth. Currently, all grads are in the system.

We also were warmly greeted by the Vice-Supt (Col Dave Harris), Commandant (Brig Gen Stephen Williams), Dean (Brig Gen Andrew Armacost) and Athletic Director (Jim Knowlton.) It was interesting that one idea they shared with us is that the graduates are as ready to serve, as capable as ever, and we can be proud of them. This is in spite of "easing" of certain conditions that some might take as making it less rigorous. It is my understanding that they are correct. A lot of things we endured simply did not make us better. I did make it clear to the AD that our graduates are eager to come out when the Falcons play Minnesota in football, hockey or gymnastics.

Of concern to me, and should be to all of us, is the upcoming election of Directors of the AOG. I am confident that we will have some good candidates from which to select new Board Members, but there will be some important decisions that will affect the AOG and graduates. They will decide how the AOG and the Endowment will be structured for the management and the financial aspects. Whatever kind of MOU and reorganization plan recommended will have to be approved by 25% of grads. I strongly recommend that everyone vote, after carefully reading and understanding the proposals and what the AOG board recommends.

Our Chapter, TCA AOG, received the Distinguished Chapter Award at the Banquet held at

Biaggis in Colorado Springs. Our chapter was formed in 2011 and have been awarded this recognition every year we have existed. This is in part because of the work your board of directors has done to serve our graduates who live in the Twin Cities area. But it is also because of the graduates who have made the chapter come alive. The award is not to the Board. It is to the entire Chapter of graduates.

I'd like to take a few minutes at our next Board Meeting and make sure everyone installs and learns how to use the USAFA AOG Mobile App.

One interesting idea that Mike Rose from the South Carolina Chapter shared is a *Conference on Leadership and Ethics* that is held annually to focus on our high school boys and girls. Basically they hold one (or more?) Saturdays with 2 students from each high school in the metro area. West Point has a manual that outlines everything. If we are interested in serving the wider community beyond just our grads, something like this could root out some great candidates for any of the academies. We could, if we wanted, do this with help of grads from other services. This is certainly an idea worth looking at. Bees would help us get started and so would Mike.

Again, it was my pleasure to represent us at this conference. I encourage every one of you to get involved and continue the tradition of the long blue line.