



MOVING FORWARD, 2011-2013

Recommendations of the Class Advisory Senate to the Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CLASS ADVISORY SENATE RECOMMENDS:

GOVERNANCE:

A. That the Board considers engaging one or two nationally recognized trainers in policy governance to conduct one or two days of seminars/workshops for new (and old) Board members.

B. That the Board consider occasional meetings outside of the Colorado Springs area, perhaps "hosted/sponsored" by a local chapter. This could be a regular Board meeting or a special membership meeting.

The Board should also consider exploiting low cost IT systems to provide audio and visual links to members outside the local area who would like to participate.

C. That the AOG work with the UE to refine the MOU to provide an integrated approach to achieve the common goal of Friendraising and Fundraising. This should include a structure or process to establish common budgeting and fundraising priorities so that both organizations can go forward to the graduate community with a unified plan for the support of the Academy, the cadets and graduates. For example, a comprehensive membership/Sabre Society campaign. The AOG should also work with the UE to explore the concept of a single CEO and joint staff. It may also be useful for occasional joint meetings of the two Boards.

The MOU should also provide a structure or process to accommodate other non-profit organizations.

D. That, as a minimum, the AOG Strategic Plan establish policy and strategic goals in four key areas: Governance, Friendraising, Outreach, and Financial Viability. The Plan should define who we are, where we are going, and what we want to be. Other strategic documents should then be aligned with the AOG Strategic Plan.

FRIENDRAISING/ENGAGING GRADUATES AND CADETS:

That the Board establish and communicate a clear policy and goals for graduate and cadet programs; establish policy and goals for membership growth; establish policy, goals and priorities for heritage projects and programs. The Board should also review the President/CEO's white paper on "The Connection Project" and, where appropriate, incorporate the recommendations into the AOG Strategic Plan.

OUTREACH:

That the Board define the AOG relationship with and policy towards these organization and establish strategic goals for interaction with these organizations.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY/STABILITY/SUSTAINMENT:

That the Board establish policy and strategic goals for financial sustainment, in coordination with the UE. The Board should also consider reaching out to the civilian community to support/sponsor specific graduate and/or cadet programs.



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References:

1. Articles of Incorporation, 1/15/68, as amended
2. Bylaws, 5/6/11
3. BOD Policy and Procedures, 2/21/09, as amended
4. AOG Strategic Plan, 2006-2011
5. CAS Assessment of AOG Strategic Goals, 10/21/07
6. President/CEO white paper "The Connection Project," 4/30/10

I. INTRODUCTION: ACHIEVEMENTS & CHALLENGES

A. Achievements: Agreement with the USAFA Endowment (UE); development of new Chapter and Membership Programs; revision of By-Laws; expansion of Heritage Trail and establishment of a Heritage & Traditions Committee; and development of the Blue Alliance/True Blue programs highlight just some of the achievements of the AOG during the past year.

B. Challenges: Refinement of the agreement with the Endowment; continued growth of the Chapter and Membership Programs; connecting with and among all graduates, cadets, the Academy and the public community; and ensuring the financial stability and viability of the AOG in order to accomplish its mission and goals.

The President/CEO has noted that we have "picked the low hanging fruit" and that further progress will require renewed and increased effort on the part of all members of the AOG. It is axiomatic that increasing graduate cohesion and support to the Academy is a shared responsibility between the AOG, the UE, the Academy and the Air Force. To fulfill its responsibility the AOG will require clear policy guidance in the area of governance, friendraising, outreach and financial stability.

II. GOVERNANCE:

A. The AOG has adopted the Carver model of Policy Governance. Although graduates generally have strong management skills, few have any real experience in policy formulation or policy governance. Policy governance is not intuitive. It requires training and experience. Other major non-profits conduct extensive training programs for new Board members.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That the Board enhance member familiarity with the Carver model through a "best practices" approach to non-profit board education and effectiveness. For example, the Board may consider engaging one or two nationally recognized trainers in policy governance to conduct one or two days of seminars/workshops for new (and old) Board members.

B. The Board represents the entire AOG membership, but is often viewed as Colorado-centric and isolated from the membership. The Senate provides a two way channel of communications between the Board and the members. *Checkpoints*, the AOG web site, zoomienews, etc. also provide an excellent means of communications. However, they are essentially one way channels with limited opportunity for back-and-forth dialogue. There are also a variety of web-based

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resources that are available to the Board. However, the credibility of the Board would be enhanced by greater “face-to-face” interaction with the members.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That the Board consider occasional meetings outside of the Colorado Springs area, perhaps “hosted/sponsored” by a local chapter. This could be a regular Board meeting or a special membership meeting.

The Board should also consider exploiting low cost IT systems to provide audio and visual links to members outside the local area who would like to participate.

C. Friendraising and Fundraising are interrelated activities and require the AOG and the Endowment to work together to achieve the common goal of Friendraising and Fundraising. The current MOU between the AOG and the UE has resulted in an unprecedented level of cooperation between the two organizations. However, as the President/CEO has noted it is only the first step in a journey and not a destination. The existence of two organizations with two Boards, two CEOs, two staffs, with different business models, different financial structures and different funding systems and priorities result in overlap and confusion among both donors and potential donors to the detriment of both organization and the Academy. The advent of the Athletic Association Corporation will further complicate the situation.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That the AOG work with the UE to refine the MOU to provide an integrated approach to achieve the common goal of Friendraising and Fundraising. This should include a structure or process to establish common budgeting and fundraising priorities so that both organizations can go forward to the graduate community with a unified plan for the support of the Academy, the cadets and graduates. For example, a comprehensive membership/Sabre Society campaign.

The AOG should also work with the UE to explore the concept of a single CEO and joint staff. It may also be useful for occasional joint meetings of the two Boards.

The MOU should also provide a structure or process to accommodate other non-profit organizations.

D. The Board has adopted a Policy and Procedures Manual which establishes five “ends” and “executive limitations;” the President/CEO has developed a Staff Strategic Plan which identifies five “strategic focus areas;” and the AOG Strategic Plan, 2006-2011, identifies ten “strategic plan goals,” five of which still appear to be relevant. In 2007 the CAS provided an assessment of the AOG Strategic Plan that also remains. The Board is currently developing a new AOG Strategic Plan to provide guidance for the next five years. The number of distinct strategic documents increases the difficulty of developing a coherent oval strategy.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That, as a minimum, the AOG Strategic Plan establish policy and strategic goals in four key areas: Governance, Friendraising, Outreach, and Financial Viability. The Plan should define who we are, where we are going, and what we want to be. Other strategic documents should then be aligned with the AOG Strategic Plan.

III. FRIENDRAISING/ENGAGING GRADUATES AND CADETS:

A key to “friendraising” is connecting graduates and cadets with the Academy and with one another. The President/CEO has noted that compared with our sister academies there is a lack of cohesion among our graduates and a lack of connection with and loyalty to the Academy. Yet, experience has shown that graduates and cadets will respond and participate if they can see



tangible benefits to themselves and the Academy. This includes providing appropriate programs for cadets and graduates that will promote interest in and dedication to the mission, ideals, activities and heritage of the Academy (the NCLS is a good example); continually reevaluating priorities in the light of financial and staff availability; and mentoring and motivating cadets, younger graduates and potential candidates. In other words “increasing the value of the ring.” It will also require working with the Academy, the UE and the class leadership to promote a sense of lifetime support for the Academy from the day in-processing through graduation and beyond.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That the Board establish and communicate a clear policy and goals for graduate and cadet programs; establish policy and goals for membership growth; establish policy, goals and priorities for heritage projects and programs. The Board should also review the President/CEO’s white paper on “The Connection Project” and, where appropriate, incorporate the recommendations into the AOG Strategic Plan.

IV. OUTREACH:

The AOG interfaces with a number of organizations that support the Academy, ie: businesses, civic groups, parent clubs, affinity groups, the Athletic Association and the USAFA Endowment, to name just a few. There is a need to promote, integrate and rationalize the efforts of these groups build support for the Academy and to increase national recognition of the Academy as a national asset, rather than just another commissioning source.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That the Board define the AOG relationship with and policy towards these organization and establish strategic goals for interaction with these organizations.

V. FINANCIAL VIABILITY/STABILITY/SUSTAINMENT:

The AOG requires adequate, stable and predictable financing in order to achieve its goals and support current and future programs. This means that the AOG needs a steady stream of income independent of support from the USAFA Endowment or any other single source. The AOG currently relies primarily on membership dues, investment income, merchandise sales, rentals, services, directed gifts, etc., as well as a portion of the Annual Fund. These income streams need to be increased and new streams developed.

THE SENATE RECOMMENDS: That the Board establish policy and strategic goals for financial sustainment, in coordination with the UE. The Board should also consider reaching out to the civilian community to support/sponsor specific graduate and/or cadet programs.



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ADDENDUM

MEMBER INPUT/COMMENTS

- Chapters should be encouraged to work/partner with area West Point & Annapolis graduates/chapters to promote improved all around comraderie & networking. Joint parties/tailgates at Service Academy Games should also be considered.
- Work with Air Force officials to permit/tolerate “on base” mentoring of young graduates by middle & senior graduates. Chapters might be a more appropriate vehicle to move such mentoring “off base.”
- Develop specific programs to reach out to specific graduate constituencies, ie: various age groups, women, minorities, etc.
- Reach out to other affinity groups to draw them closer to the Academy and the graduate community.
- Work with the Academy to bring both young & old graduates back to the Academy for informal career discussions/mentoring.
- Work with the Academy to bring nationally recognized forums to the Academy.
- Seek to open additional channels between graduates and cadets.
- Develop a more robust field infrastructure in order to keep graduates and cadets connected to one another.
- Seek ways to integrate AOG and Academy efforts into a comprehensive/systematic program to build loyalty to the Academy, each other and the AOG from the time cadets enter throughout their lives.
- Increase income from existing streams as well as developing new streams.
- Work with the USAFA Endowment to raise an operating fund for the AOG.
- Develop closer relationships with businesses/industries and other external organization.
- Develop projects/programs to benefit the families of graduates wounded/KIA in Iraq/Afganistan.
- Encourage greater lifetime membership and participation.
- Encourage classes to developing social networking programs for their classmates.
- Make the Honor Code the “Standard,” not the “Goal!”
- Work with the UE to develop a major, integrated membership/Sabre Society campaign.
- Reach out to non-donors/non members.
- 100% of Annual Fund/Sabre Society should go to the AOG (minus actual fund raising cost.
- The AOG should go to the Endowment for funding.