

**AF Senior Leader Walk Around of USAFA – 2011
(Sub-Task Deliverable)**



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COUNCIL FOR LOGISTICS RESEARCH, INC.

Assessment of Religious Climate at USAFA

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Honorable Daniel B. Ginsberg, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the Council for Logistics Research, Inc. (CLR) conducted an assessment of the current religious climate at the US Air Force Academy (USAFA). CLR convened a panel of outsiders with prior USAFA experience to form a Religious Climate Review Team (RCRT) in order to perform this task. The team included four former teachers or administrators at USAFA, including two who are USAFA graduates. None have been employed at USAFA in the last nine years. General Patrick Gamble, USAF (ret.) was asked to lead the RCRT. The team included:

Gen Patrick Gamble, USAF (Ret)	Former Commandant of Cadets at USAFA
Brig Gen Ruben Cubero, USAF (Ret)	Former Dean of the Faculty at USAFA
Brig Gen Malham Wakin, USAF (Ret)	Former Head of the Philosophy Dept at USAFA
Col Chester Morgan, USAF (Ret)	Former Head of the Law Dept at USAFA
Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff, CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret)	Former Special Asst to SECAF and CSAF
Robert Morrison, PhD	CLR

Assigned as the team's liaison to USAFA and to advise the team on legal questions was Lt Col Linell Letendre, USAF, Air Staff Counsel, Administrative Law Directorate.

During the week of 28 March – 1 April 2011 the RCRT visited USAFA to conduct an assessment of the religious climate.

A Scope of Work directed the RCRT to respond to thirteen broadly-worded objectives in order to assess the religious climate at USAFA. The objectives directed examination of official religious neutrality, religious freedom, religious tolerance, and evidence of proselytizing. In responding to the thirteen specific objectives, we attempt to consolidate comments assessing the overall climate with respect to four over-arching subject areas implied by the objectives: Official Religious Neutrality, Religious Freedom and Tolerance, Conflict Resolution, and Training and Education (see Findings).

METHODOLOGY

During the week of 28 March – 1 April 2011 our team was onsite at USAFA to conduct an assessment of the religious climate. Given the limited nature of the tasking and the reasonable time allotted to comply, we formulated a methodology sufficient to provide a supportable climate check. Through a combination of readings (both solicited and unsolicited), directed interviews and meetings with individuals and pertinent groups, casual interactions with cadets during regularly-scheduled activities, and volunteer walk-in sessions for any USAFA member, we approached the task. All interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality.

To insure that our interviews included both direct experience and hearsay, our questions were comprised of three levels: “Did you ever personally experience...”; “Do you personally know of anyone that...”; and, “Have you ever heard of anyone that...” Given the interview focus and sample size, we feel we received sufficient data to support the climate check conclusions contained herein. Where any data is felt to be insufficient, it is noted in the report.

Data Review

In response to RCRT requests, USAFA provided background materials for our review and discussion including statements from Leadership that outlined policy and/or addressed events that have occurred at USAFA in the recent past, data relating to requests for religious accommodation and complaints, and applicable findings from the 2009 Climate Survey.

We reviewed official statements concerning respect and religious freedom issued by the Superintendent of the Academy, the Commandant of Cadets, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Vice Commandant of Cadets, Culture and Climate.

General Gamble interviewed the Superintendent and the entire team was briefed by the Chief Diversity Officer, Dean of Faculty, Commandant of Cadets, Athletic Director, and the Senior Staff Chaplain.

We reviewed data on Scheduling Committee Actions in response to requests for religious accommodation, complaints received by the Inspector General's

office and the Equal Opportunity office, and letters and memos from the Cadet Wing Chaplains.

The Cadet Wing Chaplains provided us with some current training materials that have been in use at USAFA for a number of years (the Religious Guidelines Toolkit) and also provided a look at a new training curriculum that will replace it when fully-developed.

We read media releases from both inside and outside USAFA concerning charges made by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. The transcript of the USAFA Religious Respect Conference held November 2010 was provided for our review.

In preparation for our visit, we invited members of the Cadet Wing and Permanent Party to meet and speak voluntarily with us. This elicited other unsolicited emails from various sources inside and outside the Academy.

Cadet Interviews

Over one hundred cadets were interviewed individually, thus providing a large sample of independent opinion. Interviews were conducted by one member (sometimes two) of our team so that volunteers would not feel overwhelmed by the number of interviewers and questions.

The team conducted 60 directed interviews assuring a good cross-section with between 10 to 20 cadets representing each class.

In addition, the team conducted interviews with a dozen cadets from minority faiths and cadets that are non-religious.

Finally, a generic email was sent to every cadet to invite them to speak with us during any of the several “walk-in” times during the week that might suit their schedule. Over 25 cadets accepted our invitation to appear voluntarily for an individual interview.

All together, over 100 individual cadets spoke with the team, including Agnostic, Atheist, Buddhist, Earth Centered, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim cadets, as well as cadets from many of the Christian faiths represented on campus.

Additionally, we met one day for lunch and interacted with a dozen or so members of the Cadet Interfaith Council, which included representation from the Atheist and Free Thinkers group. Another day we dined with minority faith students and some inter-collegiate student athletes.

On Monday evening, we attended the regularly-scheduled SPIRE (Special Programs in Religious Education) meetings and one or two RCRT members met and spoke with cadets in each of the following SPIRE groups:

Jewish, Catholic, Baptist Student Union, Navigators (Christian), Latter Day Saints, Campus Crusade for Christ, Earth Centered Spirituality, Buddhist, Youth with a Mission (Christian), Officers Christian Fellowship, and CROSStraining (Christian).

Cadets that occupy specific roles of interest were invited to group interviews that focused on their unique perspective. We met with a group of exchange cadets from other academies (Army, Navy, and Coast Guard) and with six USAFA PEER (Personal Education and Ethics Representatives) cadets. We also met with the Cadet Wing Commanders for the 2010-2011 academic year.

Permanent Party Interviews

For members of the permanent party, we solicited volunteers by email and interviewed more than a dozen faculty members, a handful of individuals from the athletic department, a half-dozen AOCs and AMTs, and a few other permanent party members from other mission elements.

It's worth special mention that among the combination of AOCs and AMTs there exists a large and formidable active network of trained and highly perceptive military members who regularly dialogue among themselves about their squadron experiences. In the opinion of a majority of the officers, NCOs, and cadets to whom we spoke, any consistent dissatisfaction of any kind on the part of a sizable portion of the cadet wing membership would not escape their attention and professional scrutiny.

We interviewed representatives from functions directly involved with issues of religious tolerance and first-amendment rights: six USAFA Cadet Wing

Chaplains (various faiths), a representative from the Inspector General's office, the Judge Advocate's office, representatives from the offices of Human Resources and Equal Opportunity, as well as the Vice Commandant, Culture and Climate.

Individual interviews were usually conducted by one or two members of our team, similar to the cadet interview procedure. A few of these interviews were held with the entire team present.

In addition to scheduled one-on-one interviews with volunteer permanent party personnel, the team advertised and conducted a walk-in time for permanent party. Over 15 additional personnel (mostly faculty) were individually interviewed during the volunteer walk-in period.

In response to our email invitations, we did receive a handful of replies from individuals that could not appear in person, including cadet, permanent party, and even former USAFA graduates not currently on the USAFA staff.

External Organization Input

The team solicited input from external organizations known to be active in issues of religion in the military and specifically to have an interest in USAFA. By email, we solicited input from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers (MAAF), and the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF).

FINDINGS

I. Assessment of USAFA's religious climate with regard to official neutrality

The following four objectives can be appropriately linked to the Establishment Clause in the Constitution and to the constitutional guarantee of "no religious test." These protections should be well understood within the military profession and applied not only to promotions and assignments, but also to the training and education of all Air Force personnel as it applies to professional relationships, leadership and character, officership, and command.

Objective 1: Assess the degree to which USAFA has remained officially neutral regarding religious beliefs, neither officially endorsing nor disapproving any faith belief or absence of belief.

We found widespread agreement that everyone throughout the chain of command has been given and is giving appropriate guidance with respect to official neutrality, not only among religions, but also between religious and non-religious beliefs.

However:

- Despite adequate guidance, and possibly due to the legalistic nature of the correct application of guidance in specific cases, one's personal interpretation of what is proper in specific situations may not be congruent with official policy and can cause unwarranted concern. For example, opinions varied as to the propriety of senior leadership's visible participation in religious events.
- Occasional cadet wing incidents have and, in our opinion, will continue to pop up involving a superior and subordinate, but we found that they were nearly always resolved, and usually at the lowest level.

Objective 3: Assess the degree to which cadets and permanent party at USAFA feel free of pressure to participate, or not participate, in religious activities as their individual desires dictate.

Cadets and permanent party expressed a near-uniform belief that they can (and do) make their own choices to participate - or not - in religious activities, without repercussion. Reports of actual pressure to participate were rare and easily resolved by simply expressing that the invitation or speech was unwelcome.

Objective 6: Assess whether higher headquarters policy guidance on religious tolerance is properly translated and implemented at USAFA.

Policy guidance on religious tolerance has been properly translated. But to reconcile what is translated by the leadership and chaplaincy with what may be an opposing article of faith for some, and to align what is correspondingly taught and what is subsequently learned will require a more uniform emphasis across USAFA.

For example, USAFA's training program cites the essential nature of "Respect." But we found considerable individual interpretation among faculty, staff, and cadets alike as to whether a policy anchored in respect is promoting the respect of all beliefs, or an individual's right to believe or not believe, or perhaps is mandating respect for human dignity, or maybe is championing respect for the right of one to believe what they choose without consequence.

There should be mutual understanding that religious tolerance does not require acceptance of beliefs that are theologically opposed to one's own, but rather to respect the rights of others to hold different beliefs, and to show respect to all, regardless of their beliefs – so long as those beliefs do not compromise their ability to live up to their oaths and to observe good military protocol and decorum. Getting this right and making it clear is essential. If "respect" is to anchor the USAFA policy on religious tolerance, it must be unambiguously understood and professionally accepted by all.

And:

- The main focus of implementation efforts so far seems to be on cadets. An equal emphasis should be placed upon faculty and

staff, including similar training. Some training in this area should also be considered for sponsor families.

- Online training was deemed ineffective by all our audiences. The feeling is that if it's important enough to be required for everyone, it's important enough to be delivered in person by qualified people.

Objective 8: Assess the extent to which those not of a majority faith are accepted in the cadet wing and within the permanent party at USAFA.

Cadets' acceptance of those with different beliefs is *exceptional*. USAFA should be recognized for its institutional leadership in this area.

And:

- The Cadet Interfaith Council is a remarkably effective cadet organization that promotes a welcoming environment within which cadets are free to dialogue and seek to understand different religious viewpoints. The Interfaith Council is a problem solver.

Among permanent party, members of minority faiths and atheists said that they felt far freer than even five years ago to be open about their beliefs. We heard repeatedly that the religious climate is much better than in the past and that steady progress still continues.

Discussion

Of the few who say that problems still exist that remain to be addressed we found the context mainly centered around the Establishment Clause issues rather than the Free Exercise of Religion issues.

Because permanent party are in a superior position to cadets and have superior-subordinate relationships with each other, it is possible to perceive them as having a conflict-of-interest and/or endorsing or promoting one belief system, especially in the sensitive climate of heightened awareness that exists today.

Cadets are not unduly stressed about possible pressure to join or conform to a religion, and the majority clearly feels empowered to deal with unwanted

approaches. Across the board, cadets disavow that any favoritism or retribution would accrue based upon religious or non-religious affiliation.

Faculty to whom we spoke did not uniformly express the same degree of positive outlook. There were reports by faculty of feeling distressed about overt proselytizing and unwelcome religious conversation, and worries that religious affiliation could affect personnel decisions. But when this concern was pursued for details the examples were often several years old.

In summary, our sample size of faculty and staff was smaller than for cadets and we were unable to get a clear, consistent reading of all religious climate issues affecting permanent party. A more focused look by the Superintendent and the Dean may be needed to truly understand and rectify the situation for this particular Academy demographic.

II. Assessment of USAFA's climate of religious freedom and respect

The following objectives are linked to the constitutional guarantee of freedom to worship as one chooses, to the responsibility to demonstrate respect for the right of others to hold beliefs that are different from one's own, and to the responsibility of commanders to guarantee a climate of respect for personnel who are members of religions or faiths different from their own.

Objective 2: Assess the degree to which USAFA accommodates free exercise of religion and other personal beliefs, as well as freedom of expression concerning individual religious matters, taking into account the different types of relationships (e.g., chain of command, peer-to-peer) between and among cadets, staffs, commanders and other personnel.

Accommodation: We heard virtually no complaint about lack of accommodation from the cadet population, and little from faculty or staff. In fact, there appeared to be nearly blanket accommodation made to cadets, not always with reference to guidance relating to the prerogative of the commander and the importance of good order and discipline and the impact on mission.

Freedom of expression: We found no indication of any official discouragement of freedom of expression, but there was concern expressed by many cadets, faculty, and staff that media and higher headquarters attention on the subject, despite a healthy USAFA environment regarding respect of others' religious freedom, has convinced many that it is safer not to bring up religious matters at all. There is a big difference between teaching religion and teaching about religion. As a top tier university, this USAFA pendulum needs to swing back to center.

Objective 4: Assess how tolerant the cadet population and permanent party members are of individuals of varying religious beliefs and of individuals who choose no religion at all.

Cadets in particular showed great tolerance for diversity of belief and for peers with no religious beliefs including those professing atheism. In fact, some cadets expressed that before coming to USAFA they believed that it

would be difficult, if not impossible, for a non-believer to make a good officer. They had changed their minds based upon their contact and experience with other cadets. Although asked, no respondent stated that the mere fact of a different or *non-religious* belief meant that a person would not make a good officer.

Some permanent party members hold onto old views, according to some specific incidents that were shared with our team. Among the USAFA permanent party, individuals may be operating from a more dated perspective than that of cadets. This serves to underscore one of our chief points – that training and education needs to look beyond the cadets.

Objective 5: Assess how prevalent instances of unwanted proselytizing or other unwanted religious conversations may be among USAFA cadets, permanent party members or others who have base access.

While infrequent, accounts of unwanted religious approaches were reported.

However:

- Based on our interviews we suspect that in many cases the interpretation of “unwanted” may have been nothing more than a single invitation resulting in a polite refusal.
- Those cadets who related such incidents told us that their declinations were respected in almost all cases, and
- They expressed confidence in their ability to handle these situations, usually at the lowest level.
- Cadets told us that as university students and future military professionals they sought more meaningful conversations about religion, different belief systems, and how belief systems inspire and motivate people around the globe.

Objective 11: Assess whether cadets or permanent party members might fear for their physical safety at USAFA based on their religious beliefs, and if so, why.

We found no evidence in our interviews at any level that anyone fears for their physical safety based upon their religious beliefs or non-belief.

Discussion

Predominantly, cadets freely acknowledge that the USAFA religious climate ranges from good to very good with an atmosphere favorable to free expression. When pressed for a more personal opinion, a few cadets, especially those highly committed to their own belief system - be it religious or atheistic – admitted that good climate notwithstanding, they found it somewhat biased... in both directions it turns out. In other words, they sense too much opposition to their own personal views. Some religiously-devout cadets say that the climate is too secular and is overly restrictive of their free expression; while some atheists say that the prevailing climate is overly religious and biased against non-believers. Even among these few, there appears to be an acceptable balance when Academy guidance on respect is understood and followed.

Cadets, especially those of minority faiths and atheists, welcome discussion of their beliefs, but say that it rarely occurs except with a roommate or during SPIRE meetings. Cadets report that certain religion-related topics seem to be off-limits in the classroom as well, which constrains a free academic exchange of ideas.

Comments that we frequently heard include:

“They’re putting religion in a box.”

“We’re under a microscope.”

“We feel like we’re walking on eggshells.”

The constant negative press the Academy receives in various media reports distresses most cadets. Overwhelmingly they think that mistaken or uninformed assertions are one-sided and tend to be blown way out of proportion. Their actual overall experience is good and they take pride in the integrity and behavior of the cadet wing. We witnessed how negative press reports and their effects on the institution can create uncalled-for anxiety. We observed that any healthy university social and intellectual interaction with the subject of religion and faith has trended into an avoidance of anything that could possibly backfire on grounds of religious over-sensitivity. The permanent party and cadets have noticed a “chilling” effect that causes them to avoid legitimate conversation that even touches on religion. Consequently, the full potential to responsibly explore increased inter-faith understanding has become an unintended casualty.

Some cadets are still unsure whether the official USAFA policy means it is necessary to respect everyone's religious beliefs, rather than respecting the right to choose one's beliefs. Many cadets say that they fear offending others by making a religious statement or permissible display. But overall we found that most cadets clearly understand that it is okay to personally disagree with beliefs that one finds objectionable, so long as they do not disrespect expressions of those beliefs or threaten good order and discipline by their actions.

Some faculty and staff agree that certain religious subjects are avoided by members of the permanent party, or approached in a very constrained manner even in classroom courses where the topic may be entirely relevant to the point under discussion.

Many permanent party members reported that great progress has been made and that things are much better than they used to be. They said that the leadership is doing the right things and working very hard on this issue, perhaps out-of-view of the community at large. The appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer is a positive and visible step taken by leadership to demonstrate their commitment to this area.

In fact, accommodations so that cadets can freely practice their religion are the rule and are rarely denied. Some permanent party question whether certain aspects of the Academy's mission, including academics and military training, are sometimes impinged upon as a result of the time allotted for accommodation.

Religious accommodation procedures appear to be less well-defined for permanent party than cadets. Incidents that suggest a lack of sensitivity to others' needs and beliefs systems were reported.

III. Assessment of conflict-resolution of religious issues at USAFA

The following objectives are associated with the role of leadership at all levels, with the institutional vision founded on Air Force core values of integrity, service, and excellence, and also with the oath of office from which the Airman's ethos is derived. Airmen at all levels are accountable for the safety and success of the mission, and as Service members, for respecting the human dignity of friends and foe alike. There is no room for internal interpersonal conflict of any kind in this model. That lesson is essential learning for all members of the cadet wing, faculty, and staff.

Objective 7: Assess whether USAFA cadets and permanent party members understand appropriate ways to indicate that proselytizing or other religious conversations are unwanted; and appropriate responses to such indications.

Cadets clearly understand how to indicate that attention is unwanted and such indications are usually responded to immediately and appropriately. Cadets expressed a clear preference to handle things face-to-face. Cadets are not afraid to decline unwanted conversation, and those making an unwanted invitation understand the importance of respecting a declination. Cadets understand that there are a variety of means available to them to handle situations that they could not resolve themselves. Cadets possess a high degree of confidence in using the cadet chain of command.

We did not get as clear a picture for permanent party and faculty. Responses to unwanted conversation may be influenced by less of a widespread peer relationship within the faculty. Some faculty members are not confident that their chain of command would be able to resolve incidents fairly, or even to discern them.

Objective 12: To the extent your assessment suggests that problems exist that should be addressed by the Air Force, assess why these issues are not currently being reported through the formal complaint processes.

The cadets with whom we talked trusted the various mechanisms internal to USAFA (including the cadet chain of command, the Interfaith Council, PEERS,

AOCs/AMTs, and chaplains). These reporting mechanisms were deemed responsive and effective. In view of certain media reports of claims to the contrary we looked hard, but found no direct or supportable widespread evidence of cadets resorting to the use of outside agencies or organizations.

The above is not the case with some permanent party personnel, particularly faculty, at least some of whom are not trusting of their chain-of-command and believe that it is organizationally unresponsive to complaints about religious tolerance.

Discussion

Cadets clearly feel that they have the ability to resolve a conflict over religious tolerance and freedom, usually by addressing the issue head-on, by themselves. Alternatively, they have great confidence that their chain-of-command will be able to help them if called upon. The Superintendent was specifically lauded for his leadership in this area several times by faculty, staff, and cadets.

Procedures to deal with conflict resolution appear to be less well understood among permanent party than cadets. We found that a few faculty and staff preferred to refrain from or avoid conflict rather than confront or complain. It may be that because of the stratification and hierarchical nature of the faculty that confrontation is not the preferred alternative to an unwanted religious approach. In cases where there is a superior-subordinate or a senior-junior relationship certain faculty and staff reported that they are not confident that their chain of command would be able to resolve incidents "fairly," and fear being singled out for making waves. When pressed for details, once again the few examples we examined tended to be old news or to have a basis in professional academic disagreement outside the realm of religion.

IV. Assessment of USAFA's training and education for religious tolerance

The following objectives are linked to education and training. Like past Air Force education and training on social issues, USAFA is promoting the idea that we can learn unity without confusing anyone that we demand-uniformity. This conforms to a mandate that originates in the Constitution, is further secured by the oath of office, and permeates throughout cadet leadership and character education and development via the Core Values. As we examined it, USAFA command policy actively supports the voluntary free exercise of religion to the greatest extent practical through command religious programs and fair and consistent commander policies of religious accommodation, as outlined in DOD Instruction 1300.17 and Air Force policies that flow from that guidance.

Objective 9: Assess whether the planned USAFA Religious Tolerance Training Program for all cadets adequately introduces fourth-class cadets to the expectations for individual behavior and upper-class cadets to their responsibilities for both personal conduct and their leadership responsibilities in the area of religious tolerance.

We reviewed the newly-developed religious training syllabus and sample curriculum (developed in conjunction with the Anti-Defamation League) and indeed we think it shows great promise. This planned education program is still a concept in transition.

However:

- While implementation should be carried out thoughtfully, it must be a command priority.
 - In addition to curriculum, an implementation plan is needed that considers the timing, delivery, and environment for all phases of the training.
 - Adequate resources are needed to make the complete package a reality. Training for all four classes should be implemented at a reasonable pace and established in a way that guarantees retention and continuity.
- "Religious training" should not exist in isolation, as its own "stove pipe".
 - The education piece should be integrated with other programs, such as character and leadership development.

- Development and delivery of the education and training should not be the sole purview of the chaplains, but should include JAGs and commanders.
- This complex topic requires that training be delivered face-to-face by qualified people, including nuanced real-life scenarios and plenty of discussion time.
 - Eliminate any online religious training (via ADLS).
 - Based on our findings the audience should not just be cadets, but should include faculty, staff, and leadership.
- If we focus so much on what separates cadets, we risk overlooking what unifies them: Religious tolerance (respect) training should flow from beliefs that Airmen and cadets universally share...the Oath, the Honor Code, Core Values, and mission.

Objective 10: Assess whether the existing SPIRE Program contributes to, detracts from, or is neutral with respect to the climate of religious respect at USAFA.

SPIRE (Special Programs in Religious Education) contributes to accommodation and free-ranging discussion, including the atheist viewpoint. Moreover, those that participate in SPIRE like it very much and find it greatly rewarding. In particular, they noted that SPIRE gives them the opportunity to be open in their expression of belief.

And:

- The decision by leadership to modify the Cadet Schedule of Calls was very effective in communicating the Command's neutrality on religion.
- Cadets in general were pleased that USAFA was able to preserve SPIRE. Without compromising the mission, the risk of succumbing to over-reaction from the press reports was professionally mitigated.

Objective 13: Assess whether an annual conference on religious tolerance such as the conference held at USAFA on 15-16 Nov 2010 would make a significant contribution to a climate of religious tolerance.

The conference was helpful in opening dialog and improving understanding with a variety of different agencies, including outside organizations. But in our opinion, by itself it is insufficient to make a significant contribution to the climate of religious tolerance.

Discussion

We heard explicit statements from both cadets and faculty that while robust attention is being ministered to cadets with respect to religious tolerance, policy statements, and training, correspondingly appropriate education for permanent party does not appear to be receiving the same level of effort.

The planned religious tolerance curriculum for cadets intends to provide education and training during each year at the Academy, with a progression through topics designed for superiors and leaders as cadets advance. Repetition will be an essential component.

All aspects of this plan should be vetted, supported, and integrated into cadet education at the right time and by the right parties in order to maximize success. Today, as reported by fourth class cadets, current training is provided during Basic Cadet Training and is not well-retained after that demanding period of mental and physical stress. Treating religious respect education and training as a chaplains-only activity misses the opportunity to acquaint every cadet more fully with the legal lineage that culminates in a commander's professional responsibility in such matters to his or her unit and to which cadets swear an oath to support.

We believe that to be truly oriented toward our military profession, training on religious tolerance and freedom should be integrated with that on leadership, character, and legal responsibility and should have solid and visible participation by officers chosen for their experience in those categories.

The new training will replace the universally-derided online training module by live, face-to-face discussions that focus on realistic scenarios. This will offer cadets a chance to share intellectual opinions with a network of peers, thus establishing the basis for an implied social contract among the cohort for the universal practice of appropriate behavior.

Education for permanent party must be examined as well. They should be concurrently aware of the education given to cadets and, if applied appropriately, should benefit equally from the curriculum. Currently faculty and staff are out-of-reach of new religious tolerance training. From what we could discern some may have received a one-time orientation module in the past, but no effective refresher exists except for the online “quiz” which all described as a square that can be (and is) filled without really reading the content.

CONCLUSION

Based on our methodology and the allotted time, I assess the climate of religious tolerance at USAFA to be well within Air Force standards. To the point, the climate is healthy and improving due to specific leadership attention at all levels. Outside assertions claiming that an unacceptable climate of religious tolerance exists, to the degree we were able to examine actual evidence or take actual interviews from complainants, were universally unsupported. Anomalies arising in the otherwise steady climate improvement I would consider to be normal among a young population of the cadet wing's size, and they are being handled satisfactorily either by the leadership or by cadets themselves using the guidance provided to them to first work issues out at the lowest level within the cadet chain. Old religious feelings having their roots in the period leading up to 2005 still haunt a few of the faculty and some vocal graduates that we heard from and this needs attention. The Superintendent has set a firm course to follow with regard to religious tolerance at USAFA. He has made clear and frequent communication a priority. He has set into motion training initiatives and resolution procedures that are improving the USAFA climate. In my assessment, I believe that the only real threat to his effective endeavors continuing to be coherent is the threat to the exercise of good judgment brought about by over-reaction. Occasionally USAFA may still be buffeted by religious crosswinds, but... I recommend we stay the course.

Patrick K. Gamble