

**BY ORDER OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT**

**HQ UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
ACADEMY INSTRUCTION 36-3539**

**12 JUNE 2024**

**Personnel**

**THE USAF ACADEMY CADET  
EXEMPLAR PROGRAM**



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## ***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

This document has been substantially revised and must be completely reviewed. Major changes include the addition of verbiage to allow a living exemplar to be chosen as well as broadening the language for criteria to allow for a more diverse pool of candidates.

**1. Program Intent.** The cadet exemplar program is both a leadership development and heritage education program. It is designed to provide each class to select a leader of character as a role model to emulate. It is also meant to instill pride and provide a connection to our nation's heritage. As this instruction outlines below, each cadet class will form an exemplar committee, nominate and select an exemplar, and then maintain their connection to that exemplar through a class-wide exemplar dinner, an exemplar display case, and other activities throughout the class's tenure at USAFA.

**2. Philosophy of Oversight.** The cadet exemplar program is a program executed for each cadet class by each cadet class. The Cadet Wing (USAFA/CW) advisor will maintain vigilance in ensuring the cadet exemplar committee meets the required deadlines and accomplishes necessary coordination during each exemplar activity. In essence, the USAFA/CW advisor will mentor the committee and share the administrative load as required by the timeline below. The cadet exemplar committee should form subcommittees or teams to plan and execute major program elements such as voting, the dinner, and the display case.

### **3. Selection Criteria.**

**3.1. Exemplar nominees will be chosen from a diverse field of military members or military associated civilians, who have contributed to the leadership and advancement of aviation or space operations and been an exceptional leader of character.** Nominees will have made notable contributions to support the Armed Forces of the United States or the advancement of American air or space power. **NOTE:** The Superintendent may provide the class exemplar committee with additional direction and items for consideration concerning the selection criteria of their year's class exemplar.

**3.2. The list of potential nominees will represent the American public and will include nominees with diverse backgrounds.** Diversity is defined in AFI 36-7001, *Diversity & Inclusion*, para 1.3.

**3.3. Nominees must have exhibited integrity and character in both their professional careers and their personal lives.**

**3.4. Exemplars must not have been selected by another cadet class.**

**3.5. Exemplar nominees should be deceased.** **NOTE:** Living members may be considered but require specific approval by the Commandant of Cadets. In the event a living exemplar is chosen, should that person commit an act that is not in line with Core Values, they will be stricken as the class's exemplar.

**3.6. Should an exemplar be discovered to have committed an act that, in the view of the Commandant and their staff, is not in alignment with the Department of the Air Force Core Values or is in contrast to being a leader of character, the exemplar will be removed from the class.** This action, if it occurs during the class's tenure at the Academy, would allow the class to select a new exemplar using the method described in this instruction, but this action

would not obligate the Academy to expend funds for an additional exemplar dinner, speaker, etc.

#### **4. Responsibilities.**

##### **4.1. Commandant of Cadets (USAFA/CW). The USAFA/CW will:**

4.1.1. Maintain overall responsibility and authority for the successful execution and oversight of USAFA's cadet exemplar program as outlined within this instruction.

4.1.2. Approve the short list of exemplar nominees as presented by the cadet exemplar committee.

4.1.3. Approve the final selection of an exemplar, following a decision by the class.

4.1.4. Appoint a USAFA/CW officer to serve as an advisor to the cadet exemplar committee.

4.1.5. Fund displays, travel for speakers, honoraria, exemplar patches, and other associated program materials (not from appropriated funds). Gift funds may be used, if available. Coordination/approval must be received prior to any commitment or expenditure of funds IAW USAFAI 51-601, *USAF Academy Management and Use of Gift Funds*.

4.1.6. The USAFA/CW Advisor will:

4.1.6.1. Advise, mentor, and oversee the activities of the cadet exemplar committee.

4.1.6.2. Assist with the coordination required with other USAFA mission elements.

4.1.6.3. Ensure the cadet exemplar committee accomplishes required actions generally according to the proposed timeline.

4.1.6.4. Submit a Gift Need Opportunities request IAW USAFAI 51-601.

4.1.7. The cadet class president or class representative will:

4.1.7.1. Appoint a class chairperson for the cadet exemplar committee.

4.1.7.2. Maintain periodic oversight and contact with the cadet exemplar committee.

4.1.8. The cadet exemplar committee chair will:

4.1.8.1. Form a cadet exemplar committee of at least six members, not including themselves, to assist in planning and executing class exemplar activities. Members will be chosen from all four groups and include cadets with diverse demographic backgrounds that mirror the population of the class.

4.1.8.2. Ensure the committee generates a biographical brief for each exemplar candidate on which the class will be voting and present it to the USAFA/DF advisor for approval.

4.1.8.3. Ensure the accomplishment of all required items listed in the timeline below.

**4.2. Dean of the Faculty (USAFA/DF).** The USAFA/DF will appoint a USAFA/DF representative through the Department of History (USAFA/DFHI) to serve as a consultant to the cadet exemplar committee.

4.2.1. The USAFA/DFHI, through the appointed history consultant will:

- 4.2.1.1. Maintain a list of potential exemplars and provide it to each class.
- 4.2.1.2. Review each class's final proposed list for appropriateness.
- 4.2.1.3. Review nominees for exemplar dinner speeches and the contents of the speech.
- 4.2.1.4. Track items on loan to USAFA for the exemplar cases.

**4.3. The USAFA Historian Officer (USAFA/HO) will:**

- 4.3.1. Maintain a list of potential nominees for submission.
- 4.3.2. Assist USAFA/DFHI in vetting write-in candidates from the Cadet Wing.
- 4.3.3. Assist USAFA/DFHI in reviewing and researching the list of six finalists and two alternates.
- 4.3.4. Assist a class's committee in finding and gathering items for exemplar displays.

**5. Timeline of Events.**

**5.1. Prior to a class arriving for Basic Cadet Training:**

- 5.1.1. USAFA/CW and USAFA/DF (through USAFA/DFHI) assign advisors.
- 5.1.2. Previous class advisors and cadet exemplar committee members complete after action reports/lessons learned and brief new USAFA/CW and USAFA/DF advisors on roles and responsibilities. Previous cadet exemplar committee chairperson will brief the cadet exemplar committee chairperson of the incoming class on roles and responsibilities.

**5.2. Fall semester of fourth-class year:**

- 5.2.1. Class president appoints cadet exemplar committee chair as soon as possible after the start of the fall semester. The Cadet exemplar committee chair forms the committee as soon as possible and contacts USAFA/CW to establish initial contact with the USAFA/CW advisor.
- 5.2.2. The USAFA/DF history consultant provides a list of previous class exemplars and, after consultation with USAFA/HO, provide a list of suggested class exemplar nominees to the cadet exemplar committee chair.
- 5.2.3. The cadet exemplar committee chair solicits the class for other class exemplar nominees. These nominees will be vetted by the USAFA/DF history consultant and USAFA/HO and, if approved, may be considered for selection on the final list.
- 5.2.4. The cadet exemplar committee reduces the list of nominees to six primary and two alternate nominees. During this process, the USAFA/DF history consultant, in cooperation with the USAFA/CW advisor and advisement from Center for Character and Leadership Development (USAFA/CCLD), has USAFA/DFHI faculty and USAFA/HO experts review and research the provided list of nominees for appropriateness and recommend changes, if required.
- 5.2.5. The USAFA/CW advisor assists the cadet exemplar committee with preparing the nomination staff package and forwards to USAFA/CW for approval and to USAFA/DF, USAFA's Athletic Department, and USAFA/HO for informational purposes.

5.2.6. Once the short list is approved, the USAFA/CW advisor assists the cadet exemplar committee with scheduling a voting session for the entire class; the class exemplar committee presents to the USAFA/DF history consultant biographical briefs of each of the six approved primary nominees, for approval prior to the class votes.

5.2.7. The USAFA/CW advisor assists the cadet exemplar committee in formulating a budget plan for the dinner, dinner speaker, athletic jacket patches and other expenses. USAFA/CW advisor coordinates an eSSS using Task Management Tool IAW USAFAI 51-601 requesting the use of gift funds.

5.2.8. The USAFA/CW advisor assists the cadet exemplar committee in ordering athletic jacket patches for the entire class.

### **5.3. Spring semester of fourth-class year:**

5.3.1. The USAFA/DF history consultant will assist with research on the proposed speaker's background to aid in USAFA/CW decisions on appropriateness for the event. The USAFA/CW advisor will assist in choosing/inviting a keynote speaker and, if applicable, a legacy class speaker. The USAFA/CW advisor will assist with routing the nominated speakers for approval.

5.3.2. USAFA/HO will assist the exemplar committee with collecting items for the display case. If items for the display case need to be purchased, the USAFA/CW advisor will assist. All items that are borrowed from outside USAFA are required to be listed on an inventory with the owner's information and the list will be maintained by USAFA/HO until the case has been dismantled and all items returned. Responsibility for the items remains with the cadets. If required, funds should be set aside for the return cost of the items.

5.3.3. Cadet Wing Training Division assists the cadet exemplar committee in arranging for the cadet uniform shop to sew exemplar patches on the class's athletic jackets and ensuring availability prior to the class's recognition ceremony.

### **5.4. Summer between class's fourth- and third-class years:**

5.4.1. The USAFA/CW advisor assists the cadet exemplar committee in selecting and scheduling a date for the exemplar dinner, which usually takes place during October of the third-class year.

5.4.2. The USAFA/CW advisor and USAFA/DF history consultant assist the exemplar committee in finalizing a guest speaker for the exemplar dinner, inviting exemplar family members (if applicable and funding permits), and completing the preparations of the exemplar display case, to include purchasing replicas of artifacts and uniforms and acquiring donated items from exemplar family members, USAFA Special Collections, and USAFA Museum Specialist, with coordination through USAFA/HO.

### **5.5. Fall semester of third-class year:**

5.5.1. Exemplar Dinner. With assistance from both the USAFA/CW advisor and the USAFA/DF history consultant, the cadet exemplar committee finalizes the script, sends invitations, and executes the dinner. USAFA/CW will provide scheduling, facility, and personnel support. The USAFA/DF history consultant will review the keynote speaker's speech content for appropriateness.

5.5.2. Display Case. After the exemplar dinner, the cadet exemplar committee arranges for the display case items to be taken to their appropriate display case in Exemplar Hall, located in Fairchild Hall. The display case is under the control of USAFA/HO.

5.5.3. The USAFA/CW advisor assists the cadet exemplar committee in completing paperwork for the dinner speaker honorarium, if required, and any other necessary costs through the Directorate of Alumni and Development programs.

**5.6. Prior to the class's graduation:**

5.6.1. With the assistance of current and former USAFA/CW advisors, members of the cadet exemplar committee will arrange for the return of any borrowed items in the exemplar display case and advise USAFA/HO and USAFA/DFHI of the status of all items.

5.6.2. Coordinate with HQ USAFA/Protocol to invite exemplar family to attend graduation ceremony.

RICHARD M. CLARK  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Superintendent

## Attachment 1

### GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### *References*

DAFPD 36-35, *United States Air Force Academy*, 28 August 2023

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 27 July 2021

USAFAI 51-601, *USAF Academy Management and Use of Gift Funds*, 06 July 2020

DAFMAN90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*, 17 October 2023

AFI 36-7001, *Diversity and Inclusion*, 2 June 2021

#### *Adopted Forms*

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

#### *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

**AF**—Air Force

**AFPD**—Air Force Policy Directive

**AFRIMS**—Air Force Records Information Management System

**CW**—Cadet Wing

**DAFMAN**—Air Force Manual

**DF**—Department of Faculty

**eSSS**—Electronic Staff Summary Sheet

**HO**—Office of the Historian

**OPR**—Office of Primary Responsibility

**RDS**—Records Disposition Schedule

**USAF**—United States Air Force Academy