

To the Long Blue Line:

There is nothing more important at the United States Air Force Academy than developing leaders of character for our Air Force and Space Force. The Honor Code is foundational to this mission, and we are strongest when we fully internalize it across our institution.

As we shared before, during remote learning in the Spring of 2020, we had an unprecedented number of honor cases. Of the 244 cadets involved, 228 were third and fourth-classmen. In total, 18 cadets have been disenrolled, two were found not in violation and 218 were directed to enter a probationary six-month honor remediation. Six cases are still pending. This sharp increase in violations drove an intensive Honor System Review.

The review confirmed most cadets view the Honor System as a predominantly punitive and threatening mechanism to enforce the Honor Code. It revealed a pressing need to bolster character development, particularly for underclassmen, while still maintaining appropriate consequences for honor system violations. These findings demand immediate attention and a holistic approach to shift our culture and more deliberately inspire honorable living.

Our approach includes three lines of effort: greater faculty and staff alignment; enhanced fourth-class development; and recommitment of the upper three classes.

Faculty and Staff Alignment:

After years of refinement to our Leader of Character Framework*, we are making a concerted effort to ensure it is reflected in all formal development across USAFA. This will guide our faculty and staff as they intentionally and proactively develop cadets. We are increasing emphasis on honor and character development across all mission elements. We will purposefully align teaching, coaching, leading and mentoring engagements with this doctrine, which defines a leader of character as one who lives honorably, lifts others and elevates performance.

Fourth-Class Development:

Starting with the Class of 2025, we are implementing an enhanced developmental program that includes greater emphasis on the Honor Code, the Leader of Character Framework and the Core Values. We will accomplish this through an expanded curriculum, intentional mentorship and guided self-reflection. Each of these requirements draw from our honor remediation process, which has been in place since the mid-1990s and receives overwhelmingly positive feedback from cadets and mentors. Furthermore, prior to recognition, fourth-class cadets who admit to a non-egregious, first-time honor violation may receive an expedited path to honor probation, providing immediate engagement and remediation. We don't expect all entering cadets to have fully internalized the values of our honor system when they enter the Academy, but we absolutely require each cadet to do so prior to graduation and commissioning. The intent of this process is to ensure all new cadets are afforded the developmental opportunities to fully accept the values which underpin honorable living and the profession of arms.

Recommitment of the Upper Three Classes:

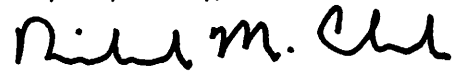
As we sharpen our developmental focus, the key to success will be our upperclassmen. When they march down the Core Values ramp on Acceptance Day, 6 August, and welcome the Class of 2025, they must be ready to lead with a firm commitment to the Honor Code.

* <https://www.usafa.edu/character/>

To accomplish this, on 2 August I am directing each cadet to reflect on the successes and failures of their own experience living under the Code. They will engage in a non-attributable, candid and private conversation with a trusted mentor or fellow cadet about their reflection. These discussions will not be used to initiate action under the Honor Code. They are intended to facilitate cadets moving forward with full commitment to living honorably. On 6 August, prior to the Acceptance Parade, I will meet with the upper three classes again. Together, with the support of faculty and staff, we will reaffirm the Honor Oath and begin the academic year recommitted to the Honor Code and our Core Values.

Across our Academy, we are dedicated to increasing emphasis and alignment on character and honor. Living honorably must remain the hallmark of an Air Force Academy graduate. Our values and our Honor Code only set us apart as an institution if we live by them. We are taking deliberate actions to reinforce our foundation and ensure that with each new class the Long Blue Line will extend its legacy of excellence.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent.

RICHARD M. CLARK

21st SUPERINTENDENT

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY