

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM AND QUALITY OF
COLLEGE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE MEMBERS

STATEMENT OF: MR. DANIEL R. SITTERLY
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STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

DANIEL R. SITTERLY

Daniel R. Sitterly, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is the Director, Force Development, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. He is responsible for developing the strategies, policies, systems and oversight needed to ensure more than 675,000 Airmen are ready to accomplish their missions. In addition, he serves as the Air Force Senior Language Authority, responsible for establishing policy and providing oversight of the Air Force's culture, language and regional programs. He oversees the Air Force senior leader development program and provides Headquarters U.S. Air Force oversight and support to the U.S. Air Force Academy. Mr. Sitterly also serves as the Chief Diversity Officer for the Air Force.



Mr. Sitterly attended school in upstate New York and has a Master of Science degree in education from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. He began his career with the Air Force in 1976 where he earned a commission and then served as a combat service support officer through 2003. In 2004, he entered federal service full time as the Chief, Congressional Action Division, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. He was responsible for developing and executing the Air Force's legislative strategy on major national security issues. In 2008, he became the Director of Staff, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. The directorate is the liaison between the Air Force and Congress on issues such as legislative and constituent inquiries, programs and weapons systems.

Mr. Sitterly has been an Airman for 33 continuous years. He has qualifications in budget, accounting and finance, information management, communications, services, personnel and legislative affairs. After retirement from active duty, he entered the Air Force Reserve and retired in 2009 from the Air Force Personnel Center in San Antonio, Texas.

EDUCATION

1983 Bachelor of Science degree in business and Asian studies, University of Maryland
 1987 Master of Science degree in education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
 1988 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
 1995 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 1998 Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va.
 2000 Air War College, by seminar
 2006 Seminar XXI - Program on Foreign Politics, International Relations and the National Interest, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
 2007 Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, N.C. 2007 Enterprise Leadership Seminar, University North Carolina

CAREER CHRONOLOGY

1. 1976 - 1977, accounting technician, 341st Strategic Missile Wing, Malmstrom AFB, Mont.
2. 1978 - 1981, Deputy Chief, Commercial Services, 475th Comptroller Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan
3. 1981 - 1984, Professional Military Education instructor, 6007th School Squadron, Yokota AB, Japan
4. 1985 - 1987, executive officer, 380th Avionics Maintenance Squadron, Plattsburgh AFB, N.Y.
5. 1987 - 1988, section commander, 8th Security Police Squadron, Kunsan AB, South Korea
6. 1988 - 1993, group and wing executive officer; Chief, Protocol, 374th Tactical Airlift Wing, Yokota AB, Japan
7. 1993 - 1995, Commander, Military Support Flight, 374th Services Division, Yokota AB, Japan
8. 1995 - 1996, student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
9. 1996 - 1998, Chief, Manpower and Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Forces Japan, Yokota AB, Japan
10. 1998 - 2000, Commander, 35th Mission Support Squadron, Misawa AB, Japan
11. 2000 - 2000, Deputy Chief, Skills Management Division, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
12. 2000 - 2002, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, D.C.
13. 2003 - 2004, Congressional legislative consultant, Council for Logistics Research, Inc., Washington, D.C.
14. 2004 - 2008, Chief, Congressional Action Division, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, D.C.
15. 2008 - 2009, Director of Staff, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Washington, D.C.
16. 2009 - present, Director, Force Development, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters
Air Force Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters
1992 Information Management Officer of the Year, Pacific Air Forces
1994 Services Officer of the Year, Pacific Air Forces
1997 Senior Personnel Officer of the Year, 11th Wing
1999 Pacific Air Forces Outstanding Mission Support Squadron of the Year

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Society for Human Resource Management
Air Force Association
National Military Family Association
National Eagle Scout Association
Air Force Sergeants Association

(Current as of July 2009)

Introduction

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Air Force's college education opportunities and the quality of college education available to Airmen. We pride ourselves in promoting a culture of lifelong learning and education for our Airmen. We value voluntary education not only as a way to enhance our Airmen's military careers but also as a credential when transitioning back to civilian life.

Quality education is valued in both our officer and enlisted force. Our officers are mentored to complete a master's degree prior to meeting their major's promotion board. For our enlisted force, the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) provides a means to receive college credit for their Air Force training. The CCAF awards an Associate in Applied Science degree and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Airmen complete this associate degree on a part-time basis. They are then encouraged to continue toward a bachelor's and a master's degree. Recent statistics show that 99% of the top two enlisted ranks have achieved an associate degree or higher. All of these civilian education pursuits are voluntary for our Airmen.

Basic Air Force Voluntary Education Operations

Every Air Force base has an Education and Training Office dedicated to the intellectual development of our Airmen. Airmen receive counseling on a multitude of topics that assist them with their military force development and their choices regarding civilian college opportunities. Each office also has a testing section that enables Airmen

to shorten degree completion time by using the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) to show college level proficiency in degree-required courses. In addition to face-to-face counseling, the Air Force Voluntary Education Center (AFVEC) is an online resource where Airmen can research educational subjects, search for colleges that will accept CCAF credits and apply on-line for the Military Tuition Assistance (Mil TA) benefit.

Air Force Military Tuition Assistance (Mil TA)

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2306, Voluntary Education Program, 13 August 2010, guides Air Force policy regarding use of federal funds for the Mil TA benefit. This AFI receives its authority from Title 10, Section 2007, and policy guidance from the Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, 5 February 1997. In fiscal year 2003, the Air Force Voluntary Education Program implemented new Mil TA uniform caps and ceilings established by the Department of Defense, OUSD (P&R) Military Community and Family Policy. That year the Air Force experienced a 44% increase in enrollments and an 88% increase in expenditures. Even though the Air Force has experienced a decrease in military end-strength and increased operations tempo the number of enrollments has remained relatively stable. In FY02, 18% of the Air Force active duty population participated in college programs. By FY09, the participation rate had risen to 30%. In any one fiscal year, we estimate that 1 in 3 Airmen take an average of three college classes each year. One of the reasons for high participation may in part be due to distance learning (DL) opportunities that have arisen

from both the start up of new on-line schools and the creation of on-line courses and degrees by traditional brick-and-mortar schools. These opportunities enable Airmen to continue college progress despite demanding work schedules and deployments to austere locations.

Changes, Challenges and Quality – The “DL” Revolution

In the past five years the Air Force has noted an upward trend in Distance Learning (DL) college attendance. DL enrollments increased 35% from FY02 to FY09. Along with this enrollment trend, we noted the average cost difference between traditional in-the-classroom courses and DL courses and found that DL, on average, has been a higher expenditure for the Air Force. The difference went from 23% in FY03 to a high difference of 46% in FY05 and back down to a difference of 28% in FY09. Despite this difference in average tuition expenditure, the Air Force still authorizes Mil TA using the DOD policy of \$250/semester hour cap and \$4,500 maximum annual ceiling.

The actual tuition rate of the school is not a big concern for the Air Force since the Mil TA program will not pay over the \$250/SH rate. If an Airman chooses a school with a higher rate than Mil TA allows, he/she must pay out of pocket or use the “top-up” benefit that allows the G.I. Bill education benefit to cover costs not paid by Mil TA. The Air Force does not maintain G.I. Bill benefit payment information since the Department of Veteran Affairs is the adjudicator of that benefit. We do not know of any Airman paying high amounts from their pocket or even taking out loans. Most Airmen choose a

school that fits within the Mil TA program or a combination of Mil TA and G.I. Bill “top-up.”

The Air Force tracks data on overall college enrollments and DL enrollments, not the classification of the school such as public/private, for-profit/non-profit. When it comes to quality, the decision point for authorization of Mil TA is the accreditation of the school. If the school is accredited by a regional or a national accrediting agency recognized by the Department of Education, Mil TA can be authorized when other Air Force policies are met in AFI 36-2306.

If the quality of education is questioned at any time, Airmen may bring a complaint about a school, a program, an instructor, etc., to the school or to the Education and Training Office Chief. If a complaint cannot be settled at that first level it is raised to the appropriate Major Command level, Air Force Headquarters level, the Department of Defense Continuing Education Programs Office, or in some cases to the accrediting agency. The AF finds that most complaints are resolved at the first level – school or Education and Training Office.

Policy Changes

With the growth of the Internet and relatively inexpensive cost of a computer and Internet service, education is continuing to move toward an “on-line” mode. Although, the Air Force has no control over advertising to Airmen from schools off-base or through the Internet, we have policy regarding commercial solicitation by schools on Air Force bases. AFI 36-2917, Personal Commercial Solicitation on DOD Installations,

7 November 2007, and DODI 1344.07, of the same title, provide guidelines to base Commanders and Education and Training Offices regarding access to the base for the purpose of pursuing new students. The Air Force has a policy of neutrality regarding schools in that we do not endorse nor do we discount any school. Instead we counsel Airmen regarding degree programs, transfer of credit, and financial options. Ultimately, they make the final decision of the school they wish to attend and the program they wish to pursue.

For nearly 40 years the Air Force has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with schools in order for them to bring classes and full degree programs into classrooms on Air Force bases as a convenience to Airmen. The decision to bring school programs on-base is done in accordance with DODI 1322.25, Voluntary Education Programs, 5 February 1997. The base must show a need for a new program or school and review options from several schools that might be interested or have the capability to provide a new offering on-base. It is a deliberate process.

Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) – The Success Story!

The CCAF is the jewel of the Air Force education opportunities for enlisted personnel. It is regionally accredited so that the college credit earned through military training can apply to an associate degree and also be compatible with other regionally accredited schools. 75% of the degree can be earned through Air Force training in an enlisted Airman's particular career field. Only 25% of the degree needs to be earned from an accredited civilian college and all of the courses are the general education

courses found in all Associate degrees. To embed education even more into the Air Force culture, this degree is a requirement to obtain a Senior Rater Endorsement on an annual enlisted performance appraisal. This policy raises the CCAF degree to a level in an Airman's career that shows competency in both a particular career field and in academics. Many Airmen use the CCAF degree in place of seeking other certifications or licensures before separating or retiring. Recent self-report surveys indicate that Airmen are finding the CCAF degree very helpful when job hunting in the civilian world. And even more pleasing, the Air Force has established a program where schools register and guarantee that credits from the CCAF degree will transfer toward specific bachelor degrees so Airmen have only 60 semester hours of credit to complete. Currently there are 46 schools with 225 degrees accepting CCAF credit in transfer.

Conclusion:

Quality education is a valued part of our AF culture. It is a consideration as officers and enlisted are promoted in their careers. It is desired by the Airmen themselves for the value they know education can have for them in the civilian community. Airmen have more education options than ever before in history. The Air Forces sees its obligation as one of educating our Airmen about all the options so each man and woman serving our nation can make a wise choice of school and degree program for their military career and their personal life.