

# CHAPTER 1—CADET OPERATIONS GUIDE

## Foreword

This guide provides a reference on how to build a strong cadet corps with cadet leaders that fully own their unit through setting organizational goals; developing programs to support those goals; planning and executing their programs; measuring, monitoring, recording and reporting progress toward the unit goals; and operating and controlling the functional areas of day-to-day unit operations (e.g. cadet use of WINGS for cadet personnel records, logistics/inventory control, health and wellness, administrative functions, maintaining unit standards, etc.). Cadets can access WINGS under the supervision of instructors. This however does not relieve instructors from oversight responsibility for Unit Operations and WINGS accuracy.

## FORMULATION OF CADET GOALS

1.1. AFJROTC requires a minimum of six organizational goals that support the mission to “Develop citizens of character, dedicated to serving their nation and community.” Although six goals are to be created and submitted within WINGS, there is no set limit to the number of goals your cadets may pursue. For example, instructors should encourage cadets to tie overall organizational goals to additional sub-goals within their various functional areas.

1.1.1. The six HQAFJROTC required unit goals are divided into three broad categories: two goals are related to the cadet corps itself, two related to the school, and two related to the local community. One of the cadet goals will be related to the quest for academic excellence within the cadet corps itself. One of the school goals will address recruiting and retention of cadets in the unit. One of the community goals will be oriented to providing service and getting cadets involved in service related programs.

1.1.2. Goal Setting Process.

1.1.2.1 Unit goals will be cadet-inspired, not instructor-directed. Instructors should provide guidance and advice, but should not direct or write the goals for the cadets. The cadet leadership’s effort to own and

achieve their goals is much stronger when written by the cadets. Goals should not simply be a repeat of last year's goals; rather it should be a concerted effort to represent the current cadet leadership's vision for the entire corps.

1.1.2.2. The more cadets involved in goal formulation the greater the buy-in. The cadet corps should begin to think about goals as early as late spring before the goals are submitted. Start the process by teaching a leadership education lesson on the importance of goal setting and their use. Reference the "SMART" Goals PPT presentation found in WINGS (Published Files | Curriculum | General Information | Goal Setting and Decision and Analysis).

1.1.2.3. Solicit as many ideas as possible regarding what cadets believe are important to the entire corps. Suggest using a brainstorming session in each class to generate ideas. Ask leading questions to initiate discussion:

1.1.2.3.5 "What is the greatest challenge within the cadet corps?"

1.1.2.3.6 "How can the cadet corps make a difference in the school?"

1.1.2.3.7 "What can the cadet corps do to help improve the community?"

1.1.2.3.8 "What best practices have you seen in other JROTC or school programs?"

1.1.2.3.9 "How can we improve the academic performance of the corps?"

1.1.2.3.10 "How can we increase or improve corps retention and recruiting efforts?"

1.1.2.4. **Optional** Ballot Process. Once the ideas are collected from all classes, ask the cadet leadership to group all ideas. Some ideas may be duplicates or very similar in nature. Categorize each idea as to which of the major categories it supports (cadet, school, community). Prepare a ballot for the cadet corps whereby the cadets are asked to rank order the most to least important ideas for next year. The next class period, have every cadet vote and submit a ballot with what he or she thinks is most important to the least important. Let your cadet leaders review the ballots

and select the highest ranked idea in each of the categories above (cadet, school, and community). Keep in mind, all goals should be challenging and require measurable efforts on the part of the cadet corps.

- 1.1.2.6. Write the corps goals. Using the corps-selected ideas, written goals need to have several essential (SMART) components. Make goals Specific, not written in general terms. What exactly do they want to accomplish? Make goals Measurable. Generate a way to continuously track and qualitatively evaluate goal accomplishments. Goals must require Action or effort. This action should be something that is dependent upon the cadet corps. Goals must be Realistic. Does the corps have the ability to control the outcome? Goals must have a Time constraint. When does the corps hope to successfully complete the goal? Remember, the results of the six required goals must be reported to HQ AFJROTC by 10 April each year. Try to avoid setting goals that cross academic years.
- 1.1.2.7. After the cadet leaders write the corps' goals, the instructors should ask questions to clarify what the cadets are trying to accomplish. Ideally, the cadets will be allowed to enter their goals into WINGS. Save the goals in "Draft" until finished. Remember to click the "Submit" button on or before 10 October each year.

### **Measuring Goal Accomplishment**

Goals are meant to guide the cadet corps. The goals should emphasize what is important to the cadets. Cadets must continuously measure how they are doing toward achieving the desired outcome. Mid-course changes may be needed to accomplish the goal.

- 1.2. When the cadet staff plans their yearly activities, they should tie each activity to the unit goals.
- 1.3. The corps commander should assign members of the senior staff to be responsible to keep records for each goal.
- 1.4. Periodic special staff meetings should be conducted to determine the progress toward each goal. Depending on the progress toward each goal, changes or corrections may be needed to achieve the goal.

- 1.5. By 10 April each year, the instructor should allow the cadet leadership to write the “Results Evaluation” statements in WINGS and help edit them before submitting.
- 1.6. After using this process, hopefully, cadets will understand the importance of goal setting to an organization and how to use them to guide the organization throughout the year. This is an outstanding leadership tool and part of putting our classroom leadership education into practice.

### **Planning & Executing Cadet Programs**

1.7. All programs in the corps should be cadet initiated, planned, led, executed and documented. This should include all social functions like Military Ball, CIA trips (even overnight), all teams (Drill Team, Color Guard, Orienteering, Model Rocketry, etc.), Awards Banquet, and all community service projects. The ability of the cadets to operate at an “ownership” level is a process which may take several years.

1.8. Once the cadets have their plan for the year, the corps commander should assign project officers for each activity/program. The SASI should monitor this process to make sure the commander’s selections are within the ability of the cadet being selected. Before announcements are made, the SASI should approve all selections. Project officers should be mature, self-starters, and usually a junior or senior with at least two years’ experience in JROTC. An assistant project officer or NCOIC, should also be selected (normally at least a sophomore with one full year experience in JROTC).

1.9. The cadet project officers and NCOs should develop a chronological checklist of things to be done to execute the project/program. Instructors should ask leading questions to take them in the direction they need to go. The project officer should keep a continuity book to be used by future cadets and updated after each event. Ensure they accurately record what they did and who they had to work with to make the project come off successfully. Depending on the cadet’s ability, the amount of assistance given may vary. Instructors should monitor progress closely. Keep in mind, while there are lessons learned in failure, do not allow a major event to fail.

1.10. Meet periodically to allow the project officer and NCO brief you on their progress. Discuss problems. Again, use questions to lead them in the proper direction.

1.11. The cadets, under the supervision of the Project Officer and NCO (with guidance from the SASI or ASI) should fully plan, determine resources needed, and organize all volunteer cadets. Make sure the planning and execution efforts are recognized publically.

### **Cadet-Run Functional Areas of Responsibility**

1.12. In a “cadet owned” program, the cadet leadership is responsible for leading and maintaining all the functional areas. These areas of responsibility include (but are not limited to) logistics inventory control and record keeping (to include uniform issue and return), cadet personnel records maintenance (to include keeping unit records on community service; individual cadet awards and decorations, jobs, ranks and promotions, health and wellness activity documentation, and individual participation in unit activities and community service; financial records; etc.). Cadets are expected to utilize WINGS to manage and operate the functional areas.

1.13. The corps commander should select the key staff members for each functional area. The SASI should monitor this process to make sure the commander’s selections are within the ability of the cadet being selected. Before announcements are made, the SASI should approve all selections. Do not allow the commander to simply select his/her friends as they may not be the best choice for the job in question. Discuss what action the commander would take if the individual selected fails to do the job properly or adequately.

1.14. Each functional leader should be responsible for training their staff. The corps should be structured to facilitate cadet’s training potential replacements. Sometimes (as with new units), the instructor may have to train the functional leader and then allow them to train their staff. An example of a corps structure which allows cadets to train cadets may be: Logistics officer has a logistics NCOIC assisting that is a year behind within JROTC. Each flight (or classroom period) may have a logistics specialist that works for the logistics officer and NCOIC. The same structure may be true of a personnel staff and health and wellness staff, and others.

## **Cadet Promotions, Awards, & Standards**

1.15. For the cadets to be true “owners” of the corps they must play key roles in promotions, giving awards and maintaining standards. There should be written procedures in the cadet guide on how promotions are administered, awards are earned, and standards are maintained within the corps. The instructors should work with the cadet leadership to develop tools that help them manage the corps.

1.16. Special board procedures for awards, promotions, and disciplinary issues should be included in the cadet guide. Instructors should be present when any board is being conducted to ensure cadets abide by the rules and that all board actions are fair and just. Board actions are only recommendations, and the SASI is the final approving authority for all recommended actions.

1.17. Standards could be maintained through the use of a merit/demerit system. Merit/Demerit systems have worked well in some units and not well in others. If used, the procedures should be written in the cadet guide. To preclude abuse of the system, instructors should monitor it closely. Any cadet receiving merits or demerits must be fully aware of the pending action. This should be documented. Care should be taken to make sure the merit/demerit system is not just a punitive system which fails to recognize good cadet actions. There also should be a procedure whereby a cadet receiving a demerit slip can appeal the action if he or she feels it is unfair. The Senior Enlisted Advisor or Command Chief could be the person used to oversee this program.

1.18. All these actions and programs are benchmarks of a cadet-owned program. Ownership may vary from year to year depending on the strength of your senior class leadership. The idea is to start the process and develop a tradition of excellence which is built upon by each new year-group passing through the corps of cadets.

## Community Service

1.19. Community service by the cadets is a key tenant of good citizenship, while providing an exceptional opportunity to develop teamwork and cadet corps ownership. Cadet leadership should be encouraged to make this area one of their top priorities. The goal is to get the maximum cadet participation in each event. Higher cadet participation rates lead to higher recruitment and retention rates, as well as providing opportunities for greater corps visibility in the school and community.

1.20. Community Service events are AFJROTC-sponsored and school approved events which are planned, organized and executed by the cadet corps while being supervised by a AFJROTC instructor. Units will only annotate in WINGS those Community Service activities which meet these criteria. The unit will not count community service hours conducted by an individual cadet when the cadet is not operating under the auspice of AFJROTC. For example if the cadet is doing community service project with their church or boy/girl scout organization those hours cannot be attributed to AFJROTC. Community service builds character and perspective, provides skills to be used later in life, and strongly reinforces the AF core value of service before self. It also provides a positive representation of AFJROTC to the community as a whole. Holm Center/JR tracks AFJROTC community service hours for yearly reporting. To be considered as community service for Holm Center reporting, it must be performed without pay and without in-kind compensation.

1.20.1. For example, if cadets stay after football games to clean the stadium, and they are paid for their work, it is not community service. If however, the money goes to the cadet organization (booster club, etc.) and they donate the money earned to an outside charitable agency, then it could be considered a community service project.

1.20.2. Community service must also benefit the general community— it cannot be for the sole benefit of the AFJROTC unit.

1.20.3. For example, volunteering to come after school and straighten up the unit classroom—while a worthwhile effort—should not be reported to the Holm Center as community service because it has no benefit to the community.

1.20.4. Volunteering to come after school to clean the school grounds should be counted as community service because it benefits the entire school.

1.20.5. To properly count community service hours, the unit should count the actual hours spent performing the community service at the event location. The unit may also count any preparation time (dressing out, loading supplies, etc.) and the time it takes to travel from the school to the community service project.

1.21. Cadet leadership should take the initiative to develop programs and activities throughout the academic year which provides opportunities for every cadet enrolled in the program to participate. One example is to have the cadet leaders approach the principal and community leaders asking, “What can we do to help our school/community?”

1.22. Cadets should plan events, recruit volunteers to participate, execute, and develop rewards which recognize cadets who participate (e.g. linking community service as one of the criteria for promotion).

1.23. Cadets should record participation hours in the Events section of WINGS no later than one week after the event is complete. Based on WINGS records, the leadership should identify cadets who have earned the Service Ribbon.

### **Corps Excellence**

1.24. Instructors set and model the standards for excellence in the JROTC unit. A “do it right the first time” attitude must be emphasized because that saves time and effort. Cadets in the corps should be model citizens on the high school campus. Successful units typically exceed school averages in attendance, academics, graduation, and discipline rates. There should be evidence of a lower number of disciplinary problems in every class among cadets as compared to the general student body. AFJROTC should be regarded by faculty and students as the best student organization on campus. Finally, cooperative/joint efforts with other school organizations, clubs, and programs help bond cadets throughout the school and community while expanding visibility of the program.

1.25. Academic success should be given high priority by cadets and factored into promotions and job advancement. Cadets in need of academic help should be identified and proactively supported through study tables/tutoring. Take advantage of academic recognition programs (e.g. KHAS) to identify and recognize academic “top guns”.

1.26. In the Wellness Program, physical fitness should be led and managed by the cadets to include planning and leading exercises to documentation and assessment (via WINGS). Program modifications are made to strengthen cadet weaknesses. Warrior or elite PT programs are encouraged.



- 1.27. In recruiting and retention, cadet leaders should be involved in promoting the unit and the programs offered. Cadets are the unit's best recruiters and are the foundation of a viable unit. Consider surveying the cadet corps to find out what is most liked and disliked, and why cadets choose to join and leave.
- 1.28. Cadets should be encouraged to actively participate in other student organizations. One goal of the unit should be to mirror the student body and be an integral part of the school. The cadet corps should actively recruit students across the entire student body: honor students, varsity athletes, band and chorus members, Key Club members, special needs students, etc. You don't want your corps stereotyped as simply a place for students interested in the military or where the "students who cannot do anything else join JROTC."
- 1.29. Cadets should take pride in their facilities. Cadets should be actively involved in keeping the JROTC area clean and neatly organized all the time (not just when a visitor is coming). They should be allowed to personalize their area to reflect the originality and unit spirit. They should keep bulletin boards and other displays neat, organized, and up-to-date.
- 1.30. The instructors should encourage the principal and other administrators to publically recognize the cadets' contributions and awards at every opportunity. Suggest that when a cadet excels, a 3x5 card with a short narrative be given to the principal for announcements. Keep the activities and corps excellence in front of the entire student body. This helps in recruiting, unit pride, and JROTC reputation on campus. Remember, the principal has many activities going on all the time and may not always see what your cadets do. The 3x5 cards will be very valuable.

### **Cadets Assessments and Evaluations**

1.31. Cadet performance in the various areas addressed in the preceding sections will indicate how well instructors are doing their job as mentors in achieving the mission of citizen development. Because of this, the Cadet Operations section of a Unit Evaluation is weighted heavier than any of the others. Units normally receive a formal external assessment from HQ every third year, and each unit must conduct a thorough self-assessment every year. Each cadet leadership team should have the opportunity to prepare their unit for inspection. Self-Assessments should be prepared for and executed just as they would for an external unit evaluation from HQ. This should be part of the unit's yearly planning calendar.

- 1.32. Some units appoint the cadet Vice Commander as the one responsible for the unit's assessment preparation. Suggest delegating parts of the assessment checklist to the functional leaders in the unit. Involve everyone in the preparation to the maximum extent possible.
- 1.33. The SASI should find someone outside of the unit to be the Inspecting Officer for your self-assessment. This could be the principal, VFW official, another unit SASI, etc. Ensure the cadets plan the day of the inspection just as if it was a HQ evaluation.
- 1.34. Adherence to dress and appearance standards and uniformity reflects the pride and professionalism of a unit. Cadets who take pride in wearing their uniform, as well as helping others wear the uniform properly, demonstrate teamwork and leadership. Cadet leaders should be involved in the uniform inspection process and provide feedback to younger cadets. The first impression of a cadet corps is centered on uniform wear and personal appearance. The cadet corps should be properly groomed, in a standardized uniform, with uniforms clean and pressed. Additionally, the assessment rating for this area is dependent on whether all or only a portion of the unit is in compliance.
- 1.35. **Cadets must develop a unit mission briefing that includes, at a minimum, measurable unit and corps goals, performance measurements, and the unit wellness program.** The cadet unit mission briefing is a required element of all formal external unit assessments. Although instructor guidance is expected, the unit mission briefing is developed and presented by cadets. The ideal length of mission briefing is 20-30 minutes, with no more than 15 PowerPoint slides. The mission briefing should be a "living" document that is kept up to date and presented when appropriate to highlight program accomplishments. Units are encouraged to include pictures of their activities. The cadets may include activities that go back to the last external evaluation. After the cadets have rehearsed their briefing, the SASI may want to role-play as the inspector and have the cadet leader's field questions from the evaluator.
- 1.36. The 30-command drill sequence is led and accomplished by 2<sup>nd</sup> year cadets. Ensure cadets have the opportunity to practice in the area they may have to use if the weather is not suitable to perform the demonstration outdoors.

## **Unit Organization**

1.37. Organization of the Cadet Corps. A unit's organizational structure should be appropriate to the number of cadets enrolled. Units with 250 or less cadets may be organized as a cadet group and units with 251 or more cadets as a cadet wing. However, units can deviate from this suggested organizational structure criteria to ensure an efficient organization and an effective program (e.g., units with less than 175 cadets may desire a smaller organization structure such as a squadron).

1.37.1. A wing is comprised of two or more groups. A group is comprised of two or more squadrons. A squadron is comprised of two or more flights. A flight is comprised of two or more elements. Elements should consist of three or more cadets (including element leader).

1.37.2. The organizational structure should reflect the actual functions of the corps, with command, staff, and rank identified. The functional organization can be any logical form consistent with military organizational principles. Each unit may add appropriate positions within the cadet corps organization as required.

1.37.3. Job descriptions should go hand in hand with cadet corps positions. Titles and office symbols should conform to standard Air Force nomenclature. Each unit should develop an organizational structure chart that clearly indicates unit structure and chain of command.

1.37.4. Instructors may select the cadet corps commander. However, subordinate commanders and key staff members required by the organizational structure of the unit should be selected by the corps commander. Instructors should allow cadet commanders and key staff officers to propose remaining cadet staff members.

## **Cadet Rank and Rotation**

1.38. Cadet Rank and Rotation. Consider the strengths and shortcomings of the individual cadets when assigning them to positions to ensure they gain the greatest leadership benefits. Promotions are a motivational tool but may become limited if rank structure is not managed properly; i.e., avoid promoting cadets to the maximum authorized rank too quickly to ensure there are proper progression and promotion opportunities.

1.39. New units should limit cadet rank during the beginning years to allow for unit growth.

1.40. The word “cadet” or an abbreviation must be a part of all references to cadet ranks.

1.41. All cadets may be assigned a permanent grade commensurate with the number of AFJROTC years satisfactorily completed; i.e., the permanent grade for first-year cadets is Airman; second-year, Airman First Class; third-year, Senior Airman; and fourth-year, if offered, Staff Sergeant. Permanent grades may be awarded during the second semester of each year. Retention of permanent grades is contingent upon satisfactory performance and behavior as determined by the AFJROTC Instructors. Permanent officer status will be awarded to cadets holding officer positions for two or more grading periods. Exceptions are authorized at the discretion of the SASI and in accordance with published unit guidance.

1.42. Cadets may be assigned a temporary grade based on a specific position. Use of a temporary-permanent grade pattern is optional and intended to serve as an administrative vehicle for rotation of responsibility and to avoid imbalances in grade structure. Cadets serving in a temporary grade may revert to their permanent grade upon completion of these duties. At the discretion of the SASI, cadets in their final term of AFJROTC may retain the highest rank to which they have been promoted, regardless of course level.