

## Introduction

The Chief of Staff, United States Air Force (CSAF) annually tasks the Air Force Research Institute (AFRI) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama to perform directed research on a wide variety of topics. In his tasking memo to the AFRI in November 2010, Air Force Chief of Staff Norton A. Schwartz directed its researchers to:

Review current Air Force leader development. Address experience, training, and education, starting with the Developing of Aerospace Leaders (DAL) initiative, and taking it forward. Generational gaps require a fresh look where changes in learning styles and technologies may point to new ways to develop Airmen. Focus on leader development that prepares Airmen of all ranks for the evolving security challenges in the Joint and Service environments.

From the last sentence, researchers developed their Research Question: “What changes to leadership training, education, and experience should the Air Force incorporate to ensure success in dynamic Joint and Air Force future environments?”

Although the tasking included “Airmen of all ranks,” research focused on strategic-level career development policies for active duty Line of the Air Force (LAF) officers only. This approach excluded officers of the Air National Guard (ANG) and the Air Force Reserve (AFR), as both cohorts have personnel and promotion systems that differ from the active Air Force. Excluding non-Line of the Air Force officers (i.e. those in professional careers such as medical and legal officers) created a group of officers managed and promoted by one system and, by law, those who can command any unit of the United States Air Force. Enlisted personnel were also not included, leaving only active duty Line of the Air Force officers, the cohort from which future senior leaders of the Air Force are grown.

Prior to conducting detailed research, the strategic environments likely to be faced by war-fighters over the next two decades were examined to provide a “real world” framework. Next, several seminal Air Force documents were reviewed to provide background on previous leadership development efforts. Among them were the Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) initiative, the Institutional Competency List (ICL), Air Force doctrine, and other military and civilian policies and studies on officer/leader development. Researchers also reviewed assignments, Professional Military Education (PME), officer promotion policies, and other initiatives contributing to development of Air Force officers.

After reviewing previous efforts and current policies and directives, the research team interviewed more than 35 senior leaders and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on topics ranging from promotions, assignments, PME, special developmental activities for general officers, Joint leadership,

mentorship, and strategic communications, and organized their comments to create a list of the most highly desired characteristics of future senior leaders. The researchers then developed a set of personnel development policies aimed at creating senior leaders with these desired characteristics.

Key recommendations include increased training on conducting high-level negotiations, 360-degree leadership assessments, providing more opportunities for assignments across all Air Force domains (air, space, and cyberspace) and in joint organizations, and designating wing-commander equivalent positions to increase the pool of candidates for special assignments and promotion. To encourage the development of a cadre of visionary senior leaders, the researchers also suggested formal tracking and designation of high-potential officers, additional training in strategic planning, increased opportunities to study national security strategy at civilian universities, and the creation of an Air Force Fellows Flag internship program to give selected major generals (O-8) the opportunity to learn from innovative leaders both inside and outside government, while also providing the Flag Fellows the time to research and write about strategic-level problems and potential solutions.

While the Air Force process of developing its future leaders is well-established, these changes to the current system were recommended in briefings to the CSAF and the Officer Force Development Council of the Air Force. Written results of the team's efforts were published in the spring of 2012 in a brief (55 page) monograph, "Air Force leadership Study – the Need for Deliberate Development." The full text is available at [http://aupress.au.af.mil/digital/pdf/paper/AFRI\\_2012-1\\_Currie.pdf](http://aupress.au.af.mil/digital/pdf/paper/AFRI_2012-1_Currie.pdf). The excerpt below (Chapter 3) discusses officer development in three phases: the first ten years (acquiring and mastering technical skills); the following twelve years (career broadening, leadership opportunities and career growth); and years 23 and 24 (wing command – the crucible for increased leadership and promotion consideration).

## Chapter 3

### **The Deliberate Development of Air Force Officers**

The cliché that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step applies to leadership development as well. One cannot aspire to become a general officer—which occurs at approximately the 24-year mark of service—unless one first successfully completes those steps to the rank of colonel. One cannot become a colonel, particularly a colonel with the potential to lead as a general officer, without the proper training, experience, and education beforehand. What training milestones, educational venues, and developmental assignments provide the needed experience and education? This chapter provides an overview of those processes and a discussion of some special interest items in the development process.

For purposes of analysis, the path to the 24-year point can be divided into three sections: the first 10 years, a period of technical skills acquisition and mastery; the next 12, for career broadening, leadership opportunities, and career growth leading to promotion to colonel; and the final two years, where wing command is the recognized crucible for increased leadership and promotion consideration. For the successful general officer candidates, promotion to colonel will occur considerably earlier than 22 years due to below-the-zone promotions.

Before that 24-year point for selection to flag rank, there is a natural framework for leadership development from major at the 10-year point to promotion to colonel at the 22nd for officers promoted on time. An officer's first 10 years are usually focused on the development and mastery of technical skills within an Air Force specialty code. This point is an average, and some career fields—aviation-related, scientific/engineering, and some technical skills fields, for example—require longer periods for mastery. Nevertheless, selection to major and in-residence intermediate developmental education (IDE) selection are two career points that frame this discussion well.

## **Education to Year 24**

### **Education for O-1 to O-4**

In the first 10 years of an Air Force officer's career, educational expectations center on Squadron Officer School (SOS) and pursuit of an advanced degree. SOS provides an opportunity to acquire and showcase leadership skills in a peer setting. Earning "distinguished graduate" (DG) status is as important as the educational aspects of SOS, because—as noted above—relatively few Air Force company-grade officers are placed in leadership positions during these early years, their focus being on the mastery of a career-specific skill set. Designation as an SOS DG recognizes both academic accomplishment and leadership skills.<sup>1</sup>

The issue of acquiring an advanced academic degree is less straightforward. While not a policy requirement for promotion to major, acquiring an advanced academic degree is deemed by the Air Force as a requisite milestone for either promotion consideration and/or IDE in-residence selection. Based on a recent snapshot of officer advanced-degree completion, the drive toward a master's degree appears to coincide roughly with promotion to captain and continues well into the rank of major. April 2011 data from AFPC shows only 723 first lieutenants (about 10 percent of the cohort) have earned a master's degree. Air Force captains, whose numbers are three times those of first lieutenants (18,874 to 6,730), have earned over 10 times more master's degrees (7,533) than their first-lieutenant counterparts. Roughly four out of 10 captains (39.9 percent) have a master's degree.<sup>2</sup> Air Force officers are expected to earn an advanced academic degree before meeting the O-4 board, the rationale being that an advanced academic degree may factor in earning a "definitely promote" (DP) rating versus a "promote" (P) on a promotion recommendation form (PRF).<sup>3</sup> For captains, the "better safe than sorry" approach motivates them to earn a master's.

The question of what advanced academic disciplines should be pursued brought numerous and varied replies in the senior officer interviews. Some of the interviewees thought that any master's degree—particularly one pursued outside normal duties—showed initiative and discipline and should be rewarded accordingly. Still others wondered about the usefulness of a

master's degree before IDE, since these programs usually award a master's degree upon completion.<sup>4</sup> Other interviewees were more specific. One Pentagon general cited a master of business administration (MBA) as the most useful degree for senior leaders, observing, "All we do here—all day—is work with spreadsheets." Indeed, MBAs and other business-related degrees are far and away the most numerous held by captains, comprising 27.3 percent of the total number—nearly four times the total of the next academic discipline. Majors with MBAs and other advanced business degrees are twice as numerous as those with advanced degrees in any other discipline, comprising 24 percent of total advanced degrees for the entire O-4 cohort.<sup>5</sup>

Does an MBA mark officers as future senior leaders? If one looks at the demographics of today's colonels (the next cohort of general officers), the answer would be "not yet." Over 50 percent of colonels with a master's degree (only one colonel has just a bachelor's degree) hold advanced degrees in either political science (17.8 percent) or social sciences (33.1 percent); only 10.9 percent have MBAs. However, the "business" trend in the lower ranks is undeniable: advanced degrees in business for both captains and majors are the most common (24 percent), and for lieutenant colonels, they are second (20.6 percent) only to "airpower studies" (23.8 percent).<sup>6</sup>

There also is debate in academia about the relative value of an online master's versus a traditional "bricks and mortar" degree. Given that Air University itself is a leader in distance education, this is perhaps a nonissue; however, online course offerings may limit the range of choices, giving rise to more MBAs than other, more specialized degrees, such as those in the laboratory sciences. Moreover, the opportunities to share ideas and to be exposed to differing viewpoints are compelling reasons for in-resident graduate studies at civilian institutions.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, note that while second lieutenants hold a wide variety of undergraduate majors at accession, if the current trend continues, these lieutenants may well end up earning master's degrees in much narrower concentrations.<sup>8</sup> While the ops tempo may limit officers' options for elective advanced education, this is also the same time period in which they would benefit from a more formal development of critical-thinking skills while interacting with diverse civilian peers. It is unclear if such "give

and take” is possible via online studies, but such studies are highly unlikely to achieve the same desired outcomes as face-to-face education. The House Armed Services Committee’s (HASC) 2010 report on PME produced a similar view: “Finding: The intellectual development of officers, especially in critical thinking skills, is facilitated by assignment to civilian graduate education programs at top-tier universities relatively early in their careers.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Education for O-4 to O-6**

Advanced formal education is an important facet in Air Force leadership development and is primarily achieved in the first 10 years of an officer’s career. The next phase—major through colonel—tends to center on broad experience and short, focused educational interludes, culminating in senior developmental education (SDE), itself a 10-month program. SDE is virtually the only educational event in this time frame. This “required” in-residence assignment cannot be overlooked or overemphasized as a prerequisite for senior rank. Where SDE takes place—Air War College, another service college, the National Defense University, and others—also has a significant impact on career development. Like squadron command, in-residence SDE is another indicator of high potential.<sup>10</sup>

### **Education in Years 23 and 24**

Most formal education is completed by the 24th year, with the exception of short courses at major institutions such as Harvard or the National Defense University. Instead of serving as students themselves, these senior officers now serve as senior mentors, using their educational experiences to advise officers on courses of study and timing of educational events.

## **Training and Experience to Year 24**

### **Training and Experience for O-1 to O-4**

The Air Force is a technical service, and achieving technical prowess will consume the better part of an officer’s first 10 years of service. Although formal training may vary in length from

career field to career field,<sup>11</sup> it is widely agreed that an officer's focus should be on those "core capabilities" until the officer reaches the O-4 plateau. This achievement allows time for both initial and advanced skills training (e.g., fighter lead-in training). In contrast, formal training beyond the 10-year point decreases the focus on technical prowess and increases the focus on leadership/management skills as officers move to positions of greater responsibility, scope, and authority (i.e., command).

During the first 10 years, almost every facet of officers' careers is vectored by the developmental teams (DT). DTs ensure that initial and upgrade training creates a technically sound Air Force officer. This is a "tribal" approach, bounded by AFSCs and even by Air Force functions (e.g., combat air force, special operations, mobility air force, etc.).

First duty assignments allow officers to hone the technical skills obtained in formal training and to gain from other focused training, such as weapons school. However, opportunities for company-grade Air Force officers to command are rare. For example, rated officers—of necessity—concentrate on the acquisition of flying skills required by high-performance, technically advanced weapon systems. The first command opportunity for rated officers is usually well after the 10-year career point—more than likely as a lieutenant colonel after 15 years. Conversely, some nonrated careers (e.g., security forces and logistics) do offer command opportunities to their captains. Although not everyone has a chance to command by the time he or she reaches O-4, tactical- and mid-level *leadership* opportunities are widespread, giving officers multiple ways to demonstrate and develop this competency.

The first 10 years should be "Air Force-centered" to ensure as complete a technical mastery as practical. Recent RAND and HASC studies agree with this technical grounding in the early years of an officer's career.<sup>12</sup>

### **Training and Experience for O-4 to O-6**

Beyond the 10-year point, career-broadening assignments may require additional training prerequisites, particularly if the assignment is in another domain (e.g., space to cyber, air to space). Note, however, that an officer's focus shifts from train-

ing to experiential development across a wide variety of assignments. A senior leader commented that this time frame is a “family of opportunities” for leadership development. This should be a period where commanders and DTs identify officers with high potential and craft deliberate career paths to broaden and deepen their expertise.

In truth, the number of leadership development “opportunities” exceeds the time needed to do them. In addition to formal training and education, some of the most common developmental experiences include

- joint tours,
- major command (MAJCOM)/Air Staff tours,
- career-broadening assignments into education, training, and/or recruiting,
- interagency tours, and
- squadron command.

**Joint Tours.** Because of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, joint tours have become the *sine qua non* for serious senior leadership development.<sup>13</sup> As discussed earlier, a joint tour should not occur too early in an officer’s career because of the need to thoroughly understand the Air Force mission to be effective in the joint environment.

**Air Staff Tours.** One of the attributes identified for effective senior leaders is political savvy. This in no way implies a violation of the nonpolitical nature of military service that is key to our democracy, but it does mean having a sense of the budgetary, policy, and legislative processes. Not every officer can be a legislative fellow or serve as an Air Force legislative liaison, but any Air Staff tour exposes officers to the nuances of a service headquarters’ prioritization and decision-making processes. It also provides an excellent chance to build and maintain a network of service and cross-service contacts.<sup>14</sup>

**Career-Broadening Assignments.** Career “stovepiping” within one discipline does not effectively season an officer for senior-level responsibilities. One senior officer observed, “We don’t grow cross-domain officers.” A 2007 RAND Project Air Force study sought to create “paired secondary occupations” for Air Force officers to

prepare them better to be colonels and general officers.<sup>15</sup> However, this proposal lacks the assignment flexibility needed to support combat and contingency operations; it does not account for joint tour requirements; and it does not recognize the cross-domain competencies required for senior rank.

Since the Air Force operates in the three domains of air, space, and cyber, acculturation across domains is key for senior leadership development. Having another perspective on the Air Force's contribution to the joint fight is vital to effective leadership.

**Interagency Tours.** Some interviewees commented on the benefits of an interagency tour, citing the Air Force's involvement in nation-building and security-assistance missions. They believe these missions will become core to the Air Force's contributions in the future. However, one flag officer issued a caveat, pointing out that an interagency tour takes an officer out of the mainstream and provides no continuity with the supported agency once the officer returns to an Air Force billet.

**Squadron Command.** Squadron command is a key indicator for increased rank and responsibility and usually is the result of careful growth within the squadron structure itself (e.g., squadron DO, deputy commander). Beyond squadron command and before wing command, other responsible positions may await. MAJCOM and/or Air Staff positions are often considered the next step after squadron command, although other challenging positions, including group command or a second joint tour, can be next. In short, squadron command by itself does not signal readiness for wing command.

The previous discussion is not a complete list, but it shows that field-grade officers have multiple paths to success. Forcing these developmental experiences into 10–12 years of service is difficult, if not impossible. Commander involvement to guide the process is key and must be done for each officer in this cohort—not just for those already deemed high potential. As one senior officer succinctly observed, “There are late bloomers out there.”

### **Training and Experience in Years 23 and 24**

Although numerous beneficial short courses exist for colonels, they are usually not visible to this cohort because they are catalogued as general officer courses and thus not used for

most O-6 deliberate career planning and leadership development. In reality, few O-6 training opportunities are available at this time.

Understandably, the wing command assignment is the most sought after leadership opportunity. Wing commanders usually remain in command through at least one inspection cycle to validate their leadership capabilities for the full spectrum of wing operations. As the Air Force becomes smaller, however, wing command opportunities will become fewer. There will be more qualified colonels than wings available for the colonels to command.

## **Special Interest Items**

### **Education and Experience in the Cyberspace Domain**

Cyber is one AF growth area requiring future leaders to acquire more expertise no matter their career path. Cyber is a constant that will permeate leadership development and Air Force operations in the coming years. Arguably, it is the one domain that will require the most overall, force-wide training. Every Airman depends on cyberspace, and this trend will likely continue into the foreseeable future.

Moreover, cyber is evolving, and its operational applications are not as well understood as those of air and/or space power. Two overarching factors make training in the cyber domain critical. First, information and communication technologies are continuously evolving, and second, cyber is understood at very different levels by different practitioners. At this early stage of the domain's development, the organization, training, and equipping of cyber forces are in constant flux due to a lack of consensus regarding the requirements of the domain and its operators.

To use *any* AF capability effectively, leaders need an in-depth understanding. Just as leaders must have expertise in the capabilities and vulnerabilities of air and space operations, they must have the same level of expertise in cyber operations. Gaining this similarity in expertise levels entails training across all ranks and commands to assure unity of effort and delivery of the best possible cyber effects. Cyber will also require continuous training updates, as tactics, techniques, and procedures are introduced and continually evolve. While junior officers

may have an intrinsic grasp of some facets of cyber—perhaps the result of continuous upgrades in social media—this does not ensure they have the same operational perspective as senior leaders and vice versa.

### **Identification and Development of “High Potential” Officers**

High-potential identification is recognized when seen, recorded, and acted upon by superiors but, in practice, may never be conveyed to the actual officer.<sup>16</sup> De facto recognition of high potential exists, but nowhere is this codified. Senior staff members we interviewed at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) believe high-potential individuals in the military—like their counterparts in the business world—should be told they are considered high potential. The CCL contends that high-potential individuals perform better when they know of this expectation. Conversely, Air Force interviewees felt that “hi-po” officers intuitively know this and that telling them is somewhat counterproductive.

While the actual timeline for identifying high-potential Air Force officers varies, recommendation for in-residence intermediate developmental education—concurrent with selection to major—is the point at which these individuals begin to separate themselves from the rest of the officer corps and demonstrate high potential. Selection for major alone is not considered an indicator of high potential, but the combination of selection to major and designation as a “select” for in-residence IDE points to high-potential officers. According to AFPC, 94.2 percent of captains in the initial promotion zone for major were selected for promotion, but only 20 percent of those were chosen as selects for in-residence IDE.<sup>17</sup>

### **General Officer Development**

The General Officer Management Office (AF/DPG) handles the training and development for general officers (GO). There are three mandatory courses for GOs: the Senior Leader Orientation Course (SLOC),<sup>18</sup> the Capstone course,<sup>19</sup> and Air Force Smart Operations in the 21st Century (AFSO21) Senior Executive Training.<sup>20</sup> The AF/DPG applies the “right person, right

opportunity, and right time” policy to a GO’s remaining developmental needs, tailoring training and other opportunities to the individual’s rank, projected assignments, and training already completed. The AF/DPG selects the GO for the specific training course (including training quota and course date), then the MAJCOM/CC or equivalent coordinates, the AF/A1 reviews, and the CSAF approves.<sup>21</sup> Training courses available to GOs are listed in the *Senior Leader Development Program Portfolio* (CY 2011) published by AF/A1DD.<sup>22</sup> They are also posted on the AF/DPG website.<sup>23</sup> Available courses for GOs include national security, joint war fighting, business, public policy, leadership, and specific functional areas.<sup>24</sup> Some courses are generic for all GOs, and some support the building of specific expertise, such as a specialty in East Asian politics.<sup>25</sup> However, as Gen William M. Fraser III, then vice chief of staff, stated in a policy memorandum to Air Force leadership, “Not all senior leaders can be developed equally and specific educational opportunities must be targeted to maximize effectiveness and limit expenses.”<sup>26</sup> Since developmental opportunities are scarce, resources must be managed accordingly, and selection for training opportunities must rely on careful projections of assignment opportunities and promotion potential.

The AF/DPG maintains a portfolio for each GO that includes the individual’s official service records as well as a résumé. When a GO position becomes available, the AF/DPG reviews these portfolios and forwards nomination suggestions to the four-star general requesting input. The DPG staff consolidates the comments and forwards them to the CSAF and the relevant combatant commander.<sup>27</sup> The Air Force is consciously building officers who can qualify for senior-level joint jobs. AF/DPG policy is always to nominate an AF officer for available and appropriate joint positions.<sup>28</sup>

Standard Air Force policy requires that senior leaders make a personal commitment to lifelong learning. GOs, under the best of circumstances, will have the opportunity to attend formal training courses about every 12–18 months. In the interim, they must remain engaged with self-directed programs of professional reading and learning. To assist in this endeavor, the AF/DPG provides a subscription to executive book summaries, available online and downloadable to mobile devices.<sup>29</sup>

While the journey from second lieutenant to brigadier general appears to be a long road with many opportunities to take side excursions, in reality it grows narrower as time passes. What may seem a long time to the 24-year point is not nearly long enough to encompass the entire polymath spectrum of growth and development. Technical expertise, the hallmark of all Airmen, must remain the early focus. What follows that achievement is the pursuit of academic excellence (e.g., a master's degree), successive PME, and joint experience.

Throughout their careers Air Force officers prepare for command by developing a desire for lifelong learning, expertise in other career areas and domains outside their chosen fields, and a variety of assignments/experiences that challenge their comfort zone.

Not every path is the same, and not every officer will develop in quite the same way. At the end of the 24-year journey, however, there will be a number of technically skilled, experienced, and self-aware officers from which to choose for increased levels of responsibility. These will be the general officers of tomorrow's Air Force.

The recommendations in the following chapter are designed to enhance the development of Air Force officers to assume senior leadership positions in tomorrow's VUCA environment.

### **Notes**

1. According to AF/A1D policy, the top 10 percent of students in each Squadron Officer School (SOS) class are designated as distinguished graduates. Evaluation criteria include academic events, leadership exercises, peer and flight commander assessments, and physical fitness. Lt Col Michael J. Hower, AETC 31 STUS/CC to Karen W. Currie, AFRI/RIR, e-mail: "DG criteria at SOS and other stats," 20 June 2011.

2. "AFPC Education Level (Highest) by Current Grade," HQ AFPC website. According to this data pull, only 205 second lieutenants have master's degrees.

3. For captains in the initial promotion zone for major, the "DP" select rate is 99.8 percent versus a select rate of 78.1 percent for "P." "Officer Promotions," AFPC Operations Assignments Briefing, "Promotion Opportunity vs. Selection Rate (Line of the Air Force)," Slide.

4. This latter phenomenon may account for the relatively high number (1,095) of "airpower studies" master's degrees held by majors today: 11.5 percent of the total number of 9,560 officers.

5. "AFPC Education Level (Highest) by Current Grade."

6. The data constraint “highest education level” may influence these results as other degrees may have preceded an airpower studies degree awarded at Air Command and Staff College or Air War College.

7. US House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Report, “Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades after the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel,” April 2010, 45–46, [http://democrats.armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File\\_id=d4748d4a-b358-49d7-8c9a-aa0ba6f581a6](http://democrats.armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=d4748d4a-b358-49d7-8c9a-aa0ba6f581a6) (hereafter referenced as “HASC Report”).

8. “AFPC Education Level (Highest) by Current Grade.”

9. “HASC Report,” 46.

10. One hundred percent of calendar year (CY) 2009 brigadier general (BG) selectees had in-residence SDE. AFPC Operations Assignments Briefing.

11. While not common, officers may be assigned to directed duty assignments at accession.

12. “HASC Report,” 46.

13. Ninety-five percent of CY 09 BG selectees had a joint tour. See AFPC Operations Assignments Briefing.

14. Seventy-two percent of CY 09 BG selectees had performed an Air Staff tour. See AFPC Operations Assignments Briefing.

15. S. Craig Moore and Marygail K. Brauner, *Advancing the U.S. Air Force’s Force Development Initiative* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2007), [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND\\_MG545.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG545.pdf).

16. Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), interview, 16 March 2011.

17. AFPC Operations Assignments Briefing; and Daniel Sitterly, director of force development, USAF, “Officer In-Residence Professional Military Education,” presentation to US House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services and Investigations, 28 July 2009, 3, [http://democrats.armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File\\_id=b5a04897-c2e7-420a-807f-adbdc4911403](http://democrats.armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=b5a04897-c2e7-420a-807f-adbdc4911403).

18. The Senior Leader Orientation Course (SLOC) is a CSAF-hosted program geared toward making new brigadier generals (active duty, Reserve, and Guard) and newly appointed senior executive service (SES)/defense intelligence senior executive service (DISES) members more effective representatives of the Air Force as they assume greater leadership responsibilities. SLOC provides an opportunity to receive a top-level strategic view of the institutional Air Force. Additionally, the course incorporates sessions designed to fulfill the requirements for the OSD-required Senior Executive Equal Opportunity Seminar (SEEOS). SLOC attendance is mandatory for new active-duty brigadier generals and newly appointed career SES and DISES members. The first week of the course is held in Washington, DC. The second week of SLOC takes place in San Antonio, TX. See HQ USAF/A1DD, *Senior Leader Development Program Portfolio*, CY 2011, 40.

19. *Ibid.* CAPSTONE is designed to reinforce new general/flag officers’ comprehension of joint matters and national security strategy needed for the remainder of their careers. It focuses on the employment of US forces in joint and combined operations to support national policy objectives. It consists of

seminars, case studies, informal discussions, visits to key US military commands within the continental United States, and overseas trips to Europe, the Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere. CAPSTONE provides personal interaction with combatant commanders, other senior US commanders, and retired four-star general and flag officers. The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 requires that all active-duty general and flag officers attend CAPSTONE within two years of Senate confirmation.

20. Ibid., 7. "The objective of the Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st Century (AFSO21) Executive Leadership Course is to augment GO/SES/CCM leadership skills with an understanding of how to manage performance and strategically align continuous process improvement using AFSO21 tools. The course includes one full-day immersion in process improvement concepts and one half-day visit to an industry operation that provides first-hand exposure to Lean tools. Industry senior executives complement course material with real-world experiences in applying Lean to daily, weekly, and monthly management processes."

21. Capt Darlene Shaffer, talking paper on Senior Leader Development, *General Officer Handbook*, January 2010, 1–2, <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/browse.do?programId=t6925EC2F42E50FB5E044080020E329A9&channelPageId=s6925EC13371A0FB5E044080020E329A9>; and Gen Norton A. Schwartz, chief of staff, to USAF general officers, USAF senior executive service, USAF command chief master sergeants, and USAF career field managers, memorandum, 5 June 2009.

22. HQ USAF/A1DD, *Senior Leader Development Program Portfolio*, CY 2011.

23. "Course Descriptions," AF/DPG, <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/browse.do?programId=t6925EC2E11A10FB5E044080020E329A9&channelPageId=s6925EC13371A0FB5E044080020E329A9>, accessed 9 May 2010.

24. Shaffer, talking paper, 2.

25. CCL, interview.

26. Gen William M. Fraser III, vice chief of staff, to ALMAJCOM/CV, general officers and SES members, memorandum, 4 March 2009.

27. CCL, interview.

28. Ibid.

29. "Senior Leader Development: Book Review," AF/DPG website, <https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/browse.do?programId=t6925EC2E6EAA0FB5E044080020E329A9&channelPageId=s6925EC13371A0FB5E044080020E329A9>, accessed 9 May 2011.