

Greetings Association of Graduate members:

The upcoming 2018-2019 election is going to have a familiar proposed bylaw change on the ballot. This change, if approved by our membership, will enable a single CEO to lead both the Association of Graduates (AOG) and USAFA Endowment (UE).

Of those members who voted on this very issue in the 2017 election, a resounding 86% were in favor of the proposal. Unfortunately, only 19% of our members voted. We need a majority approval from at least 25% of our membership to achieve the necessary quorum to enact any AOG bylaw change. Without the quorum, we were unable to take this important step forward. Your Board of Directors strongly feels this is too important of an issue to let a lack of participation drive the decision. So, we are asking you to, most importantly, vote. Second, we ask you to vote to allow us to move your AOG forward.

#### Background

For several years, the goal of having a single CEO to lead both the AOG and UE has been a topic of discussion. During the 2016-17 election, and with the support of the previous Board of Directors, this initiative was put forth for consideration by the membership. Although the election did not engage the required 25% quorum of voters to permit the required Bylaws change, 86.5% of those who did vote on this measure (4,656 members of the 5,380 votes) supported a Single CEO between the AOG and UE. Now, the current AOG Board of Directors – comprised of 5 new directors since the last push – is calling on the membership to support this bylaw change for the benefit of the AOG and its membership.

Currently, the AOG relies upon a lengthy negotiation process each year to gain approval for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) determining the financial support the UE will provide to the AOG. This process limits the AOG's strategic growth because there are no long-term commitments negotiated, so the AOG and its operations are impacted each year depending on the final agreement. Although our close work with the UE mitigates concerns, there is necessarily less continuity and consistency than would be ideal. By drawing both organizations under the same CEO, there will be more streamlined issue resolution across competing interests and *both* organizations' financial well-being will be the priority.

#### Discussion

Here are three questions you are likely asking:

- 1) Why should members vote in favor of a Single CEO?
- 2) How would this construct look?
- 3) What might change for AOG members with a Single CEO?

**First the "Why."** The goal of a single CEO is to improve the AOG's and Endowment's ability to fulfill our individual and complementary missions. The AOG's mission is to provide support to graduates and cadet programs, and to preserve our heritage and traditions. The Endowment's mission is to be the philanthropic arm to support the needs of the Academy, in concert with the

other non-profit organizations. This means the Endowment reaches out to donors to provide support for graduates, cadet programs, and our heritage, on the AOG's behalf.

Your AOG Board believes the Single CEO construct will not only increase cost savings, but also reduce inefficiencies and operational confusion between our two critical organizations. We also believe the AOG and UE will inherently become more aware of the value of each other, which will promote cooperation and ultimately enhance donor trust and the missions set before each entity.

The growth of the Endowment, the Air Force Academy Athletic Corporation (AFAAC), and other partners, who have particular areas of expertise, can potentially allow the AOG to turn additional focus and resources to the graduate community.

**Now for the "How."** The AOG and Endowment will remain two organizations with the CEO reporting to the two independent Boards. Our AOG Board of Directors will still be comprised of elected and appointed directors, just as it is today. This CEO will be charged with achieving the goals for both organizations and faithfully executing both budgets. Your AOG Board believes the Single CEO construct will increase efficiencies and enhance our unity of effort. In fact, that very unity of effort has already been demonstrated as members of both organizations crafted a Single CEO Agreement.

Under the proposal, there would be two separate boards to ensure continuity of mission interests, as well as joint committees to bring the two missions together. The key to this organizational structure is the strength gained by having a Single CEO to lead both the AOG and Endowment staffs through day-to-day operations as well as more strategic projects.

**Finally, what might change?** Your AOG will continue to work tirelessly to ensure the graduate services you value are maintained and enhanced. Reunions, *Checkpoints*, Service Academy Career Conferences and other membership benefits will continue to deliver the quality that members have come to expect. The cadet programs supported by the AOG — such as Soaring, Cadet Commanders' Leadership Enrichment Seminar and Cadet Clubs — also will continue to receive the support they've enjoyed in the past. As always, we will continue to preserve our heritage and traditions.

Our Board expects this realignment will increase cohesion, improve communications with the graduate community, enhance fundraising efforts led by the Endowment, and allow graduate services to grow.

In short, the AOG and Endowment are each stronger when we work together. A Single CEO is the next step in our steady progress toward greater unity and collaboration. Help us take that next big step by most importantly, voting.

Approving this change will help us provide even better support to you and our Academy.