

Air & Space Forces Association

Emerging Leaders Program

Apr 23

Purpose:

The Air & Space Forces Association Emerging Leaders Program is designed to identify, motivate, develop, and encourage emerging leaders to serve actively in AFA by providing hands-on experience and unique insights into how the Association operates and is governed. AFA needs an infusion of committed new leaders to bring a fresh perspective to the organization. The program is intended to accelerate the development of field leaders and to inspire them to serve at all levels of the Association. It is also designed to be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for the participants and a program that will attract and retain our finest.

Background:

Prior to the reorganization of AFA under *afa21*, the AFA Board of Directors included six Leadership Development Directors, an outgrowth of the original "Under 40 Directors" program. The purpose of those programs was similar to this proposal: grow and mentor emerging leaders to be ready and willing to assume greater levels of responsibility in the Association. Each director served a two-year term during which they were mentored, trained and gained valuable national experience.

The original programs met with notable success in developing future leaders for AFA. However, when the AFA and Aerospace Education Boards were merged under *afa21*, the number of Board members was reduced from 49 to 19. The Leadership Development Directors were among those positions eliminated as we transitioned to a more manageable and smaller Board of Directors, one focused at the strategic level and made up of highly experienced leaders. An alternative means to groom future leaders was sought. One proposal was to establish an AFA internship program, but this was deferred until after the three-year board transition was complete and was never revisited.

A recommendation to revive the Under 40 Director program was discussed at the 2011 Region and State President's meeting. RPs and SPs felt leadership development was inconsistent, lengthy, and often led to burnout and frustration prior to individuals being exposed to the "big picture" of what AFA is and does. The 2012-13 Field Council was tasked to take a look at the issue and to make a recommendation to the BOD. Over the years, the program has been modified slightly with adjustments to the schedule. Today the program is as follows:

Structure:

Participants will serve for one year, from 1 October through 30 September. The participants will:

- A. Attend the in-person Board meeting as observers in January providing exposure to the roles and functions of the Board. (Although not funded ELPs are encouraged to observe portions of the EXCOM and Finance Committee meetings if the opportunity permits)
- B. Attend the Field Leadership Summit immediately following the January Board meeting gaining exposure to senior field leaders and issues/challenges affecting the AFA Field.
- C. Attend the Board meeting virtually as observers in May.
- D. Attend a second in-person meeting which may rotate from year to year. Currently the options being discussed are:
 - 1. In person meeting at 1501 Langston Blvd to expose the ELs to the various staff functions and aspects of our Association to include the Mitchell Institute, STEM programs, etc.
 - 2. Attend one of the national STEM competition events: CyberPatriot or StellarXplorers providing exposure to AFA's national STEM efforts
 - 3. Attend the AFA Warfare Symposium in Aurora, CO providing exposure to AFA's professional development events.
- E. Attend the Board meeting virtually as observers in August.
- F. Serve as delegates to the National Convention for their state organization. Participants will be encouraged to attend as many other meetings (Region Caucus, field training sessions, etc.) during the convention weekend as their schedules allow.
- G. Be assigned to, and actively participate as full members in one council or committee for the year (see atch).
- H. Be assigned a mentor for the year by the VCOB-FO. Mentors may either be the chairman of the council/committee to which the participant is assigned, a serving or former national officer, a member of the board or other highly experienced field leader approved by the FCOB-FO.

The program will be administered by the VCOB-FO through a Field Council Sub-Committee which will also serve as the candidate selection committee.

The program will be highlighted to AFA's membership via print and social media throughout the year, as an illustration of our commitment to leadership development.

Selection:

The Chairman will provide guidance to the Field Council and Region Presidents thru the VCOB-FO outlining the characteristics and qualities desired in candidates for this program. This guidance will be considered in the selection process.

On or around 1 April the VCOB-FO will issue a call for candidates to the Region/State/Chapter Presidents to respond NLT 15 May each year.

Candidates will submit an application (separate file) which will include a statement that they are volunteers, understand the commitment required by the program, and are willing to put in the time and energy necessary to complete the program.

Candidates should have at least two years' experience in an elected or appointed chapter or higher leadership position. This should not stop anyone from submitting a highly qualified candidate, this is only a guide.

Region Presidents may nominate as many candidates for the program annually from within their regions. It is required that the Region rack the candidates in order though for the ELP Sub-Committee after all region submissions. The search for candidates will include inputs from all levels of the Association's leadership using the Emerging Leaders List as a starting point.

Region Presidents shall ensure their region's nominees:

- Are active AFA members
- Are volunteers who are committed to long term membership and support of the Association;
- Have demonstrated potential to serve in leadership positions;
- To the best of their knowledge will be able to participate in a year-long program;
- Have the dedication and desire to serve in leadership positions in AFA .
- Have a plan for the ELP once they complete the program.

The Field Council Sub-Committee will select the most qualified candidates among those nominated, regardless of geographic location. The program is established for seven ELPs each year however, that may change depending on annual AFA budgets. The VCOB-FO will forward those names to the EXCOM/Board of Directors for confirmation. The selection process will take place in time for the selected participants to be announced at the National Convention.

The ELP Sub-Committee will assign mentors and committees to each of the ELPs based on their preferences but also in line with the current needs of the AFA.

Funding:

AFA will reimburse participants' travel and lodging expenses for each of the program events subject to the same restrictions as region presidents, board members, or heads of delegations. Excess expenses for travel, convention delegate registration fees, and optional dinner costs (e.g. AFA Awards Banquet) will be borne by the participants.

Follow-on and Metrics:

Upon completion of the program, participants will be expected to serve as elected or appointed officers at the chapter or higher level and will be encouraged to serve on National councils or committees.

We will measure success by determining the percentage of graduates assuming field leadership positions:

Year 1 Goal: 85% (6 of 7) hold a chapter or state office.

Year 3 Goal: 70% (5 of 7) hold a chapter, state or higher office.

Year 5 Goal: 60% (4 of 7) hold a chapter, state or higher office.

Following completion of the program at the end of September, the VCOB-FO will host a conference call for feedback from participants, mentors, and others involved to improve the program and the experience for future participants.

Atch: Participating councils/committees

Note: The application form is a separate file.

Attachment 1

Recommended Councils and Committees for Emerging Leaders Program are shown below (not an all-encompassing list)

1. Field Council (FC)
2. Aerospace Education Council (AEC)
3. Membership Committee (MC)
4. Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)
5. Development Committee (DC)

Assignments will be made based on which committee or council a participant's skill set best fits and on their expressed preferences, IAW the procedures outlined in the OPM.