

# We want to hear from you — now more than ever

By Lt. Col. (Ret.) Cathy Almand '90, Association of Graduates Board Chair



I've ended my past few columns with a simple call to action to our graduate membership: We want to hear from you. This time, I'm leading with it — because the moment demands it.

This is a pivotal time for our graduate community. As we move into 2026 — nearly 60 years after our alumni association's incorporation — we want to check in and assess what our community wants and needs as well as gather ideas on where and how we can turn opportunities into action. We're doing that through a graduate survey. If your contact information with us is active and accurate, you should have received email and text message communications to participate in the survey. The survey closes on March 31.

The Long Blue Line spans five generations and some 56,000 of us — from grads in their early 20s to those into their 90s. Experiences and perspectives vary. And graduate needs vary. Yet we all share a common set of values and traditions and the pride of being part of the growing Long Blue Line. We all raised our hand to serve our country. We have far more in common than we have differences.

The last survey we conducted was in 2022, shortly after we rolled out no-cost membership for all graduates. The 2022 survey informed our strategic priorities and the programs we developed and continue to refine — such as NextGen engagement efforts, more dedicated support of our Next of Kin office, revamped career services and new ways to communicate such as podcasting — to better serve and reach all graduates.

Similarly, what you tell us in the 2026 graduate survey will inform our

Association & Foundation's next chapter under our joint mission. It is a new opportunity to listen and focus on what you say is important to you. What you tell us in the survey will:

- Influence how we can better serve, support and remain relevant in your life and in the lives of all graduates — from those currently wearing the uniform to graduates in the private sector to those in retirement.
- Help us understand why some grads may express their pride in USAFA differently than others, and why some may be reluctant to engage while others show up to everything. This will help the Association & Foundation thoughtfully meet all grads where they are and offer something of value.
- Inform our goals and priorities for better serving you and supporting the Academy. Your direct feedback is the “Polaris” for our strategic priorities (please see QR code to plan below), ensuring that future investments align with real needs and opportunities.

Additionally, the 2026 survey asks about the role you want to see the Association of Graduates have — or not have — in influencing policy at the federal level. The Association traditionally has not taken positions on Air Force and Space Force policy, in keeping with our mission as an apolitical nonprofit organization. Some survey questions are meant to ascertain if graduates would like to see the Association move into the policy space in an apolitical fashion, or if they want us to remain solely focused on supporting the Academy, serving graduates and

preserving our growing heritage.

We've hired the same firm we worked with in 2022 to administer the survey and analyze the results. Working with a professional third party helps ensure objectivity and confidentiality, and it's part of our commitment to accountability — being accountable to you as a grad and member as well as accountable to ourselves.

Your input will guide how we engage our members, serve graduates, support our alma mater and preserve the heritage of the institution and Long Blue Line. It will inform how we continue to be not just present, but also relevant, in the lives of all graduates.

So, if you have not already taken the survey, I ask you to please do so by March 31. Look for an email with the link, and be sure to check your junk mail folder if you don't see it.

Your voice matters. Your experience matters. Together, we can ensure our Association & Foundation continues to serve the entire Long Blue Line and support our Academy with purpose, relevance, strength and impact.

Thank you for being part of this journey — and for helping shape what comes next. 

Sincerely,

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Cathy Almand '90

*Click here to view the strategic plan.*

