

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
PARENTS ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA
(USAFA PANCA)

GRADUATION PLANNING

8 February 2024



WELCOME

- Board Members:
 - President – Mara Smith '88 (2027)
 - Vice President – Will McLeod (2026)
 - Treasurer – Ursula Ratcliff (2023, 2024)
 - Membership – Marilyn Glancy (2024)
 - Website – Kim Cheri (2027)
 - Cadet Support – Vacant
 - 4th Class Representative – Kim Cheri (2027)
 - Activities – Vacant
 - Activities (Sports) – Mark & Sherry Hanna (2026)
 - Alumni – Vacant
 - Secretary – Vacant
 - States Night Director – Lynn Conroe (2021)
- ***Attendee Introductions***
 - ***Name, Cadet, Squadron, Class Year***



GRADUATION PLANNING



- Objective:
 - Provide information so Parents can plan well in advance, know what to expect, prepare for the experience, celebrate Cadet accomplishment, and observe the Commissioning ceremony.
- Goals:
 - **How to get to 2027**
 - **What to plan for in 2026**
 - What to anticipate in 2025
 - What to know about 2024

‘THE WEDDING
WITHOUT THE
BRIDE/GROOM’

USAFA Graduation Planning

- Agenda & Main Topics:
 - Setting the Stage Early – 4th Class Year
 - Initial Planning – 3rd Class Year
 - Preparing the Playbook – 2nd Class Year
 - Executing the Plan – 1st Degree Senior Year
 - Graduation Week
 - Post Graduation

SETTING THE STAGE EARLY – 4TH CLASS YEAR (DOOLIES)

- Recognition – It's finally here! Prop & Wings signify ascension to ranks of the upper class.
- Keep the end in sight – It's a tough road ahead but well worth it.
- Chart the course to a degree – Focus on talents and understand Air Force needs.
- Be optimistic about the future – Lots for your Cadet to do this summer and next year as their academic degree selection occurs next Fall.
- Support your Cadet when discussing degrees and career options, as Graduation is the transitional milestone from one to the other.
- *What's in next year's flight plan...Exemplar Dinner for 3 Degrees occurs in the Fall semester, with Legacy Class of 40 years prior attending.*



INITIAL PLANNING – 3RD CLASS YEAR (SOPHOMORES)

- Familiarize yourselves with the surrounding area:
 - Restaurants,
 - Grocery stores,
 - Hotels, BnBs,
 - Sightseeing, entertainment,
 - Travel options, airlines, vehicle rentals, shuttles.
- Start setting up a budget and putting away money for the event.
- Foster relationships with Cadet sponsor, other Parents, especially those who've been through it or will go through it before you.
- Think about graduation because it comes up fast.
- *What's in next year's flight plan...Commitment Dinner early Fall semester; 2 Degrees then committed to service in the USAF. Ring Dining Out later in the year.*



PREPARING THE PLAYBOOK – 2ND CLASS YEAR (JUNIORS)

- Once your Cadet signs their Commitment papers, it's 'game on'.
- Remember this is your Cadet's event (make it memorable for them).
- Start talking with your Cadet to see what kind of graduation they want or don't want and what your budget will allow.
- Start putting together a preliminary list of who you want to invite.
- Prepare a separate list for the Graduation Announcements.
- Start looking at renting houses, hotels, BnBs.
 - Houses and hotels start booking the day after graduation of the class in front of them, if not sooner.
 - Restaurants also book up early.
- *What's in next year's flight plan...1 Degrees have their 100's Night in the Spring Semester.*



EXECUTING THE PLAN – 1ST DEGREE YEAR (SENIOR)

- Academy Graduations are a big deal; the Commissioning experience is unique.
- Send out an initial informational note/letter by the second/third week in September, especially if your relatives are unfamiliar with the Academies.
- Discuss with your Cadet the ordering of Graduation announcements and Senior photos, so any mistakes can be corrected.
- Finalize the invite list (with your Cadet's knowledge) and start asking people if they want to (and will) attend.
- Be careful who invitations are sent to, because they will come.
 - It's acceptable to say there are a limited number of tickets to graduation; there are after all.
- Ensure your Cadet knows how many tickets are needed;
- For 2022 Graduation, maximum of 20 per Cadet with no swapping allowed.
- *What's in the flight plan...Culmination is Graduation and Commissioning!*



EXECUTING THE PLAN – 1ST DEGREE YEAR (SENIOR) [continued]

- Announcements are not an invitation to the graduation.
 - Including your Cadet's Sponsor Family, Congressional Representatives/Senators, etc. is appropriate.
- Ask your Cadet whether they have finalized their decision on who will be giving the Oath of Office and performing Pinning the Rank at Commissioning.
- Ask a few out of the box questions, but understand your Cadet is mature and about to launch their career.
 - It wouldn't be the first time a Cadet realizes two clean white parade pants are necessary for the parade and one for graduation.
- Remind yourself continually this is your Cadet's graduation; they will have their own plans and may want to get together with their classmates.



EXECUTING THE PLAN – 1ST DEGREE YEAR (SENIOR) [continued]



- Don't do things without your Cadet's knowledge.
- Don't treat this as something for yourselves; it's your Cadet's graduation.
- Don't delay discussing with your Cadet the ordering of Graduation announcements and Senior photos.
 - Senior pictures are done in the Fall; Graduation announcement information arrives in December.
- Don't fail to read all info provided to Parents by Academy Liaisons.
- Don't be afraid if everyone can't be invited or you don't want to invite someone.
- Don't overcommit yourselves and try to cater to your guests; this is an experience you'll want to enjoy.
- Don't be everyone's photographer; Parents should be in pictures too.
- Don't do or order something that will embarrass your Cadet.

GRADUATION WEEK

- Your Cadet should have purged, packed, and turned in equipment since they've accumulated a lot in 4 years.
 - They need to be out of dorms within hours, with gear off the grounds prior to graduation.
 - You don't want to spend all your time packing.
- If you have a lot, ship any Graduation items out ahead of time, e.g., decorations, gifts.
- Try and arrive in Colorado Springs no later than Saturday.
- You can bring your Cadet's favorite food/meal on the plane.
- You are there for your Cadet; you're not the tour guide for your family and guests.
- If it is Memorial Day Weekend; have your guests go and explore and do their own thing.
- Most attendees really don't need to be in the Springs until Tuesday.
- Consider catering some of your meals to free up your time.



GRADUATION WEEK [continued]

- Everyone will want to help, let them; assign jobs/tasks, let them be the runners.
- There's an airport shuttle from DIA to COS and return, use it if necessary.
- Have an event plan with timelines and stick to it; don't get frustrated if things vary.
- Don't over plan for your Cadet, and don't surprise them with an event or dinner they didn't know about; they have parties to go to and other events to attend.
- Down time is very important to your cadet; sitting around the dinner table or out by a fire pit just relaxing, telling jokes and reflecting on their best memories.
- Bring music; of course, everyone has their favorite playlist.
- If you're having a party for your Cadet, encourage them to invite their classmate's family members; no one wants to sit in a hotel alone during the week.
- If you're having a party, extend an invitation to your Cadet's Sponsor Family.



GRADUATION WEEK [continued]

- Depending upon your Cadet's slot time for Squadron Commissioning, try and attend the Graduation Reception after the Graduation Parade.
- Extend an invitation to the Sponsor Family to the Commissioning.
- You can practice taking off and pinning on shoulder boards and rank all you want, but it may not work when it counts; just relax and everything will be fine.
- The March On at Graduation is one of the most impressive things you'll witness.
- There should be vendors inside the stadium during Graduation selling food and beverages.
- Sunscreen and sunhats are about the only shade you'll have in Colorado.



POST-GRADUATION

- If your Cadet or someone is driving back from Colorado, their car should be weighed empty early in the week.
- Depending on your Graduate's plans for their 60 days of leave, the Government movers may come to get their belongings while they're gone.
 - Ask them what they're planning on moving and what they're planning on bringing with them; they may not have access to items placed in storage.
- Thank you notes are certainly appropriate and proper protocol for newly Commissioned Officers; a gentle reminder to write them and send out the thank you cards is customary.
- Some Graduates may not start their jobs for a while (up to a year or more) and will be assigned casual duty.
 - While paid casual duty sounds fine to the average person, these officers have been go, go, go for the last 4 years and don't really do casual well.
 - Some encouragement may be warranted, e.g., taking classes, learning golf, or volunteering; recreation and personal/professional development is fulfilling.



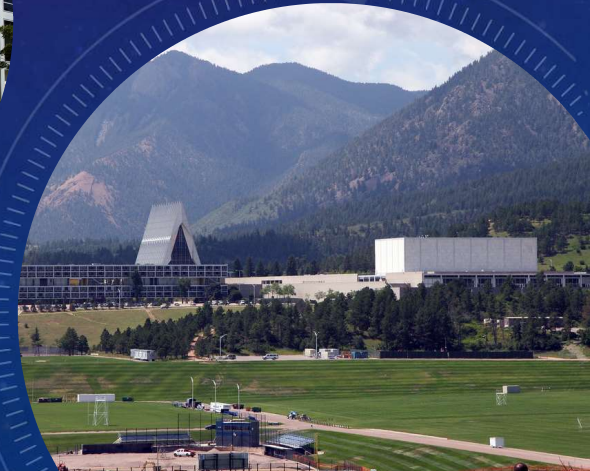
GRADUATION BOOKLETS

- Prepared by Parents for their family and friends.
- Fun and informative way of guiding invitees through the USAFA Graduation.
- Removes much of the stress of having to go over the details of each event and about appropriate attire.
- Family and friends often enjoy the tidbits of information and knowing what to look for at the activities and events.
- Clarifies lots of things including dress codes, arrival times, directions, and seating.
- Suggested content includes:
 - Links to bios for guest speakers, military abbreviations, history of USAFA
 - Class mottos, class exemplars
 - Visitor centers, local Air Force attractions, Space Force museums
 - Altitude sickness, weather
 - Unique aspects about USAFA and Cadet life
- Some examples are available from prior Parents; and templates are often posted to Facebook



OTHER RANDOM ITEMS

- Weather in the Springs is fickle; dress in layers as you can always remove clothing.
- Squadron Commissioning sites and times are determined by the Squadron's rank.
- Accept what's provided and remember just how hard your Cadet worked the last 4 years for this day to be Commissioned as an Officer (Second Lieutenant or Navy Ensign).
- It's tradition to present a gift to the officer swearing in your Graduate, as well as a gift to the Sponsor Family.
- Silver dollars are traditional for an Officer's 'First Salute'.
- Take plenty of pictures and have your relatives and friends take pictures.
- Enjoy yourself; the week goes by in a flash.
- *And remember...*
 - *No one gets in or graduates the Academy alone; it's truly a team AND family effort.*



GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Class of 2022

2024 Pending

2022

YOU'VE EARNED THIS.

Commemorate your graduation with personalized Academy announcements.



See order instructions on opposite side.

**A PERSONALIZED
GRADUATION
ANNOUNCEMENT**

Each announcement is personalized with your name, degree, major and commission, so your friends and family will know what you've worked so hard to achieve.

**B SOUVENIR
ANNOUNCEMENT COVER**

The announcement cover, which features the Academy crest, can keep one of your announcements protected as a keepsake of your graduation day.

C THANK YOU NOTES

These notes are a great way to show your gratitude to everyone who helped make your graduation possible.

D INFORMAL NOTES

These crested note cards can be used to send a personal note to your friends or relatives.

**E RETURN ADDRESS
LABELS**

These feature your name and address, along with the academy crest.

F ENVELOPE SEALS

The final touch on your envelope is a seal featuring the academy crest.

**G EBONY ANNOUNCEMENT
PHOTO FRAME**

This is an outstanding way to display your graduation announcement and 8"x10" graduation portrait or commission photo. The class crest, Academy crest, announcement and 2nd lieutenant bar is included. (Photo print not included.)

GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

2022 PRICE SHEET

2024 PENDING

Personalized Academy Graduation Announcements

United States Air Force Academy Graduating Cadet

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation! Graduation is an exciting time, a moment you will want to share with family and friends. Graduation Announcements for Graduation Week 2022 are ready to be ordered from our representatives.

Our quality paper, artistic design and beautiful three-color, hand-engraved Academy Coat of Arms and your Class Crest reflect your hard-earned achievement. If you need further information you may call **1-800-433-0296** or place your order **online at www.CBGrad.Balfour.com**. Ordering information and prices are listed below along with a sample text of the announcement.

800-433-0296 | www.cbgrad.balfour.com

Save time and money by ordering one of our convenient packages!
Packages A, B, and C contain a 5% Special Discount for the Class of 2022!!
Check the website for additional packages!

Personalized Package A

50 Announcements
50 Thank You Notes
50 Envelope Seals
50 Return Address Labels
1 Announcement Cover
50 Inner/Outer Envelopes

\$156⁹⁰

Personalized Package B

35 Announcements
35 Thank You Notes
35 Envelope Seals
50 Return Address Labels
1 Announcement Cover
35 Inner/Outer Envelopes

\$113⁵¹

Personalized Package C

25 Announcements
25 Thank You Notes
25 Envelope Seals
50 Return Address Labels
1 Announcement Cover
25 Inner/Outer Envelopes

\$84⁵⁸

Individual Items	Count	Price
Personalized Announcements w/envelopes	25	\$48.75
Personalized Announcements w/envelopes	5	\$9.75
Crested Thank You Notes w/envelopes	25	\$19.88
Crested Thank You Notes w/envelopes	10	\$7.95
Crested Envelope Seals	25	\$7.50
Crested Envelope Seals	35	\$10.50
Crested Return Address Labels	50	\$8.95
Announcement Cover	1	\$9.95
Personalized Name Card	50	\$12.95
Ebony Photo Frame	1	\$139.95

* Spanish and Photo announcements are available online.

** The prices on this page do not include sales tax or \$12.95 shipping & handling.

We accept VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express, cash, or personal check.
Make checks payable to:
CB Announcements, P.O. Box 781, Manhattan, KS 66505-0781

Sample Text

The Superintendent
of the
United States Air Force Academy
announces that
Jordan M. Washington
of the
Class of 2022
is a candidate for the degree of
Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering
and a
commission as a
Second Lieutenant
in the
United States Air Force
Wednesday, May twenty-fifth
United States Air Force Academy,
Colorado

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT GRADUATION 2024 (PENDING)



Parents,

- Graduation schedule has been updated on the USAFA Graduation webpage:

<https://www.usafa.edu/about/traditions/graduation/graduation-schedule-of-events/>

Each Cadet will get a limited number of tickets for the Graduation Ceremony; no more and no swapping with Cadets to get more tickets.

- Graduation Parade at Stillman Field is historically limited for attendees.
- Guest numbers for other graduation events will be based on the venue; check with your Cadet as we get closer.
- AOG Parent Program and USAFA Liaison Office are working on a Graduation Parent All Call to answer questions.
- More to follow as the call specifics get finalized.
- *2024 schedule follows on next slide...*

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

2024 STILL TENTATIVE

- ❖ Schedule of events is tentative.
- ❖ Times and venues may change due to security, weather, or other circumstances.
- ❖ Graduating cadets will be given up to 20 tickets each for guests to attend the Graduation Ceremony.
- ❖ Any changes to the schedule will be reflected at the link on the prior page.

(Last updated: 29 January 2024)

- ❖ What's known:

May 20, 2024:	Prep School Graduation Parade & Ceremony
May 26, 2024:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Baccalaureate Service❖ Superintendent's Graduation Reception for Grads & Families
May 28, 2024:	Graduation Awards Ceremonies
May 29, 2024:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Cadet Aerial Event & Honor Guard❖ Graduation Parade❖ Parents Graduation Reception❖ Commissioning Ceremonies
May 30, 2024:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Pre-Graduation Performances❖ Graduation (Falcon Stadium)

HISTORICAL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Example Only; This was 2022

Saturday, 21 May, 2022		Gate Visitor Hours: 5:00 a.m.
3:00-5:00 p.m.	Commandant's Future Spouses Reception	Otis House
Sunday, 22 May, 2022		Gate Visitor Hours: 5:00 a.m.
9:00-1:00 p.m.	Sunday/Baccalaureate Services <i>(optional)</i>	Various times/ locations
7:00-9:30 p.m.	Bluebards Production of "All Shook Up"	Arnold Hall Theater
TBD	Superintendent's Graduation Reception for Cadets & Families	Carlton House
Monday, 23 May, 2022		Gate Visitor Hours: 5:00 a.m.
8:00-9:00 a.m.	Graduation Tapping Ceremony <i>(by invitation to honored cadets & their guests)</i>	Arnold Hall Ballroom
9:00-9:30 a.m.	Tapping Ceremony Reception	Arnold Hall Ballroom
9:30-10:30 a.m.	Schulte Award Ceremony <i>(by invitation to honored cadets & their guests)</i>	Polaris Hall Forum
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Schulte Award Ceremony Reception	Polaris Hall
11:00-noon	Graduation Awards Ceremony <i>(presentation of organizational & individual awards)</i>	Clune Arena
noon-12:30 p.m.	Graduation Awards Ceremony Reception	Clune West Terrace
12:30-1:30 p.m.	Wings of Blue Awards & "Blue Suit" Ceremony <i>(by invitation to honored cadets & their guests)</i>	Davis Airfield
1:00-3:30 p.m.	Academic Department Award Ceremonies	Various Locations
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Athletic Department Awards Ceremony	Clune Arena
4:30-5:00 p.m.	Athletic Department Awards Reception	Clune West Terrace
4:45-5:45 p.m.	Academy Scholars Program Ceremony <i>(by invitation to honored cadets & their guests)</i>	Fairchild Hall F-1
7:00-9:30 p.m.	Bluebards Performance of "All Shook Up" Closing Night	Arnold Hall Theater
Tuesday, 24 May, 2022		Gate Visitor Hours: 5:00 a.m.
7:30-9:00 a.m.	Cadet Aerial & Cadet Honor Guard Demonstrations	Stillman Field
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Graduation Parade	Stillman Field
10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	Graduation Reception	Mitchell Hall
12:30-2:00 p.m.	Commissioning Ceremonies Wave 1 <i>(Limited Guests)</i>	Locations vary <i>(See separate schedule)</i>
3:00-4:30 p.m.	Commissioning Ceremonies Wave 2 <i>(Limited Guests)</i>	Locations vary <i>(See separate schedule)</i>
5:30-7:00 p.m.	Commissioning Ceremonies Wave 3 <i>(Limited Guests)</i>	Locations vary <i>(See separate schedule)</i>
7:30-9:30 p.m.	Graduation Concert: Cadet Orchestra <i>(no tickets required)</i>	Arnold Hall
8:00-9:30 p.m.	Commissioning Ceremonies Wave 4 <i>(Limited Guests)</i>	Locations vary <i>(See separate schedule)</i>
Wednesday, 25 May, 2022		Gate Visitor Hours: 5:00 am
8:00-8:45 a.m.	Performances by the Cadet Chorale & "In The Stairwell"	Falcon Stadium
9:30 a.m.-1:15 p.m.	Graduation Ceremony & Thunderbirds <i>(Tickets required; stadium gates open at 6:00 a.m.)</i>	Falcon Stadium

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATTENDEES

- Wings Over the Rockies @ Lowry AFB & Academy Museum (where it all began!)
- National Museum of WWII Aviation – #1 Museum in COS
- Space Foundation & Discovery Center
- The Airplane Restaurant
- Cockpit Craft Distillery
- Colorado Mountain Brewery & Restaurant – Grad owned
- Cadet Visitor Center
- AOG Doolittle Hall
- Heritage Trail @ Doolittle Hall



Cadet noon formation, Lowry



ANNUAL EVENTS

Parent All Call on Recognition

- **Coming Soon!**
- Link: <https://alumlc.org/usafa/13838>

PANCA Elections

- *Throughout March & April*
- *Emails to follow...*

PANCA Appointee & Candidate Luncheon

- **Save the Date!**
- **9 June 2024**
- **11 AM ET**
- *More to follow...*

AOG NEWS

Association of Graduates bringing back — Parent Membership Guide (PMG)!

- Decided this year to bring this wonderful membership resource back to our Parents, with information to help you as the Parent navigate the four-year journey with your Cadet, the PMG is sure to be your go to for information on a variety of events, monthly calendar, emergency contact information and more, sent directly to your door at the beginning of each academic year!
- In the past, we had several Parents Clubs advertise their goods as well as members advertise their businesses in this book, and we would like to open that up to you again. If you have a desire to place an ad, we would be happy to help walk you through that process.
- The cost for advertising in the PMG is as follows — Full page: \$1,000, Half page: \$600. However, as a way of saying thank you for helping to make the PMG amazing in its relaunch, we would like to offer you an introductory 20% discount.
- If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Jeff MacLean, Director of Advertising and Sponsorships
jeff.maclean@aogusafa.org or by phone at 719-247-8767.

Sample Advertisement

Recognition/Class Patches and Class Pins

2022 patch will debut at Parents Weekend!

Designed by cadets, for cadets and their families. Each patch and pin proudly displays the Prep & Wings and Class color.

Order your pins today to proudly support your cadet, especially at USASA activities. See our website for patch uses.

only \$5 each
+ Shipping

Questions? Email advertising@aogusafa.org. Please include class year in subject line.

To order, visit www.afapan.org

Thank you for supporting the AF Academy Parents Association of Nebraska. Come see us in Arnold Hall Parent's Weekend!

Trolling by boat on 11 Mile Reservoir for Trout and Kokanee Salmon. Up to 4 adults or combination of adults and children. \$250 for one, then \$50 for each additional person.

Contact Bob at: (719) 659-4053
Bob@coffishing.com
www.coffishing.com

Colorado Friends & Family Fishing

Get your complimentary ~~VORTEX~~ **VORTEX** online travel site and **save up to 30%** on hotel rooms 85-90% of the time!

Other savings also possible on:

- Rental Cars
- Activities
- Cruises
- Weekly stays
- Flights

Start saving now!

Go to AreWeThereYetCO.com, complete your profile and get your **FREE** Vortex site. We also offer Southwest flights where bags fly free!

For assistance, contact Mariano Nandin, Jr. (JR)
719.210.0013
AreWeThereYetCO@gmail.com

LOOK FOR HOLIDAY BUS TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULES

PRIOR TO SCHEDULED LEAVE AND VACATIONS
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



2022 CADET SPRING BREAK BUS TRANSPORTATION

Tickets on sale starting 18 January – 3 March

No refunds or changes after 3 March

All seats sold after 3 March on a space available basis

All dates, times subject to cancellation per demand.

DEPART BASE OF RAMP - Northeast corner below Terrazzo Cadet Area

DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

DEPARTS

18 March: 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600,
1700, 1800

19 March: 0400, 0700

RETURN

27 March: 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500,
1600, 1700, 1800

COLORADO SPRINGS AIRPORT

DEPARTS

18 March: 1215, 1315, 1415, 1515, 1615, 1715,
1815

19 March: 0415, 0715

RETURN

27 March: 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600,
1700, 1800

TYPE OF TICKET	COST
Round Trip	\$55
One Way	\$35

TYPE OF TICKET	COST
Round Trip	\$30
One Way	\$20

DEPARTURE INFORMATION:

1. Please allow at least two hours for driving time to Denver International Airport, plus one hour security.
2. Please allow at least one hour for driving time to Colorado Springs Airport, plus two hour security.

RETURNING INFORMATION:

1. There will be standby tickets sold at DIA for \$40, COS \$25 but there is *NO GUARANTEE* a seat will be available.
2. Meet at DIA level 5 East baggage claim, inside between doors 515/517
3. Colorado Spring - ODR rep will be present outside baggage claim area

VANDENBERG ORC-ROOM IC15

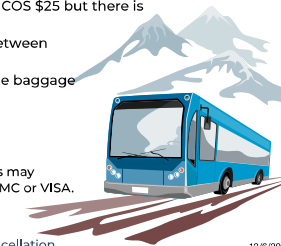
719-333-4602

NOTE: Cadets must purchase tickets in person, parents may purchase a bus ticket by phone for their Cadets with a MC or VISA.

Open Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri; 0800 – 1700

Closed Wed, Weekends and Holidays

NOTE: All dates and times are subject to change or cancellation



12/6/2021



USAFASUPPORT.COM



2024-2025 ACADEMIC CALENDAR



Cadet Academic Calendar:

- BCT Dates are as follows:
 - 27 June 2024 '28 In-Processing Day
 - TBD '28 Swearing In Ceremony
 - July '28 Doolie Day Out
 - July March out to Jack's Valley
 - July Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo
 - July March back from Jack's Valley
 - July BCT ends
 - August Acceptance Day Parade
 - September Parents Weekend

Cadet Academic Calendar:

- November Thanksgiving Break begins (LMD)
- November Thanksgiving Break ends
- December Winter Break begins
- January 2025 Winter Break ends
- March Spring Break begins (LMD)
- April Spring Break ends
- April Recognition
- May Graduation Week begins
- June Graduation



THANK YOU PARENTS!

USAFA PANCA GRADUATION PLANNING