

AIR UNIVERSITY



Strategic Plan September 2015

COMMANDER'S INTENT



My Fellow Airmen and Airpower Advocates

Air University is at an extraordinary moment in its long and rich history. Air Force strategy documents highlight agility, innovation, and creativity as our best hope for continuing to deliver relevant and effective airpower for the United States. Senior leaders are emphasizing the value of education and are willing to invest in Airmen even in these lean economic times. These factors have converged to make it "our time" to create a better Air University for our Air Force and simultaneously a better Air Force for our nation.

Although the specific wording of our mission statement has changed over the years, the basic services we deliver to our Air Force have remained remarkably consistent. We develop leaders, enrich minds, advance airpower, build relationships, and inspire service. We achieve success in this broad array of mission elements through a wide variety of programs, products, and processes, all aimed at ensuring that the Airmen and other students we educate, along with the leaders we influence through our teaching, research, and writing, share our commitment to excellence in the defense of our nation. These endeavors will not change. In fact, we will recommit to these efforts in ways that increase both our effectiveness and influence as a university.

What will change is how we go about the business of training and educating Airmen for the challenges of this dynamic era. We must become more agile in leveraging technology and alternative learning opportunities. We must reach more Airmen and, as we do so, ensure that the developmental experiences we provide are rich, relevant, and tailored to help bring our Airmen and our Air Force to maximum effectiveness. We must also lean forward to analyze and address the challenges facing our Airmen and our leaders, providing well-researched, thoughtful recommendations that directly support the defense of our nation and its freedoms that are at the heart of our calling to serve. We must be focused on outcomes, ensuring that we are constantly analyzing, assessing, and improving all that we do to be more relevant to Air Force and stakeholder needs even as we continue to become more effective and efficient. In short, we will rethink conflict, reimagine airpower, and build agile leaders.

This 2015 *Air University Strategic Plan* outlines the ways in which we will refocus our efforts to ensure that we are meeting our Air Force's intellectual needs. A "living document," it will guide our planning and operations while supporting our Air Force's 30-year strategy as defined in *America's Air Force: A Call to the Future*, the *USAF Strategic Master Plan* with supporting annexes, and *Future Operating Concept*, as well as the Air Education and Training Command's 10-year vision. I urge every member of the Air University team, as well as our stakeholders across the globe, to review this plan and make a personal commitment to its success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Kwest".

STEVEN L. KWAST
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander and President





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INTRODUCTION

In December 2014, Air University began a journey of transformation. Opportunity drove Air University's revectoring, not failure. The secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force chief of staff challenged the university to find new ways to improve the Air Force's human capital, to think deeply and creatively about the challenges confronting the service, and to bolster connections with the communities the Air Force serves. As they outlined in the *USAF Strategic Master Plan* and the *Air Force Future Operating Concept*, the future force cannot rely solely on the tools and techniques of the past. New tools and techniques—based on innovative ideas and technologies—will be required to achieve success. Much as its Air Corps Tactical School forebears blazed the path for airpower's achievements in World War II, today's Air University must embrace its crucial role in shaping the people, concepts, and technologies essential for the Air Force to remain the premier air, space, and cyberspace force of the future. This strategic plan articulates the steps that the university will take to fulfill its role in producing the future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Air Force's 30-year strategy, *America's Air Force: A Call to the Future*, identifies innovative Airmen—leaders at every level—as the key to adapting and responding faster than potential adversaries. The need for innovative Airmen drives Air University to develop leaders, enrich minds, advance airpower, build relationship, deliver solutions and inspire service. The university's vision is to be the intellectual and leadership-development center of the Air Force.

The 2015 *Air University Strategic Plan* outlines how the university will achieve its vision and accomplish its mission. This plan is a living document that will evolve to embrace new directions and innovations. It supports the Air Force's *Call to the Future*, *Strategic Master Plan*, and *Future Operating Concept*, as well as the *2014 AETC Strategic Plan*.

Five strategic lines of operation delineate the university's path to success:

1. Deliver the best training, education, and leadership development opportunities possible to all Airmen and other Air University students.
2. Conduct research and analysis to make recommendations that address Air Force, national security, and leadership challenges of today and tomorrow.
3. Improve integration and outreach.
4. Execute robust lessons-learned and doctrine development, delivery, and education programs that underpin and guide Air Force and airpower strategies, concepts, and operations.
5. Build Air University's capability to deliver development opportunities, research/problem solving, outreach, and doctrine.

Together, these lines of operation shape Air University's transformation. Focusing on them will enable the university to educate more people, more broadly and deeply so that they can think critically, act morally, and innovate rapidly. Air University can leverage capability to help senior leaders address vexing challenges and, in so doing, connect more fully with communities, agency partners, industry, academia, legislators, and the American people.



STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Air University is a regionally accredited, joint-accredited, and internationally recognized academic institution. The university annually produces more than 76,000 resident and 154,000 nonresident graduates in programs that include not only short certificate courses but also degrees ranging from the AA to the MA, MS, and PhD.

The 2015 *USAF Strategic Master Plan* identifies four trends that are shaping the Air Force's operating environment: rapidly emerging technological breakthroughs, geopolitical instability, a widening range of operating environments, and increasing importance and vulnerability of the global commons. As the strategic environment evolves, Air University must evolve to prepare leaders to confront emerging challenges. The university can leverage some environmental changes to its advantage. For example, new technological capabilities can enable it to reach stakeholders and teach students in ways that previously were impossible. Air University can become the hub of airpower-focused intellectual networks, connecting innovators, operators, experimenters, researchers, scientists, war gamers, and other experts to analyze emerging trends, technologies, and threats.

In his vision document, *The World's Greatest Air Force: Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation*, Gen Mark Welsh noted the role that education plays in preparing the service for the future:

Education and training are the foundation of our airpower advantage. To maintain this advantage in the future, we must safeguard and reinforce that foundation. All Airmen, whether teacher or student, have a role in ensuring that we remain the most technically proficient, best-educated, and best-trained air force in the world.

—Gen Mark A. Welsh, III, CSAF

Air University is committed to strengthening the foundation of the Air Force's airpower advantage. By enriching minds, advancing airpower thought and practice, building relationships, and delivering solutions, Air University helps Airmen achieve their individual potential, ensuring that graduates can rise to meet any future challenges.

Air University is on a transformational journey. The university is not turning its back on the excellence that has been at the heart of its accomplishments to date. Instead, it is building upon that fundamental excellence to expand training and education, to inform strategic decision makers, to create networks, and to promulgate lessons learned and doctrine to achieve effects that are even more powerful. Every Air University stakeholder has ownership of, and responsibilities for, the success of this journey—from the junior ROTC cadets in schools across the world to the PhD candidates at AFIT and SAASS; from Airmen matriculating in programs at the Maxwell, Gunter, and AFIT campuses to those studying in civilian institution programs; from students at fellows programs to distance- and blended-learning programs and geographically separated units, such as the National Security Space Institute; from Air Force doctrine development to lessons-learned programs; and from alumni to ROTC and OTS cadres teaching tomorrow's leaders, as well as all of the faculty and staff members who make this university successful. Everyone has a stake in this journey. Success requires that stakeholders embrace the vision, mission, lines of operation, goals, and objectives described herein and contribute their energy and expertise to those ends.



VISION AND MISSION

Vision

Be the intellectual and leadership-development center of the Air Force.

To meet the changing needs of the Air Force in this dynamic era, Air University must transform. It must become something more than a “teaching university” or a “research university.” The university must embed itself fully in the operations of the Air Force, drawing lessons learned from current operations to analyze, test, and provide new solutions for the future application of air, space, and cyberspace power.

Air University must become a “hybrid” educational institution, combining teaching, research, and on-demand assistance with problem solving and experimentation. The university must create the spaces—both physical and virtual—in which forward-thinking experts and advocates learn about, and share ideas on, the theory and practice of leadership and the application of airpower. It must provide an environment in which students not only attain mastery of instructional objectives but also gain skills in how to learn, instilling in them an insatiable thirst for learning for the rest of their lives.

This wide array of responsibilities presents an immense challenge. Being the intellectual center of the Air Force means that leaders turn to Air University first for assistance with the most daunting security, conceptual, and doctrinal challenges they face. Similarly, being the leadership-development center of the Air Force implies that Air University is the first choice for training and educating Air Force leaders and for proposing solutions to leadership dilemmas. Once leaders recognize Air University as the thought leader on intellectual and leadership development, the prestige of the university and of those who serve it will undoubtedly rise. With that achievement, however, comes even greater responsibility to provide the best solutions, the best people, and the best products for the Air Force.

Mission

Develop leaders, enrich minds, advance airpower, build relationships, and inspire service.

Focusing on airpower and the development of the future leaders entrusted into its care, Air University expands the understanding of airpower while building character and professionalism across the Air Force. The university’s products include the Airmen and other students it teaches; validated lessons learned; and the innovative solutions, war games, problem solving, and doctrine that it designs, develops, tests, and delivers.

To accomplish its mission effectively, Air University is constantly expanding a series of intellectual networks. These groups of experts tackle the toughest scientific, force-structure, and national security challenges. The inclusion of their work in AU programs helps it instill the creative, critical, and strategic thinking required to promote innovation in ways that allow Airmen to anticipate the changes and threats that these challenges may generate and prepare for them effectively.

The banner features a dark blue background with abstract, glowing light patterns and a stylized Air Force symbol on the right side.

AU STRATEGIC LINES OF OPERATION

The Air Force chief of staff initiated Air University's transformation by asking these questions:

How might Air University reinvent education to educate more Airmen, more deeply and more broadly?

How might Air University leverage its tremendous intellectual potential to help senior leaders overcome the challenges the Air Force is facing today and in the future?

How might Air University connect more fully with the communities the Air Force serves?

Air University responds to these three questions by establishing the following lines of operation:

1. Deliver the best training, education, and leadership-development opportunities possible to all Airmen and other Air University students
2. Conduct research and analysis to make recommendations that address Air Force, national security, and leadership challenges of today and tomorrow
3. Improve integration and outreach

Based on previous senior-leader guidance, Air University identifies a fourth line of operation:

4. Execute robust lessons-learned and doctrine development, delivery, and education programs that underpin and guide Air Force and airpower strategies, concepts, and operations.

The fifth line of operation encompasses the challenges Air University must address to deliver on the promise of the previous four:

5. Build Air University's capability to deliver development opportunities, research/problem solving, outreach, and doctrine.

The following sections of the strategic plan describe the five lines of operation and associated goals in more detail. The strategy execution section describes AU's strategy for achieving the objectives, goals, mission, and vision outlined in this strategic plan.

Deliver the best training, education, and leadership development opportunities possible to all Airmen and other AU students.

Unlock capacity for comprehensive education. The Air Force will develop Airmen who are critical and creative thinkers by implementing an agile, individually tailored approach to life-long education, and eliminating superfluous demands from already encumbered schedules.

—USAF Strategic Master Plan

Air University must continue to improve the breadth and depth of the training and educational experiences it delivers to as wide an audience as possible while reducing costs, maximizing efficiency, and meeting Air Force, joint, and accreditation requirements. As depicted in figure AU1-1, educational excellence stems from the interaction of the faculty, students, learning environment, and curriculum. The curriculum becomes a “learning contract” between the faculty and students, explaining what each will contribute to and draw from the learning relationship, all within the confines of the learning environment.

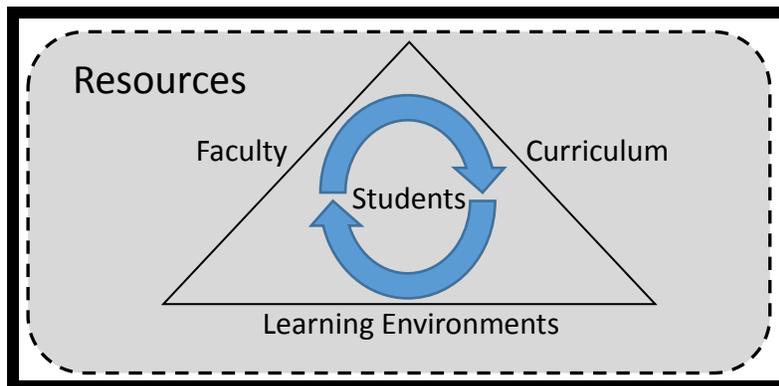


Figure AU1-1. Factors driving education

AU will achieve its goals in this area by maintaining a focus on outcomes and concentrating on each of the variables that comprise an educational experience. By leveraging organizational structures, appropriate methods, technologies, and innovative delivery techniques, AU can deliver challenging, relevant curricula to all Airmen and other AU students around the world. It can do so in a more decentralized, effective manner by making available more information, courses, and materials off-site and on-site as well as on demand and on command.

Goal 1.1 Recruit and retain high-quality faculty.

While we will support learning with appropriate technology such as computer-based training, we will not lose the mentorship inherent in the instructor-student relationship.

—USAF Strategic Master Plan

Of the variables comprising the educational experiences, the faculty is foremost in guaranteeing the quality of that experience. Air University must have the right numbers of faculty members with the right educational backgrounds and operational experiences who want to teach—and become good at it—to lead in the intellectual networking efforts, conduct the research, and launch the outreach the Air Force needs. The university must recruit, have assigned, and hire the best possible military and civilian faculty members. It must develop, and the Air Force must support, a valued career track to grow its own teachers and researchers at AU. Doing so requires investments in faculty members while they are serving, not only to make them better teachers and researchers but also to make them more valuable to the Air Force as they move on in their careers.

Goal 1.2 Improve the selection, recruitment, and assignment of students.

To enhance the quality of its graduates, AU must consider the students entering those programs. When students have a choice of programs to attend, preference for AU's programs becomes a powerful indicator of how much Airmen value the university. The Air Force should send its best to Air University because it offers the best education. Giving adult learners curricular choices increases their investment in the educational process and makes those programs more desirable. Finally, if the university and its products are to be valued, then the best students and faculty members it produces must be placed in follow-on assignments that leverage their unique skills and knowledge.

Goal 1.3 Continuously improve curricula and teaching methodologies in all AU schools and programs.

When technology and cyber threats are changing at a geometric rate, we cannot wait 18–24 months to update curriculum. Iterative curriculum updates and incorporation of a feedback loop from the field (supervisors, commanders and MAJCOM Functional Managers) will enable us to reduce the gap between current-day content and [what is] needed in the field.

—Human Capital Annex,
USAF Strategic Master Plan

AU must ensure that each of its educational programs contribute directly to graduates' improved job performance after graduation. Every Airman should be better for having completed a course or program. This objective means establishing, enforcing, and measuring achievement of rigorous standards for academics and professionalism. It may

also entail the award of distinctive identifiers to track utilization of those who have been uniquely educated. The university must also provide educational opportunities that are relevant to students' needs. In support of AU's outcomes focus, this goal requires that the university make assessment foundational in every program. Faculty and staff must create a culture of assessment to ensure that AU can achieve desired outcomes in every endeavor and adjust as prudent to improve whenever and wherever necessary. AU needs an agile approach to curriculum development, quickly incorporating current operational data, relationships, and effects into case studies and other academic material so students have the benefit of its assessment of the latest issues. To keep pace with the evolving nature of current global operations, the faculty must routinely receive documented lessons learned.

AU also needs an agile approach to education, delivering instruction to Airmen at the time and place that they need it. Where applicable, programs should be flexible enough to allow students to opt in to degree programs or to receive comparable education without earning a degree. Improvements in all of these related areas rely on mechanisms that leverage what the university learns through research into its curricula. Additionally, the university will expand techniques and opportunities for distance and blended learning, online instruction, flipped classrooms, and other techniques to make learning a lifelong process available in both "push" and "pull" formats anytime, anywhere. Guided by the desired outcomes, AU instructional modules and courses should be available Air Force-wide, leveraging a Khan Academy-style of offerings for all USAF members: enlisted and officer, civilian, active-duty, Guard and Reserve, and cadets.

Goal 1.4 Aid Airmen and students in capturing and transporting their educational accomplishments.

"Credentialing" has become a major factor in the US job market and is a growing trend in adult advanced education. In essence, schools or programs receive their credentials when a government (federal, state, or local) or industry review recognizes that their educational program meets accreditation standards. Typically, credentialing occurs in the form of a licensure or certification. From an Air Force standpoint, credentialing serves two purposes. First, it continues to professionalize the force by providing up-to-date government- and industry-recognized evidence of each Airman's developmental efforts. Second, it provides an additional means through which Airmen can prepare for post-Air Force employment by providing future employers evidence of their knowledge, talents, and skills.

Goal 1.5 Facilitate incorporation of competency-based educational programs where appropriate for the accomplishment of the missions of individual colleges, schools, and centers within the university.

Competency-based learning is a student-centered approach that leverages a student's experience and previous learning, coupled with credentialed faculty expertise, to ensure achievement of specific learning outcomes. Such programs generally portray learning outcomes as "competencies." Students demonstrate mastery of their competencies either in a prescribed order or as allowed by program administrators.

One university noted an unfavorable trend in its nursing program. Retention of prior-military medics in its program was very low. University leaders wondered why this was so. Upon interviewing students who quit, they learned these medics were upset over the requirement to take classes in making beds, dressing wounds, administering medications . . . all skills they mastered while serving in combat zones overseas. The school had no mechanism for awarding credit for this knowledge, however, so the classes were “required.” The former medics “voted with their feet,” seeking other developmental opportunities that honored their expertise.

Airmen want credit for the things they know and abilities they can demonstrate. At the same time, resource limitations dictate that the Air Force devise the most effective and simultaneously most efficient education systems possible to meet developmental requirements. Having Airmen take classes they do not need is wasteful. Competency-based learning will provide more agility for Airmen and will allow AU to focus specifically on a particular Airman’s educational needs.

Conduct research and analysis to make recommendations that address Air Force, national security, and leadership challenges of today and tomorrow.

Of the capabilities we need, none is more important than our Airmen. If we are to devise innovative solutions to new challenges, we are going to need Airmen that can leverage the knowledge of the past, ever-evolving technology, and the expansive information available now to plan and deliver force as needed to achieve national objectives. That requires intellectual agility—an agility that exceeds anything that we are asking of our weapon systems, intelligence systems, support systems or infrastructure. Our people are the key to our success.

—*Human Capital Annex*

Education remains at the forefront of the university’s mission. However, the need to address the future security challenges facing the Air Force and nation also demands the university’s intellectual prowess.

To answer this need for solutions, the university will provide research, analysis, and recommendations that address issues of the greatest importance to the Air Force. These areas include deterrence, cyber, and electronic warfare (EW); choices in strategy, organization, and technology; and the five core Air Force missions.* Air University will meet this need through dedicated and ad hoc research and consultation efforts; directed lessons-learned collections; the creation of curricular opportunities that allow more student research on these problem sets; research support for Airmen across the Air Force who are studying Air Force issues; and the dissemination of research products within the service and the defense community and, as appropriate, to the public and/or international partners. This pursuit will be orchestrated through an integrated effort that matches questions to those with the capability to craft answers as well as to create synergies among seemingly disparate efforts across the university and beyond.

This expanded research effort will require a more robust capacity to conduct classified research that exceeds AU’s current capability. To achieve success in this line of operation, AU will require substantial improvement in the facilities, connectivity, and personnel to expand classified research. Like the information technology infrastructure required, this capacity is fundamental to the accomplishment of the AU vision and mission.

* The Air Force’s five core missions are (1) air and space superiority; (2) intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); (3) rapid global mobility; (4) global strike; and (5) command and control. Through these five core missions, the Air Force provides *Global Vigilance*, *Global Reach*, and *Global Power* for America.

AU must also ensure that a mechanism is in place to incorporate research results, operational lessons, and solutions into the curriculum. Lastly, much as was described in the education section, all of the variables involved in research and problem solving reside within a context of limited resources. Figure AU2-1 depicts the variables driving effective research and problem solving.

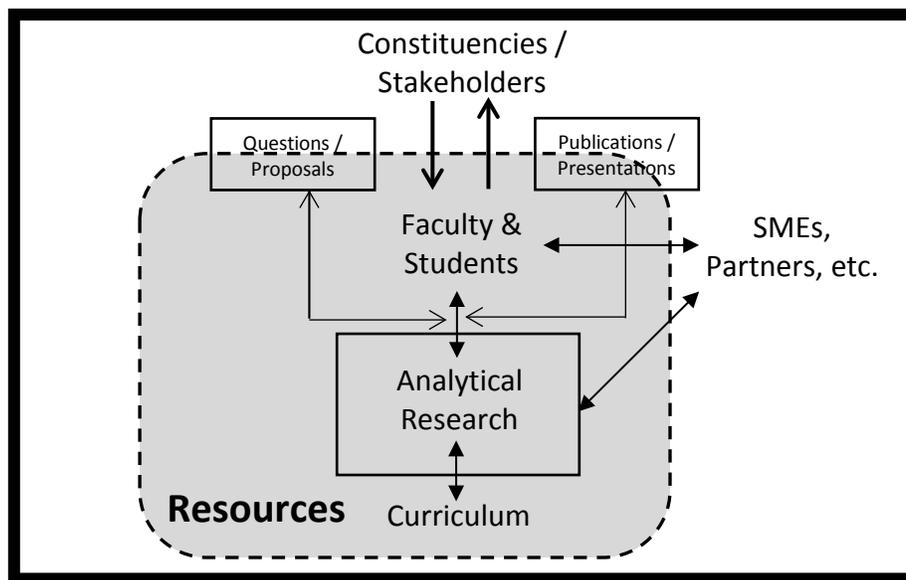


Figure AU2-1. The factors of effective analytical research

The figure depicts the relationships of faculty and students at AU with subject-matter experts and partners who collaborate in research and problem-solving efforts. The results of AU’s analytical research efforts serve to enhance and facilitate outreach efforts. Outreach is the focus of the university’s third strategic line of operation, discussed later.

Goal 2.1 Improve the university’s ability to conduct research and problem-solving efforts and to respond to requests for research, analysis, consultation, and support.

Air University possesses a tremendous capacity to analyze challenges, gather current lessons, and propose solutions. Channeling the intellectual power of AU’s faculty and staff, as well as the innovative capabilities and operational expertise of AU students, will dramatically increase the university’s abilities to address the challenges it uncovers as well as those submitted to the university for its consideration.

The major focus of these research initiatives, internally or externally derived, should be on those strategies, concepts of operations, campaign planning, and tactical requirements that will enhance the Air Force’s core missions and addresses issues posed by CSAF and other USAF leaders. Such emphasis should not diminish concerns regarding the evolving strategic landscape in which the Air Force and the nation must operate. To that end, enhanced knowledge of relevant historic watershed events and of changing geopolitical realities at both the national and international levels is necessary. Expertise in knowledge of various areas, cultures, languages, and leadership is also required.

Goal 2.2 Be a major source for research needs critical to USAF strategic and operational challenges.

Air University is a treasure trove of historical documentation, current studies, scientific and policy research, and—perhaps above all—subject-matter expertise relevant to virtually every challenge the Air Force and the nation face in today’s dynamic security environment. To attain this goal, Air University will make its capabilities and resources widely known, inviting and assisting Air Force–sponsored researchers to take advantage of all the university has to offer.

Developing ways to instill a more frequent, relevant, and focused interchange on air, space, and cyber power between the university and various service and joint commands is required. Such interchange should include the sharing of expertise flowing both from and to Air University, whether in the form of information, personnel, or increased connectivity.

Goal 2.3 Expand capabilities and use of war games, simulations, exercises, and experimentation to explore and develop concepts and research projects.

Experimentation is a tool to transform innovative ideas, concepts, and technologies into demonstrated warfighting capabilities. It provides a means for multi-disciplinary teams of operators, researchers, and acquirers to conceive and co-evolve new system concepts with the doctrine to implement them effectively.

—USAF Strategic Master Plan

The university must invest in an expanded capability to “test drive” ideas in order to produce the very best recommendations to Air Force and DOD leaders. War games, simulations, and experiments do not always yield perfect solutions, but they do provide valuable insights into the benefits and risks associated with employment strategies and new technologies and techniques. The effectiveness of these tools improves with increased participation. “Red-teaming” to create intellectual foils to ideas allows researchers or analysts insights into how they might improve their recommendations. Repeat testing in various conditions provides evidence of reliability in solutions. Combined, these tools provide levels of confidence in the university’s suggestions, recommendations, and solution sets; they should be leveraged to the maximum extent practicable. A vigorous lessons-learned process would also deliver results to decision makers Air Force–wide.

Improve integration and outreach.

We will demonstrate the Air Force purpose and culture to a broader U.S. audience. Flight, innovation and the spirit of adventure and discovery have always captured the public's imagination. We are an aerospace-minded nation. We need to capitalize on opportunities to reclaim public excitement and interest by leading or partnering in high-profile, competitive endeavors. . . . We will strengthen our partnerships . . . [and] . . . increase public exposure to Airmen and Air Force capabilities. Highlighting our heritage, culture, and mission in popular media and events will increase public awareness of the Air Force and inspire a new generation of Americans.

—USAF Strategic Master Plan

Another AU priority is to enhance integration within the university, foster outreach across the Air Force and beyond, and create public engagement opportunities at the local, national, and international levels. Improving internal collaboration and information sharing strengthens AU's relations with local communities and its creation of partnerships across academia, government, industry, and the international community. The university needs to create networks of creative, critical, and strategic thinkers aligned to analyze and propose solutions to the security challenges facing the United States and its allies. Further, the university needs to leverage this outreach capability to share, to the extent possible, the results of its research efforts. Doing so will enhance its network of constituents and create new partnerships for collaboration. AU should influence the context by providing information to senior Air Force, joint, and elected leaders. Air University should provide knowledge about the importance of air, space, and cyber power to strengthen relations between the Air Force and the populace it serves.

Goal 3.1 Improve internal AU integration to facilitate synergy and maximize use of expertise and resources.

Air University needs to improve the sharing and integration of information, personnel, and projects within its scope of programs, schools, research endeavors, and continuing education. The university must develop a shared consciousness by increasing information sharing, improving collaboration, and maximizing the use of shared resources. This shared consciousness is critical in enabling AU's faculty, staff, and students to address Air Force, national security, and leadership challenges and in facilitating more productive public engagement and institutional outreach capabilities.

Goal 3.2 Improve AU outreach to promote airpower and engage externally to effectively address Air Force issues.

Outreach is a complex concept that includes both the messages and the audiences to be addressed. Air University needs to assess the informational needs of its constituencies and match products and programs to those needs. As the university expands its reach, it must simultaneously increase its networks to ensure that the right people remain connected to the issues driving discussions. The tasks in this area are devoted to creating and maintaining partnerships and expanding influence and trust that will convey the messages and products produced at Air University. Public engagement ensures that the messages and products are visible to a wide audience, selectively chosen and nurtured.

Execute robust lessons-learned and doctrine development, delivery, and education programs that underpin and guide Air Force and airpower strategies, concepts, and operations.

Any Air Force which does not keep its doctrines ahead of its equipment, and its vision far into the future, can only delude the nation into a false sense of security

—Gen Henry H. “Hap” Arnold

The Air Force lessons-learned function, assigned to Air University, is responsible for analyzing operations with an eye towards identifying strengths, weaknesses, and needs and providing that information to appropriate entities. In this capacity, the function serves as a source of current and evolving content that informs joint and Air Force senior leaders’ strategic decisions on doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and policy matters.

Through doctrine, Airmen articulate the contributions of airpower in the context of joint and coalition operations. Doctrine also provides an informed baseline for innovation. Because doctrine directly supports ongoing operations and the planning for future operations, its efficient and effective maintenance and promulgation are operational imperatives. The mechanism for these imperatives is Doctrine Next, an online process for linking development and dissemination into a single, seamless effort.

Doctrine requires senior leader emphasis to ensure that the Air Force continues its preeminence in the advocacy and application of airpower. Within AU, the LeMay Center is responsible for developing and promulgating Air Force, joint, and multinational doctrine. AU then incorporates doctrine into education, which directly supports the operational war fighter’s need for a strong mission-oriented foundation. The *USAF Strategic Master Plan* captures the synergies between education and doctrine:

[We must] produce decision makers who are adept in finding creative ways to access the force structure and optimizing it to meet mission demands . . . [and] focus on arming a generation of leaders with doctrine, history, and experience to provide cross-component expertise.

—*USAF Strategic Master Plan*

Goal 4.1 Improve Air Force doctrine revision, production, and dissemination.

The level and pace of change within the operational environment require equally quick and agile doctrine-revision and production processes to ensure that the Air Force responds effectively to national security threats and provides options to joint force commanders. Such a capacity requires not only a process that periodically pulses the operational community for changes but

also a deliberate investigative mechanism that captures lessons learned. Assimilating vetted change requires a rapid, continuous process that generates, tests, and updates doctrine.

Goal 4.2 Enhance collaboration within the doctrine design, development, and feedback processes.

For doctrine to reflect current operational reality, AU must field collaborative methods, tools, and opportunities so that stakeholders can interact with one another and doctrine development experts. A parallel process must examine key issues in depth and feed vetted lessons learned into the doctrine development process. These actions require online collaboration systems and expanded integration of doctrine subject-matter experts at key locations during operations, lessons-learned collections, exercises, experiments, and war games.

Goal 4.3 Enhance delivery of doctrine in support of operations.

Just as educational opportunities need to be available to Airmen “on demand and on command,” so do Airmen requiring specific guidance need ready access to doctrine—whether they are in-garrison or deployed to a remote location. The Air Force must also be proactive in alerting Airmen about what is available, what has changed, and what it is considering. Finally, within Air University, effective operational support requires closer links between doctrine development and military education—including both Air Force and joint education centers—to ensure that Air Force and airpower topics reflect Air Force views.

Goal 4.4 Recruit and retain high-quality doctrine action officers.

Success in this mission demands sufficient numbers of doctrine researchers and writers with the right educational backgrounds and operational experiences. Because doctrine development does not have a designated career field, the Air Force draws from military personnel across the Air Force. Military and civilian personnel alike recruited for this mission need a breadth and depth of recent experience in the applicable operational fields. AU must recruit, have assigned, and hire the best-qualified Airmen to perform doctrine-related tasks.

Goal 4.5 Improve the collection and dissemination of lessons learned about USAF activities.

Air University must draw upon lessons learned from current operations to improve curriculum, inform research and analysis, and support doctrine development. The Air Force Lessons Learned program informs joint and Air Force senior leaders’ strategic decisions on doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and policy matters.

Build Air University's capability to deliver development opportunities, research/problem solving, outreach, and doctrine.

Finally, [AETC] will proactively develop virtual and physical infrastructure to support emergent RT&E [recruiting, training, and educational] processes.

—2014 AETC Strategic Plan

The first four lines of operation define the goals and objectives necessary to achieve Air University's mission and vision. The fifth line of operation encompasses the goals, objectives, and tasks required to deliver on the promise of the previous four. AU pursues these in the context of how their outcomes support the other lines of operation. Without the key enablers captured in line of operation five, the resources expended to progress on lines of operation one through four will certainly have less effect and could be for naught.

Goal 5.1 Foster professional and effective learning and working environments.

The environment significantly influences AU's students, faculty, and staff. Creating the right environment establishes the conditions for success. Additionally, leaders at all levels must take care of their Airmen by giving them a safe, professional work environment. Investments in AU's virtual and physical environments yield a high return in performance and outcomes.

Goal 5.2 Improve the institutional tools, processes, facilities, and support to meet AU goals and objectives.

Technology is a critical force multiplier for the entire university. In particular, AU requires that students, faculty, and staff have a first-class technology backbone available anytime from anywhere. Doing so not only will allow for the management and documentation of the training and educational process but also will underpin all current and future training, education, and research. AU must create a technology foundation that permits it to be innovative while remaining affordable, sustainable, and maintainable. Relevance demands that AU participate more fully in classified discussions and connect with stakeholders via secure channels, which drives additional investments in the necessary infrastructure. The inability to acquire goods and services in the time frame necessary impedes mission success. AU must work constantly to improve these timelines. The university achieves progress in all of these areas by recruiting and retaining high-quality staff members with the requisite skills and agility to identify and accept risk and meet challenges.

STRATEGY EXECUTION

A shared understanding of Air University's vision, mission, and goals is necessary but not sufficient to guide transformation. Strategy must focus on the tough challenges AU faces as well as the analyses, concepts, policies, and actions needed to address those challenges successfully. Strategy ultimately arises from a hypothesis about how actions create effects. It draws upon AU's strengths to overcome obstacles. AU's primary source of advantage is its people. The university's faculty and staff are talented, creative, and motivated to serve. Leaders must develop, support, and equip them, then trust and empower them to deliver results every day.

AU must become an agile, learning organization capable of quickly adjusting to the demands of a rapidly changing environment. Building on the talent of individuals coming together in teams, agility requires creating a common understanding of both commander's intent and actions across the university. So equipped, leaders can push sufficient resources and authority to the lowest levels of their organizations so teams can seize opportunities and react to challenges. This is a concept that is very familiar to Airmen: decentralized execution. People are not interchangeable cogs in a giant machine; treating them as such hinders organizational performance. Drawing on the work of Gen Bill Creech, AU's emphasis must be on teams versus functions, outputs versus inputs, products versus jobs, and leaders versus managers.

Another strategic insight arising from a diagnosis of today's Air University is the need to build a shared consciousness among people and teams by radically improving information flow across the university. All too often, an AU team starts out to solve a problem only to discover that others have addressed the problem before, or there is another team somewhere in AU already progressing toward a solution. AU must build a common operating picture (COP) that effectively and efficiently captures what has been done, what is currently in work, and what challenges are on the horizon. The COP is critical to employing resources more efficiently and revealing opportunities for collaboration.

Successful implementation of the strategic plan requires a relentless focus on outcomes. Such a focus must emphasize measures of effectiveness over measures of activity. An effects or outcomes-based focus is already familiar to Airmen. Success for Airmen is not measured in numbers of sorties flown, bombs dropped, satellites launched, or cargo tons delivered. Success is measured by the effects those sorties, bombs, launches, and tons of cargo achieve. Similarly, AU must bring new attention to the effects it achieves, its outcomes, in every endeavor including those proposed in this plan.

Finally, AU's identity as a military organization with an academic mission must always guide its organizational choices, processes, and actions. AU's programs address practitioners of the profession of arms. While theory is a critical component of education, AU's ultimate emphasis must always be on putting theory into practice. AU must combine the academic understanding of important issues with an appreciation for the accomplishment of military missions.

In summary, six principles will guide transformation actions across AU:

- Embrace AU's identity as a military organization with an academic mission
- Invest in people constantly

- Align authority, responsibility, resources and accountability to support decentralized execution
- Share information to build an AU-wide shared consciousness of actions and opportunities
- Focus relentlessly on outcomes
- Ensure AU programs are responsive and relevant to AF needs

Strategy demands that leaders identify the actions most critical to success. It should also describe how challenges will be addressed and in what order. Proper execution of strategy requires that leaders establish clear priorities. Priorities will drive resource investments of time, effort, money, and personnel. Consequently, it is imperative that limited resources be invested first in those tasks determined to be most critical to success. The strategic plan identifies the lines of operation, goals, and objectives that will lead to AU's success. It is a living document, subject to revision and adjustment as the strategic environment changes. Still, strategy is bigger than a plan. Strategy is an exercise in design that requires coordination and mutual adjustment of various elements within an organization. It identifies the tradeoffs available when leaders must make decisions among competing alternatives. Ultimately, strategy is about making choices, choosing to invest resources in some actions while halting investments in others, all the while balancing risk in order to achieve a position of advantage.

The five lines of operation and tables of goals and objectives described in this plan support AU's strategy but they are not AU's strategy. The choices leaders make to address the established goals, informed by strategic insights, comprise AU's strategy. To execute this strategy, AU will exercise centralized control over the prioritization, timing, and resources devoted to the tasks necessary to achieve the objectives and goals while simultaneously relying on decentralized execution to accomplish the tasks. AU's leaders will employ the principles of mission command, articulating the overall strategy and end-state. Then, through trust and empowerment, leaders will enable subordinates to innovate, employ resources efficiently, and deliver desired outcomes and effects.

Drawing on the principles of operational design, the AU vice commander (AU/CV) will assign team leads for each of the five lines of operation. Commanders and directors will be aligned with each of the teams as champions to provide direction as required. They will also designate members of their organizations to participate on the teams. Team leads may form subordinate teams as necessary while maintaining overall responsibility for their assigned line of operation. The AU Director of Operations will perform the role of planning team lead to ensure coordination of efforts across teams. The teams will design tasks, establish metrics, propose phasing, and report progress on achieving the objectives and goals outlined in the strategic plan.

The strategic plan establishes the university's vision, mission, lines of operation, goals, and objectives. The objectives guide actions across the university. They are specific, action-oriented, realistic, time-driven and are measured with relevant, results-based metrics. Teams will refine the goals and objectives as necessary in execution. As this plan is a living document, the tables in appendix A capture only the initial starting point. The teams will maintain the most current list of goals and objectives.

APPENDIX A: TABLES OF INITIAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

AU LINE OF OPERATION 1: DELIVER THE BEST DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES Deliver the best training, education, and leadership development opportunities possible to all Airmen and other AU students.	
GOALS	OBJECTIVES
1.1 Recruit and retain high-quality faculty.	1.1.1 Streamline and improve civilian faculty recruiting and hiring processes.
	1.1.2 Ensure that AU faculty meet established quality requirements
	1.1.3 Ensure that AU has sufficient numbers of qualified faculty members to meet qualitative and joint standards.
	1.1.4 Maximize the opportunity to participate in professional conferences, both DOD and non-DOD hosted.
	1.1.5 Expand faculty-development opportunities across the university.
	1.1.6 Increase the diversity of AU faculty, staff, and students.
1.2 Improve the selection, recruitment and assignment of students.	1.2.1 Make AU the school of first choice for Airmen.
	1.2.2 Give students more choices in their educational programs to meet personal and professional developmental needs and goals.
	1.2.3 Assist in matching specific student strengths and learning results to assignments to meet personal and Air Force needs following graduation.
1.3 Continuously improve curricula and teaching methodologies in all AU schools and programs.	1.3.1 Increase the operational relevance of AU's educational offerings.
	1.3.2 Increase the deployment of innovative methodologies.
	1.3.3. Improve students' ability to learn.
	1.3.4 Expand opportunities to support civilian development (civilian PCE, PME, or CPME).
	1.3.5 Use an outcomes-focused approach to guide program design, development, delivery, and constant improvement.
	1.3.6 Maintain current opportunities and expand future opportunities for Airmen to secure an associate's and/or a bachelor's degree specific to Air Force needs.
	1.3.7 Integrate war gaming and experimentation in education programs.

1.4 Aid Airmen and students in capturing and transporting their educational accomplishments.	1.4.1 Identify and pursue accreditation of candidate classes, courses, and programs.
	1.4.2 Identify and pursue certification of candidate classes, courses, and programs with federal, state, academic, or industrial partners.
1.5 Facilitate incorporation of competency-based educational programs where appropriate for the accomplishment of the missions of individual colleges, schools, and centers within the university.	1.5.1 Leverage competency-based learning to meet USAF education requirements.
	1.5.2 Leverage competency-based learning to meet external requirements.

AU LINE OF OPERATION 2: MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES Conduct research and analysis to make recommendations that address Air Force, national security, and leadership challenges of today and tomorrow.	
GOALS	OBJECTIVES
2.1 Improve the university’s ability to conduct research and problem-solving efforts and to respond to requests for research, analysis, consultation, and support.	2.1.1 Expand research, problem solving, and consultation devoted to addressing current and future Air Force challenges.
	2.1.2 Increase incentives for faculty, staff, and students to conduct research and problem solving.
2.2 Be a major source for research needs critical to USAF strategic and operational challenges.	2.2.1 Assist USAF MAJCOM and combatant commanders by connecting their researchers to AU faculty and student expertise.
	2.2.2 Expand research networks to identify and partner with Air Force–sponsored research efforts
	2.2.3 Attract high-quality researchers.
2.3 Expand capabilities and use of war games, simulations, exercises, and experimentation to explore and develop concepts and research projects.	2.3.1 Expand opportunities to leverage war gaming, simulations, exercises, and experimentation.
	2.3.2 Expand AU’s war-gaming, simulation, exercise, and experimentation capabilities
	2.3.3 Expand AU’s classified war-gaming, simulation, exercise, and experimentation capabilities.

AU LINE OF OPERATION 3: IMPROVE INTEGRATION AND OUTREACH	
GOALS	OBJECTIVES
3.1 Improve internal AU integration to facilitate synergy and maximize use of expertise and resources.	3.1.1 Increase information sharing among individuals and organizations at AU to create effective vertical and horizontal lines of communication.
	3.1.2 Increase collaboration and partnerships between individuals and organizations at AU to create synergy and focus efforts to achieve the AU mission.
	3.1.3 Maximize resource sharing across AU to conduct the mission more effectively and efficiently.
	3.1.4 Ensure AU has the appropriate processes, resources, and structures to promote and support AU integration.
3.2 Improve AU outreach to promote airpower and engage externally to effectively address Air Force issues.	3.2.1 Formalize and expand processes for creating and maintaining partnerships to provide structured and persistent engagement opportunities.
	3.2.2 Expand and target the sharing of AU intellectual thought and products to enhance the effectiveness of airpower and address Air Force challenges.
	3.2.3 Build and expand networks and links to engage new and existing audiences to promote airpower and address Air Force challenges.
	3.2.4 Increase engagement and build trust within the Air Force and across the DoD, USG, and with international partners.
	3.2.5 Increase engagement, expand influence and build trust with communities and constituencies.
	3.2.6 Ensure appropriate AU capabilities to capture, focus, and target for effect all forms of outreach

AU LINE OF OPERATION 4: EXECUTE LESSONS-LEARNED AND DOCTRINE PROGRAMS	
Execute robust lessons-learned and doctrine development, delivery, and education programs that underpin and guide Air Force and airpower strategies, concepts, and operations.	
GOALS	OBJECTIVES
4.1 Improve doctrine revision, production, and dissemination.	4.1.1 Streamline doctrine development and expedite its dissemination.
	4.1.2 Optimize the process of doctrine development, production and distribution for service, joint, multiservice, and multinational doctrine.
	4.1.3 Institutionalize a process to draw on student expertise in support of doctrine development.
4.2 Enhance collaboration within the doctrine design, development, and feedback processes.	4.2.1 Increase collaboration with key senior leaders and stakeholders.
	4.2.2 Expand participation of doctrine SMEs in exercises, experiments, and war games.
	4.2.3 Team with lessons-learned efforts that investigate specific issues in-depth to provide vetted inputs for doctrinal consideration.
4.3 Enhance delivery of doctrine in support of operations.	4.3.1 Improve doctrine dissemination and education.
	4.3.2 Improve field-assessment methods and tools to evaluate application of emerging concepts, doctrine, experiments, and war games.
4.4 Recruit and retain high-quality doctrine action officers.	4.4.1 Ensure that the LeMay Center/DD is adequately manned with military and civilian personnel who have a broad cross-section of functional area expertise.

4.5 Improve the collection and dissemination of lessons learned about USAF activities.	4.5.1 Fill Air Force Lessons Learned positions with individuals who possess a deep understanding of the operational level of war.
	4.5.2 Support lessons learned mission with a mix of experts from across the Air Force as required for each event
	4.5.3 Partner with the <i>Strategy, Concepts and Assessments Wargaming Division (AF/A5SW)</i> for all Title 10 Wargame lessons learned collections
	4.5.4 Partner with AF Component Commands during Blue Flag and Combatant Commander sponsored exercises for lessons learned collections.
	4.5.5 Distribute timely lessons for implementation in the DOTMLPF-P planning processes.
	4.5.6 Monitor lessons learned resolution.
	4.5.7 Distribute lessons learned products and reports for research and education.

AU LINE OF OPERATION 5: BUILD CAPABILITY TO DELIVER AU PROGRAMS Build Air University’s capability to deliver development opportunities, research/problem solving, outreach, and doctrine.	
GOALS	OBJECTIVES
5.1 Foster professional and effective learning and working environments.	5.1.1 Infuse Air Force Core Values and heritage into all that the university does, sustaining an ethical, professional culture that ensures accountability at every level.
	5.1.2 Ensure that the physical learning and working environment is professional, safe, and effective for all university students and personnel.
	5.1.3 Ensure that the virtual learning and working environment is professional and effective for all university students and personnel.
	5.1.4 Ensure that Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF) is integrated into AU organizations and developmental programs as applicable.
	5.1.5 Create and nurture support programs, products, and relationships that aid Airmen and their families, and ensure Airmen have ready access to information on these initiatives.
5.2 Improve the institutional tools, processes, facilities, and support to meet AU goals and objectives.	5.2.1 Create, maintain, and continuously improve information-/education-technology (IT/ET) enterprise architecture to improve delivery of education to all Airmen and AU students and to support research/problem solving and outreach efforts.
	5.2.2 Expand secure-processing/teaching/researching capabilities.
	5.2.3 Expand AU war game, simulation, and testing and experimentation capabilities.
	5.2.4 Recruit and retain high-quality support staff.
	5.2.5 Improve the ability to program for and acquire goods and services.



APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS – TERMS – DEFINITIONS

AAE	advanced academic education
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. Eight of AFIT’s engineering programs in its Graduate School of Engineering and Management are accredited at the advanced level by ABET.
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AFIT	Air Force Institute of Technology. It is the Air Force’s graduate school of engineering and management, as well as its institution for technical professional continuing education. A component of AU and AETC, AFIT is committed to providing defense-focused graduate and professional continuing education and research to sustain the technological supremacy of America’s air and space forces. AFIT accomplishes this mission through three resident schools: the Graduate School of Engineering and Management, the School of Systems and Logistics, and the Civil Engineer and Services School. Through its Civilian Institution Programs, AFIT also manages the educational programs of officers enrolled in civilian universities, research centers, hospitals, and industrial organizations.
Air Corps Tactical School	Also known as ACTS, the school provided professional development for officers of the United States Army Air Service and United States Army Air Corps—the first such school in the world. Created in 1920 at Langley Field, Virginia, it relocated to Maxwell Field, Alabama, in July 1931. Instruction at the school was suspended in 1940 in anticipation of the United States’ entry into World War II.
Air Force culture	Air Force culture and policy on professionalism and standards expected of all Airmen are set forth in Air Force Policy Directive 1, <i>Air Force Culture</i> . Air Force Instruction 1-1, <i>Air Force Standards</i> , implements the directive. AFI 1-1 describes the Air Force environment, including the Air Force mission, core values, oath, Airman’s Creed, way of life, customs and courtesies, structure, diversity, and instructions. AFI 1-1 also provides standards for conduct and appearance. AFI 1-2, <i>Commander’s Responsibilities</i> , establishes broad responsibilities and expectations of commanders in the Air Force. AFI 1-2 sets the minimum standard for successful command and provides a template for evaluating and inspecting all Air Force commanders.
Air Force history	The AETC history website provides general Air Force and AETC history. See http://www.aetc.af.mil/About/History.aspx .

Airman	In this strategic plan, the term <i>Airman</i> refers to uniformed members of the United States Air Force as well as Department of the Air Force civilians. Uniformed members include officer or enlisted members on active duty or in the Reserve, Guard, and members of the Civil Air Patrol regardless of rank, component, or specialty. Air Force civilians are incorporated within the broader meaning of the term when the need exists to communicate to a larger audience within the service, either for force-development purposes or for clarity and inclusiveness by senior leaders when addressing a larger body of personnel. All Airmen, military and civilian, support and defend the Constitution of the United States and live by the Air Force Core Values. This usage follows that described in <i>Air Force Doctrine, Volume 1, Basic Doctrine</i> , and <i>Volume 2, Leadership</i> .
AU	Air University
Barnes Center	Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education. It is responsible for administering the Airman Leadership School, Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute, Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Air Force Noncommissioned Officer Academy correspondence courses, Community College of the Air Force, and USAF First Sergeant Academy.
BOV	Board of Visitors. The Air University Board of Visitors provides the secretary of the Air Force, through the AU commander and president, independent advice and recommendations on matters pertaining to the educational, doctrinal, and research policies and activities of Air University.
CAP	Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the United States Air Force
capability	The ability to maintain the necessary level and duration of operational activity to achieve military objectives. Capability involves force structure, modernization, readiness, and sustainability.
capacity	The force structure required to meet a single military objective or multiple military objectives.
continuum of learning	According to <i>Air Force Doctrine, Annex 1-1, Force Development</i> , the <i>continuum of learning</i> is a “career-long process of individual development where challenging experiences are combined with education and training through a common taxonomy to produce Airmen who possess the tactical expertise, operational competence, and strategic vision to lead and execute the full spectrum of Air Force missions.”

COP	Common operating picture. An accurate, timely depiction of all actions across the entire organization which builds a shared consciousness sufficiently detailed to support rapid decision making and decentralized execution.
CSAF	chief of staff of the United States Air Force
DAF	Department of the Air Force
diversity	<p>The <i>United States Air Force Diversity Strategic Roadmap</i>, published by AF/A1DV in March 2013, notes that “the Air Force broadly defines <i>diversity</i> as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission.” The roadmap adds that “Air Force diversity includes but is not limited to . . . personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational and work background, language and physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity, and gender. The concept of diversity is to be tailored as specific circumstances and the law require.”</p> <p>Air Force priorities for diversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalize diversity as necessary to mission success • Attract high-quality, talented, diverse individuals to consider service in the United States Air Force, in uniform or as civilian employees • Recruit high-quality, talented, and diverse individuals to serve with the United States Air Force in uniform or as civilian employees • Develop a high-quality, talented, and diverse Total Force • Retain a high-quality, talented, and diverse Total Force.
Eaker Center	Ira C. Eaker Center for Professional Development. It provides multidiscipline technical training and professional continuing education to Air Force and other Department of Defense personnel, as well as to international students. The center is composed of five schools: Commanders’ Professional Development School, USAF Chaplain Corps College, National Security Space Institute, Defense Financial Management and Comptroller School, and the USAF Personnel Professional Development School.
education	Mastery of the cognitive abilities underpinning each level of learning in the cognitive domain to solve a wide range of problems. Education encompasses, and can be accelerated by, but is not defined by training (John W. Moore, “Education versus Training,” <i>Journal of Chemical Education</i> 75, no. 2 [February 1998]).

Appendix D of *Air Force Doctrine Annex 1-1, Force Development*, distinguishes between education and training. Although education and training are interdependent, they are “fundamentally distinct in application.” Education is distinguished from training in several critical areas listed below.

- Education is appropriate when adaptive outcomes are desired. It focuses on the development of critical thought that enables creative solutions.
- Education is process-dependent, not task-dependent. It focuses on combining familiar and unfamiliar information to produce a suggested course of action.
- Education is not dependent on a specific situation. Instead, it attempts to prepare individuals for new experiences and new challenges.
- Education provides knowledge and skills, such as critical thinking, that are useful in unfamiliar or unexpected circumstances. Education is most beneficial during transitions from the known to the unknown.
- The value of education increases with uncertainty and provides long-term benefits.

epicenter	The point at which a physical, climatic, or cultural movement begins.
ET	Educational technology. According to the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, it is “the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources.”
force development	According to <i>Air Force Doctrine, Annex 1-1</i> , <i>force development</i> is the “deliberate process of preparing Airmen through the continuum of learning . . . with the required competencies to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.”
force structure	The military service’s interconnected framework—active, Reserve, and Guard components, equipment, personnel, and real estate—exists to accomplish specific missions in national security.
geopolitical	The relationship between politics and a geographical region.
global diversity	Intimate knowledge of and experience with foreign languages and cultures, inclusive of both citizen and noncitizen personnel, exchange officers, coalition partners, and foreign nationals with whom we interact as part of a globally engaged Air Force.
goal	An overall achievement considered critical to the future success of the organization. Goals express where the organization wants to be.

governance	Process to establish accountability for strategic performance. Governance also defines the strategy execution review and follow-through processes.
HAF	Headquarters Air Force
HLC	The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher-education institutions in the Southern states. AFIT is accredited through the HLC.
Holm Center	Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accessions and Citizen Development. It administers the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, Officer Training School, and Civil Air Patrol.
infrastructure	In this strategic plan, <i>infrastructure</i> is an all-encompassing term, referring not simply to brick-and-mortar facilities or runways. It refers to all means, such as bandwidth or knowledge-management systems, required to deliver research, development, test, and evaluation.
innovation	According to the Air Force Vision (<i>The World's Greatest Air Force: Powered by Airmen, Fueled by Innovation</i>), "The story of the Air Force is a story of innovation." AETC highlights the importance of innovation by including it as the fourth core competency, along with recruiting, training, and education. Innovation involves the pursuit of creative, new ways of doing things. While it may include the adoption of new technologies, it is not limited to their application. At the heart of innovation is finding better or smarter ways to approach and solve security problems. As stated in the Air Force Vision, <i>innovation</i> means that "every Airman should constantly look for smarter ways to do business. The person closest to the problem is often the one with the best solution. . . . Airmen at all levels must have the courage to take risks and learn from mistakes." The Air Force portal provides a way for individuals to submit innovative ideas for consideration through the link "Airmen Powered by Innovation," https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af/USAF/ep/globalTab.do?channelPageId=s0ECF2BB844E64F620144F48AA2DF00BD .
international partners	Non-US students and/or government officials involved in Air University programs.

IT	Information technology. The Information Technology Association of America defines <i>IT</i> as the study, design, development, application, implementation, support, or management of computer-based information systems. IT includes the use of computers and telecommunications to store, retrieve, transmit, and manipulate data. The term is commonly used as a synonym for computers and computer networks, but it also encompasses other information-distribution technologies such as television and telephones.
JPME	Joint Professional Military Education as established by Joint Staff J7
JROTC	Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps. A citizenship program for high school students administered by the Holm Center and offered at high schools across the United States.
LeMay Center	The Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education. The center develops and publishes Air Force doctrine, teaches doctrine through resident and online courses, and advocates airpower through visionary war gaming.
lines of operation	Lines of operation express a cognitive map for planning. Consistent with the JP 5-0 definition, this plan uses the term line of operation to link actions to objectives to achieve strategic effects.
measures	A way of monitoring and tracking the strategic objectives. Measurements can be leading indicators of performance (leads to an end result) or lagging indicators (the end results). Measures communicate the true intent of an objective.
mentoring	According to Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 36-2643, <i>Air Force Mentoring Program</i> , <i>mentoring</i> is the ongoing, “inclusive professional relationship and process . . . required to support career and personal development of mentees[,] . . . [who are] individuals who desire to expand their knowledge and skills by gaining advice from a more experienced individual [mentor].” Further, “mentorship is a relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom guides another person to develop both personally and professionally. . . [Its] overall goal . . . is to help Airmen (civilian, enlisted, and officer) “reach their full potential.” AFMAN 36-2643 guides the establishment of an effective mentorship program: it “explains mentoring program objectives and benefits, identifies guidelines and expectations of mentors and mentees, and provides a Mentoring Toolkit.”
mission statement	Articulates the organization’s purpose for its members and the public. It is a brief description of the organization’s fundamental purpose or reason for being; why it exists beyond present-day operations.

objective	Manageable, single-focus component of a strategy. A concise statement articulating a specific component of what the strategy must achieve and what is critical to its success, it usually consists of short, action-verb phrases that provide focus. Objectives explain what specifically must be done to execute the strategy and what the organization must do to reach its goals.
OLMP	Online Master’s Program. ACSC launched its OLMP in 2007 as a master’s degree–granting version of the ACSC resident course. It offers the same master of military operational art and science degree as its resident counterpart, with a concentration in joint studies. Since its founding, additional concentrations have been offered. A CGO-level version of the program features a concentration in leadership studies, with SOC managing that program, and a concentration in aeronautics is offered through the Air Force Test Pilot School
operational level	The level of internal processes and day-to-day functions that align to the goals of the strategy.
PCE	Professional continuing education. Education designed to provide programs in scientific, technological, managerial, and other professional expertise to meet the Air Force’s needs.
PME	Professional military education. Education designed to help Airmen acquire the technical, management, and leadership skills they will need to be successful in their careers. PME programs also educate Airmen on the capabilities of air, space, and cyberspace power and their role in national security.
qualitative metrics	Relating to or involving comparisons based on quality.
quantitative metrics	Relating to or expressed in a number or quantity.
resilience	The ability to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands. It is a skill that can be learned and sharpened with practice. The Air Force Portal provides additional information on building resilient Airmen.
risk assessment	Determines gaps, shortfalls, and unnecessary redundancies across the organization.
risk management	The process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks arising from operational factors and making decisions that balance risk cost with mission benefits

ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps. An officer accessions program offering college students an opportunity to learn military skills, knowledge, and attitudes required of an Air Force officer in preparation for possible military service. Administered by the Holm Center, ROTC is offered at universities and colleges across the United States.
SAASS	School of Advanced Air and Space Studies. A 49-week program to educate strategists for the Air Force and nation. Its graduates receive a master of philosophy degree in military strategy, and the program forms the foundation of the AU doctorate of philosophy degree in military strategy.
SACSCOC	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the southern states. AU is accredited through SACSCOC.
Spaatz Center	The Carl A. Spaatz Center for Officer Education. It speaks with a single voice on issue affecting officer PME, ensures that resources and lessons learned are shared across the officer PME programs, and provides daily and planning support to the Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, Squadron Officer College, International Officer School, and academic centers.
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
strategic agility	In this plan, institutional <i>strategic agility</i> means flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness throughout AETC in all mission areas. In his foreword to <i>America's Air Force: A Call to the Future</i> , Gen Mark Welsh states that “the Air Force’s ability to continue to adapt and respond faster than our potential adversaries is the greatest challenge we face over the next 30 years.” He adds that while not adapting leads to vulnerability, the ability to adapt is “an enduring advantage to the agile.”
strategic level	The level of planning focused on the long-term strategy and aligned to the mission of the organization.
strategic planning	The process of systematically evaluating the strategic environment’s nature and direction, identifying long-term goals and objectives, and developing strategies to reach the goals and objectives to support resource allocation. Strategic planning embraces a capabilities-based planning methodology and performance planning to cover near-, mid-, and long-term planning horizons as determined by the specific organization’s needs.

strategy management	Process by which strategy is defined, governed, and communicated to the organization. Strategy management ensures that the organization is aligned to the strategy.
tactical level	The level of planning focused on ensuring that the organization achieves near-term objectives.
targets	Performance expectations for assessing relative success. AETCI 90-1101, <i>Strategy Management</i> , states that “stretch targets, or goals beyond the standard target, are highly encouraged . . . [and are used] to motivate the workforce and encourage continuous process improvement efforts. Good stretch targets are set to a value that is not historically or easily attained.”
think tank	An organization that conducts research and engages in advocacy in areas such as social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology issues, and in the creative and cultural field.
Total Force	Consists of Regular Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve members as well as Air Force civilians and contractors.
training	<p>Appendix D of <i>Air Force Doctrine Annex 1-1, Force Development</i>, distinguishes between education and training. Although education and training are interdependent, they are “fundamentally distinct in application.” Training is doing—education is thinking. Training is distinguished from education in several critical areas listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is appropriate when standardized outcomes are required. It focuses on building specific skill sets to produce reliable, consistent results. Standardization in training and evaluation ensures that outcomes are predictable. • The purpose of training is to teach skills associated with desired outcomes. • Training is task dependent and generally focuses on a specific skill, situation, or tools of a specialty. • Training is most effective in stable and expected environments; it shows immediate results. Its value diminishes with uncertainty.
USAF	United States Air Force
USG	United States Government
vision statement	Captures the aspirations of the organization. It is an overall assertion of how the organization wants to be perceived over the long term.