Overcoming the 7-Day Option
SOS Think Tank
Falcons Proposal

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• Officers facing reassignment without ADSC utilizing the 7-Day Option is detrimental to the AF
  – Represents a significant loss of talent/investment
  – Impedes filling of critical manpower requirements

• Under current assignment system, officers feel a loss of agency in their lives and careers
Background

• System does not account for generational differences
  – Eroded institutional loyalties
  – Increased emphasis on individual input
  – Prioritization of time over money
  – Changing family circumstances

• Use of 7-Day Option represents desire for greater control

• Airman Development Plan (ADP) is useful but incomplete tool
  – Offers career vectoring according to “Up or Out” paradigm
  – No direct feedback mechanism for assignments in a particular cycle

• Officers want to feel their contributions are valued
Strategy

1. Increase officers’ feeling of agency in process
   1. Develop culture of volunteerism
   2. Increase member engagement
2. Incentivize traditionally hard-to-fill assignments via additional tools for Functionals
3. Allow officers a second chance at matching
Overview of Changes

1. Defined “undesirable assignments” as “hard-to-fill” and quantified that with data
2. Introduced greater variety in incentive options
3. Refined process of attaching incentives to assignments
4. Added additional member feedback mechanisms
5. Introduced volunteer-based “Phase 0” to fill hard-to-fill assignments with incentives up front
6. Changed from 3 annual assignment cycles to 2
**Process Overview**

**Phase 0**
- ID hard-to-fill bases
- ID impactful incentives
- Apply incentives to assignments
- Solicit for volunteers
- Match volunteers to incentivized assignments

**Phase 1**
- Match members to remaining assignments
- Member can accept or decline
- Unfilled hard-to-fill bases offered to matched officers for swap

**Phase 2**
- Final match
- Member can accept or decline
Phase contains activities to:

• Identify undesirable assignments
• Identify impactful incentives
• Apply incentives to assignments
• Match volunteers to incentivized assignments
Suggest variety of incentives to appeal to member values:

- Base of preference ( )
- Cash bonus ($$)
- Specialized training ($)
- Incentive leave ($$)
- 1.5x time-in-service ($$$)
- Temporarily increased cap/matching on TSP contributions ($)
Phase Zero

1. AFPC notifies all eligible officers with a list of available assignments
2. Eligible officers identify the following via Assignment Preference List (APL)
   - What assignments they would take WITHOUT incentives
   - What assignments they would only take WITH incentives
   - What assignments they wouldn’t take, even with incentives
   - What type of incentive is most attractive to them
   - Brief comments on additional personal and career considerations
3. Based on these inputs and historical data, identify hard-to-fill assignments, and apply incentives as possible
4. Solicit for volunteers for only the hard-to-fill assignments
5. Once matched, assignments and members are removed from further rounds
Phase Zero
Implementation

- Member A
- Member B
- Member C
- Member D
- Member E
- Member F

1.5x Time
Bonus
Follow On
Phase Zero Implementation

Assignment 3
Assignment 4
Assignment 5
Assignment 7
Assignment 8
Assignment 10

Hard-to-fill Assignment 1
1.5x time in service
Hard-to-fill Assignment 2
+$30K
Hard-to-fill Assignment 6
+1.5x time in service
Hard-to-fill Assignment 9
+$25K
Phase Zero
End Result

Hard-to-fill Assignment 1
+1.5x time in service
Hard-to-fill Assignment 2
+$30K
Hard-to-fill Assignment 6
+1.5x time in service
Hard-to-fill Assignment 9
+$25K

Undesirable Assignments Advertised to All Members on VML

Volunteers
Member A
Member B
Member C
Member D
Member E
Member F
Assignment Team matches officers to remaining assignments as usual, relying on Phase 0 inputs (APL) and ADPs

- Member can accept or decline with comments
  - Comments can be used to improve Phase Two match
  - AFPC could use comments to guide trades as necessary

- Unmatched hard-to-fill jobs could be offered to previously matched officers for a voluntary swap
Final Match

- Based on inputs from Phases Zero and One
- Member can accept or reject final assignment (7-Day Option)
Major Points

- Current timeline is 14 weeks
  - Additional 7 weeks
- Corresponding change from 3 to 2 VMLs
  - Summer and Winter
- Gives AFPC more down time
  - Current: 47 days (CY17)
  - New timeline: 71 days
AFPC will receive an appropriated amount of retention incentives to allocate to Functionals:

• Amounts of all incentives can change year-to-year based on budget
• Functional team will then project needs across VML cycles and set aside appropriate incentives to last the year’s two cycles
• Functional team will then have these resources for phase zero incentives to include funding of specialized training, cash bonus, and incentive leave
• Cash: AFPC will apportion funds across career field functional teams
• Time-in-service/Leave: AFPC will allot leave days and additional time-in-service credit (Example: 100 years at 1.5x)
Incentives Allocated Based on Retention Goals

Allocated Based on Seasonal Needs

Allocated to Hard-to-fill Assignments

Proper oversight is key to preventing fraud, waste, and abuse of incentives
Constraints/Drawbacks

• Increased complexity and work for AFPC
  – May require one additional functional billet per AFSC
  – Overall process extends by 7 weeks

• Increased financial burden
  – Cost of lost talent significantly greater than retention cost

• Legal changes required for some incentives
Second and Third Order Effects

General

- Would increase financial footprint of assignment system
  - May compete with other budgetary priorities
- Over time, assignment desirability data could become skewed, reducing effectiveness
  - Could lead to overuse of incentives
- Increased retention could lead to more competitive promotions
  - Possibly create morale problem for mid-career officers
Second and Third Order Effects
Incentive Specific

- Time-in-service incentive could encourage earlier retirements
  - May create difficulty filling Lt Col positions, especially in under-manned AFSCs

- Base of preference could be overused
  - Large number of people on list dilutes potency of this option

- Incentive leave could center on specific bases
  - Could cause challenges for accomplishing the mission if everyone has extra leave
Proposed plan suppresses use of 7-Day Option by:

• Improving matching between incentives and assignments
• Introducing a volunteer-based Phase 0
• Boosting feedback between member and Functional
• Adding second matching cycle
Questions