BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

AIR UNIVERSITY/ESCHOOL OF GRADUATE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

THE FLIGHT COMMANDER'S EDGE

1. The purpose of this background paper is to provide an overview of *The Flight Commander's Edge,* an Air University (AU) program which supports the establishment of wing-level Flight Commander courses by 1 Jun 19 (per CSAF memo, 1 Jun 18, titled "Squadron Revitalization Implementation Plan"). This program supports local efforts to "establish Flight Commander/leader courses focused on key skills needed to succeed in this first essential level of leadership."

2. In early 2018, the CSAF tasked AU to create course content options for wings to execute mission-specific Flight Commander Leadership Courses and formally highlight the roles and responsibilities of command as defined in Air Force Instruction 1-2, *Commander's Responsibilities*. *The Flight Commander's Edge* is a program established by AU and managed by the eSchool of Graduate Professional Military Education (hereinafter, eSchool) for this effort.

3. The eSchool, through *The Flight Commander's Edge*, has provided a variety of tools and products which support local course development. The use of eSchool-provided content is not required; however, wings may find it useful for quickly deploying local Flight Commander Leadership Courses.

4. The Flight Commander Leadership Course is a Wing Commander's program. The eSchool does not set nor mandate policy or guidance regarding the implementation or execution of these courses. Each wing is required to determine how it will implement and allocate appropriate support for its own course. So far, most units have indicated the course will reside under the FSS Professional Development Center with the Career Assistance Advisor serving as the Course Director/Lead Facilitator.

5. While there is no length requirement for the course, the eSchool recommended curriculum is designed for delivery over a minimum of two days. Wings are required to determine attendee requirements (grade, position, etc,) and course frequency. So far, most units have indicated they will conduct a minimum two courses per year.

6. Graduates of a Flight Commander Leadership Course should be equipped and motivated to strengthen their squadrons by leading, developing, managing and communicating with competence and confidence. The eSchool has developed lesson plans, lesson guides, course templates, facilitator guidance, a Course Director Handbook, self-assessments, feedback forms, and a multitude of exercises, handouts, and learning aids to support this goal. eSchool-provided content is designed to (a) improve understanding of flight commander roles, duties, and responsibilities; (b) increase proficiency in key flight-level leadership skills and behaviors;

and (c) orient flight commanders on unit policies, programs, plans, and procedures. Additionally, an online collaborative platform for collaboration between wing-level course developers is available to support the discussion of best practices and the sharing of content.

    a. In eSchool-provided leadership lessons, participants review materials (videos, handouts, etc.), engage in guided discussion, complete exercises, and assess themselves on flight-level leadership behaviors. <u>Leadership lessons include:</u>

> *The Role of the Flight Commander (introductory lesson)*
> *Preparing for Command*
> *Emotional Intelligence*
> *Followership*
> *New Problems, New Thinking*
> *Developing Full-Range Leadership*
> *Communication in Command*
> *Mission Command in Leadership*
> *Building Teams*
> *Leading Change*
> *Developing Others*
> *Conflict Management*
> *Ethical Leadership*
> *Senior Leader Perspective*
> *The Road Ahead (closing lesson)*

    b. In locally-produced lessons, participants receive important information about base agencies and programs, and gain perspectives from local leadership. Facilitators can use the eSchool-provided lesson guides as they prepare and tailor course presentations. Course Directors can use them to reinforce linkages between leadership lessons and the local unit. Lesson guides include:

Organizational Structure and the Mission	*Organizational Heritage*
Manning	*Funding*
Civil Service Force Structure	*Enlisted Force Structure*
Total Force Integration	*Working with Contractors*
Discipline, NJP, and the UCMJ	*Base Support Agencies*
Materiel Management	*Deployment*
Taking Care of Families	*Professional Development*
Mentoring	*Networking*
Officer Performance Reports	*Enlisted Performance Reports*
Civilian Appraisals	*Conducting/Documenting Feedback*
Promotion Recommendation Forms	*Awards and Decorations*
Prioritization	*Time and Meeting Management*
Local Leadership Panels	

7. *The Flight Commander's Edge* program is currently in testing. Full release of materials to all wings is planned for 30 Nov 18.