

# Air Education and Training Command Symposium 2012

## *“Develop America’s Airmen Today... for Tomorrow”*

Jan. 12, 2012

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As prepared for delivery, Page 1 of 6

Welcome to the 2012 AETC Symposium. This event has grown and matured over the years and is now recognized as a premier activity in the recruiting/education/training world. I have full confidence that the next two days will be professionally beneficial to each of you.

As the Command Chief and I have traveled around the command, as you might guess, the aspect of our business that has impressed us most is our people and their stories of what they want to do and who they want to be in our Air Force.

I don’t want any of us to ever forget that what we do is to recruit these young people and then provide them with the education and training they need to be ready for any challenge the Air Force gives them. It is all about the Airman and what we do needs to be effective and relevant to them.

So I want to begin my remarks today with a short video to help set the stage for what I’m about to say.

Roll video.

Great stories, right? Our job is to help them realize their hopes and dreams.

I have high expectations for this year’s symposium and want to spend a few minutes at the outset ensuring that the members of Air Education and Training Command, which is the majority of you out there, understand why you are here.

Some have asked over the last year whether we would still have this symposium given the tough fiscal environment we are in. Clearly, by the fact that we are all here, my answer to that was yes. And not only yes, but a resounding yes.

There are very few areas in life where you get something for nothing. You have to invest in something before you can reap the rewards. And if you are a shrewd investor, the rewards will exceed the initial investment.

We are in the force development business, which means we develop human capital. In times of shrinking resources it is more important than ever that we get that human capital part of the equation right. And as good as you are today at recruiting, educating and training you are going to need to be better at it tomorrow if our Air Force is going to remain preeminent in the years and decades to come.

The professional development opportunity presented to you over the next two days is designed to put additional tools in your tool kit so you are better prepared to help us transition to the AETC of tomorrow, not try to hold onto the AETC of the past, which is a losing game.

So this symposium represents an investment of sorts. An investment in you, and I expect the rewards we will reap from that investment will far exceed the initial costs.

Why and how will this happen?

Let me begin with a brief review of the Force Development business we are in.

Force development is a deliberate process of preparing Airmen through the Continuum of Learning (COL) with the required competencies to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The COL is a career-long process of individual development where challenging experiences are combined with education and training through a common architecture to produce Airmen who possess the tactical expertise, the operational competence and the strategic vision to execute and lead the full spectrum of AF missions.

Force development is like a four legged chair: recruiting the right people, training them, educating them and giving them the right professional experiences.

Education and training facilitate the transition from one level of experience to the next and are critical to creating productive experiences in an Airman's development.

Education prepares individuals for dynamic environments, while training is essential in developing skill sets. These are related, but distinct concepts and in our business, we must understand the relationships and distinctions. These relationships and distinctions are well-described in AFDD 1-1, which covers leadership and force development.

Based on our doctrine, we believe education provides critical thinking skills, encouraging exploration into unknown areas and creative problem solving. Its greatest benefit comes in unknown situations or new challenges; education prepares us for unpredictable scenarios.

Conversely, training is focused on a structured skill set, and the results of training performance should be consistent. Thus, training provides us with skill expertise.

**Training** is appropriate when standardized outcomes are required. Training is focused on building specific skill sets to produce reliable, consistent results.

**Education** is appropriate when adaptive outcomes are desired. Education is focused on developing critical thought that enables creative solutions.

**Training** is task dependent. Training is generally focused on a specific skill.

**Education** is process dependent. Education is generally focused on combining familiar and unfamiliar information to produce a suggested course of action.

**Training** requires restrictive application and is generally restricted in application to the known circumstances related to the skill set.

**Education** requires transformative application and it is most beneficial when transitioning from the known to the unknown.

**Training** is most effective in stable, expected environments.

**Education** is most effective within unexpected environments.

**Training** value diminishes with uncertainty.

**Education** value increases with uncertainty.

**Training** shows immediate benefits.

The benefits of education often don't manifest themselves until long after the education event.

Training makes education possible and education makes training more relevant.

Training and education together make it possible to move from one level of experience to the next, either laterally or vertically.

What you will engage in over the next two days is not training, it is education. . .part of your professional education. Its purpose is to improve your critical thinking, to help you develop adaptive outcomes, to help you perform better in uncertain and unknown environments.

In other words, this symposium is designed to prepare you to be a more significant contributor to our mission in the environment we expect to exist for the foreseeable future.

Over the past year as I have traveled around the command, two thoughts have crystallized in my mind. The first is that we are very good at what we do. Whether it is recruiting, training or education, all the metrics tell us we are very good at what we do. The second thought is that even though we are very good at what we do in each of these areas, there are seams between the major components of our enterprise, seams that result in ineffectiveness and inefficiency.

Those of us who work at a level where we can see across the enterprise bump into these seams all the time. . .we know they exist. As we move into a more resource constrained environment, we can no longer afford some of the ineffectiveness and inefficiency that occurs across these seams and all of us have a role to play in knitting those seams more tightly together.

So this is another major reason why you are here today: to better understand the relatedness and the uniqueness of the recruiting, training and education enterprise, as I described them earlier, so you can help us tighten up the seams.

There is a third reason you are here.

At the end of last year the senior leaders of AETC held a series of discussions about strategic initiatives.

I just commented that we are already very good at what we do so one might think that we should just keep doing what we are doing in the way that we are doing it because “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it”.

Your leadership doesn’t think this is the right strategic direction for two reasons.

First, every once in a while something happens in the world that enables not just incremental change, but fundamental change to the way things work. We believe we are in such a period now.

If we use an ends, ways and means construct; ends being the goal or objective, means being the tools we have available to achieve the objective and ways being the processes we use to combine the tools to achieve the ends, then what we are saying is that the revolution in technology has resulted in a fundamental change in the means or tools that are available to us to do our work.

Better tools provide opportunities to think differently about how we combine those tools, to achieve the desired ends.

The men and women entering the Air Force today have a different experiential base than the generations who preceded them. They are truly digital natives, which means, in part, that they access, absorb and process information differently than their predecessors.

When we combine this major change in the raw material if you will, the people we are recruiting, and the significant advancement in the tools we have at our disposal to help them learn, whether in the training or education environment, then you have a very rare opportunity, a once in a generation opportunity, to pivot the enterprise in a way that it is more effective and more efficient.

We intend to take advantage of this opportunity.

I just used the word efficient and that is indeed a motivating factor in our strategic direction. While our resources will likely decrease in the future, we believe we will have enough resources to accomplish our mission, but not enough resources to accomplish that mission in the same way we have in the past.

Said another way, we believe that this period of resource constraints, that we will be in for the foreseeable future, is not a time for hand-wringing and slowly dismantling the recruiting, education and training structure we have had in the past, but an opportunity to build a fundamentally different construct and structure for the future. And if we do it right, it will require less resources and be more effective.

Building on the resource issue, while I said we will have the resources we need, we also know we will not have a single penny to waste. In recognition of this reality, your leadership team has adopted a second strategic direction which we are calling a Culture of Cost Consciousness, and since Culture of Cost Consciousness tends to be a tongue-twister for me I will just refer to it as C3.

More than anything else, C3 is about a mindset. A mindset that says every AETC Airman should constantly consider the cost implications of our actions, our inactions and our decisions. It is about being good stewards of America's resources. It is more than just achieving greater efficiency; it really is about a mindset that makes cost considerations a part of everything we do.

Are the lights out in the office when I leave? Are the lights out at the ball field when the game is over? Can the temperature be set a few degrees higher in the summer and a few degrees lower in the winter? Can I walk the few blocks to where I need to go instead of driving? Do I really need a dozen government pens and pencils in my desk drawer? Is the government getting best value on this contract? Is my mindset "how do I spend everything I have" or is it "how to I save everything I can"?

C3 can work and it can work on a large scale, but it will take all of us, to include our families who live on or use our installations. Let me give you an example of how this worked for Southwest Airlines.

You might recall the rising fuel crisis that plagued the airline industry back in 2000. In February 2000, the company CEO, Herb Kelleher, sent a letter about the crisis to all of his employees. Jet fuel was \$1 a gallon, three times the previous year's cost. Southwest was using 19 million gallons a week. "Our profitability is in jeopardy," Kelleher wrote.

He asked each worker to help out by saving \$5 a day, which would, he explained, save Southwest \$51 million annually.

The response was immediate. One department offered to do its own janitorial work. A group of mechanics figured out how to heat the planes more cheaply pilots began to taxi with one engine to save fuel, workers stopped printing out reports, turned off things that were idle, turned every other light off, etc.

Within six weeks employees had already saved the company more than \$2M. They expected a loss that year – the first in 28 years. They ended the year surpassing expectations and making money when all around them were losing.

They did it, and so can we.

In fact, many of you are already adopting this mindset. At Keesler, Capt Wendy Williams led the effort to restart a recycling program at the hospital where they now take disposable surgical items and "re-manufacture" them reducing hazardous waste, cutting supply requirements and in just three months saved over \$62K.

At Luke, Mr. Andrew Taylor designed a bench that could test component parts for aircraft – eliminating need to send them to the manufacturer. This saves Luke AFB \$100K a year.

I could go on, but the point is that C3 is about all of us. . .all of the time. It is not just a good thing to do; it is the right thing to do, for your unit, for our Air Force, for our country. And every single one of us can make a meaningful contribution. You will hear more on this from us soon.

Let me wrap up by repeating that this symposium is an important professional development opportunity for each of you and I expect you to take maximum advantage of it. We have big plans for the next year that entail thinking anew about how we execute our recruiting, training and education missions as well as adopting a new culture of cost consciousness.

This is not about looking behind us and longing for the past, but looking ahead of us and shaping the future.

This flows from the characteristics that define us as Airmen. Our eyes are on the horizon. Runway behind us is irrelevant. We think big. Our vision, our reach and our power are global in nature. Some people might say we are biting off too much with what we have planned, but I'm more concerned that we won't think big enough and that we won't take full advantage of the opportunity in front of us.

But the key to our success is not me and what I think, but you and what you do. The ideas that will power us into the future will come from you. The quality of those ideas will be directly related to your understanding of not only your specific part of the enterprise, on which I expect you to be an expert, but your appreciation for how what you do relates to the other parts of the command.

Coordination and synchronization of activities between recruiting, education and training are good and helpful, but we are the USAF and we aim high, and as a consequence, our goal is not just coordination and synchronization, but integration of activities, and that will only come if we break down the seams between what each of us contributes.

So, if you are in the training business, spend time in seminars focusing on education. If you are in recruiting, go to training seminars, etc. You should plan to attend all of the General Sessions. They will be in this room and we will have seats for everyone. And when you get back to your units, put your minds to work on how we can take advantage of the wonderful opportunity in front of us.

I want to end with a short tale of two shoe salesmen who were sent by their company to the outback of Australia to scout for business. They traveled together, both saw the same things and the first salesman sends an e-mail back to HQ saying, "bad news, the natives don't wear shoes here, no business." The second salesman, who had seen the exact same things, sends an e-mail back saying, "great news, the natives don't wear shoes here, plenty of business." Two people look at the exact same situation and one is defeated before he starts and the other is ready to fly, fight and win.

Life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent what we do about it. Are you salesman one or salesman two? We all talk about the change we want to see in our unit, in AETC, in the AF. As Ghandi said, if you want change, then be the change you want to see in your unit, in AETC, in the AF.

It starts now, right here. I look forward to spending time with you over the next two days and learning and growing together.

Aim High. . .

