AFSA International President’s Report

The AFSA 2014 Mid-Year Meetings

3/14/2014

Air Force Sergeants Association

CMSgt (Ret) Dan Yeomans

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Your AFSA Executive Committee (EC) met from March 5th through the 8th at HQ AFSA. The following is a brief synopsis of key discussions and decisions. Feel free to share this synopsis to all Chapters and members.

***Best-Dan Yeomans, AFSA IP.***

# Part I: General Discussions

* Non Dues Revenue: We continue to excel at attaining non-dues revenue from some great partners. USAA and Marsh are two to name a few. Please note that we need non-dues revenue to maintain our low membership dues rates. We will continue to seek viable partners to bring in even more non-dues revenue. You also have our commitment we will not revisit the DCD and PCI marketing ventures based on the dissatisfaction you voiced in the past. Kudos to CEO McCauslin for his efforts here!
* Technology: We are delighted with upgrades to our website, improved and more user friendly fillable forms, and of course—our AFSA Application. Our Communications and IT leads, DP Fred Dembinski (Division 1) and DP Dale Lutzen (Div 3) are planning a trip to HQ AFSA to work with Director David Mimms to brainstorm new ideas that will hopefully allow AFSA to take communications to the next level. The EC agreed that we must proactively move AFSA technologically forward—while not negatively impacting our less technologically able members along the way.
* Audit Report: We received a positive report from our Auditor. CEO McCauslin and his staff are doing a great job ensuring that AFSA remains in compliance and does business the right way. Our Chapters can assist—get your reports to HQ AFSA in time, to include updated Directory of Officers, 990 inputs, and Chapter audit reports. These are critical to ensuring we maintain our 501 c 19 exempt rating with the IRS!
* Legislative: We approved our new 2014 Legislative Platform. Our strategy is two-fold. Our Legislative Platform lists key objectives in a very logical order. There is a lot on the platform by design to ensure all AFSA supports is visible to our membership. On the flip side, however, we are realists and understand we must be tactical. We can’t ask for everything. In 2014, our VERY BIG ROCKS are pay equity, fair educational benefits (TA and Post 911), maintaining Commissary funding support, and retirement to include the Guard and reserve reduction in retirement age from 60 to 55. Kudos to HQ AFSA’s Director Morgan Brown—and great thanks to VP Tim Litherland and DP Jim Crissinger (Div 4) for their hard work making this happen!
* Sky High/Hi Flyer/Twin Flyer Transferability: Your EC worked hard in 2013 to allow you to transfer your free registration to anyone else. Please note that the transfer decision must be complete and at HQ AFSA by 1 May 2014!
* 2013 Membership Wrap-Up: The numbers have been crunched and in the end—AFSA grew by approximately 200 members in 2013! This may not seem like much. However, thanks to the great work of our Membership Team under the guidance of DP Cary Hatzinger (Div 5), we found many on our rosters who had sadly passed away. These members numbered at over 3,000. So our recruiting and retention efforts bore fruit!
* Awards: Our awards program is second to none thanks to the efforts of Trustee Dale Nelson and his committee team.
	+ Please share with your members that the new 14 in 14 coin is awesome. We also have recruiting and retention incentives every month during 2014!
	+ Please also note that awards packages are due from each Division NLT 1 May 2014. NCOY and AOY are due NLT 1 June 2014. Need more information? Ping Dale at dalen57@msn.com
* Printing Support: Need printing support? Do you know that HQ AFSA has some limited capability to support you? Chapters and Divisions need to pay—the service is not free. However, they can work with you if needed. Contact Mel Boston at HQ AFSA for more information!
* AFSA Store: Many have shared that they wish there was more merchandise available in the AFSA Store. That’s great—but we need to know what you need? Please provide suggestions through your Chapter and Division Presidents on specific items you would like to see. We’ll check it out and see if it is “doable.” In the interim, do look for a few new items to be available that already passed the viability test ☺.
* Auto-Renewals: I am pleased to share that our new emphasis on Auto Renewals is making some headway! In the past two months, about 312 new and current members opted in! Please push this option. Auto renewals are a solid step in reducing lost members who do not retain for one reason or another. The cost is the need to maintain current credit card data—but the benefits are huge!
* AFSA Web Page Hosting Support**:** Our Communications and IT Committee are looking into an idea to potentially serve as a host for all AFSA Division and Chapter websites. This initiative will ensure consistency, reduce costs for all Chapters and Divisions, and ensure compliance. This is not a done deal. Look for our findings and recommendations to be shared at this year’s PAC.
* Lobbyist vs. Advocate: Please share that HQ AFSA refers to our team as Advocates. The term lobbyist has some negative connotations—and we are evolving away from it.

# Part II: Strategic Planning

HQ AFSA, under the leadership of Past President Jeff Ledoux, established a very viable Strategic Plan for 2012 to 2014. Past President and Senior Advisor Ledoux is taking the lead to update this plan for 2014 to 2016—so that we have the direction we need to move forward sharply. Your EC spent some time developing tactics to implement the plan. The table below provides a brief synopsis of the findings of the EC. Those inputs in **“red”** show almost unanimous support—they were entered on the majority of inputs!

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| Keep Doing:* **Seek reputable non-dues revenue sources to maintain low membership dues—or possibly reduce existing dues structure!**
* Continue to hone in on our Top 10 legislative platform items—we can’t have it all!
* Maintain our current recruiter program as is—it’s not broken!
* Push CAPWIZ! It works. Cases in point—Tuition Assistance and reversal of the 1% COLA freeze (in part)
* Continue to take lead positions in The Military Coalition—we have two now!
* Keep the Capitol Hill updates coming!
* Maintain Chapter/Division support payment system
* Maintain our sound budget processes to ensure AFSA is financially viable
* Continue to reward our people—the four pillars focus works!
* Continue to monitor our F8888 recruiting Chapter to ensure new processes are working and effective.
* **Maintain the great level of HQ AFSA Customer Service.**
* **Continue to advocate on Capitol Hill—we are making a difference!**
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| Start Doing:* **Develop a strategy to attract family members—we are missing opportunities.**
* Recognize past and present members who excelled—“AFSA Hall of Fame?”
* **Improve our use of technology—multi-media marketing, video streams, town halls, chat groups, etc.**
* Train the field in a way that works.
* **Communicate more effectively with the field. Consider a “mobile web”, cloud based solutions, etc. Move AFSA to the future.**
* Consider having a HQ AFSA Staff Writer to be responsible for web content, marketing events, etc.
* **Continue to find new ways to use technology to our advantage—i.e. SharePoint.**
* Emphasize AFSA history—what we have done for you. Use some more “seasoned” members to share the word.
* Find alternative locations to San Antonio for the PAC once we satisfy the current Hyatt contract in 2019.
* Ensure all Command Chiefs understand the importance of their support for PMAs as AFSA.
* Provide duty descriptions for all AFSA elected and appointed positions.
* Devise a means to better collect data from the field—AFSA poll is strong start.
* Make it exciting to be involved in AFSA—develop plans to get more people involved.
* Upgrade the Capitol Hill Update: Who was contacted—when—about what?
* Implement the Allotment System (Report and recommendations to be presented at the PAC).
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| Stop Doing:* Performing outdated activities that add no value. Example: Why does a 5 time Sky Higher need a 5th Sky High name tag? Find stupid stuff and stop!
* Relying on E-Mail as our primary means of communications. Let’s not throw out the baby with the bathwater—but let’s find more face-to-face and interactive opportunities.
* Cutting expenses at the expense of our members. We need to balance membership support AND fiscal responsibility.
* Eliminate manual processes—they don’t promote efficiency.
* Eliminate mailing out support checks unless absolutely necessary.
* Stop addressing symptoms and start solving the real root cause of problems.
* Stop relying on contracts with only the Hyatt for PAC support—look for alternative and less expensive PAC options.
* Reduce reliance on the CEO position to be the face of AFSA—find ways to get the EC more involved.
* **Stop relying on a hard copy AFSA Magazine. Move toward e-copies with exceptions. Info is often outdated by time received. Review and revise AFSA Magazine strategy.**
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| Change:* **Improve how we market—we need a more robust marketing methodology. How we are viewed! Add testimonials from key members, etc. We must attract new and existing members. Consider new marketing sources as Air Force Times, etc. We must “tell our story”**
* Improve how we plan and format the PAC. Keep the PAC—but upgrade what we do for the members. Perhaps scale down the PAC if conditions warrant.
* **Upgrade our retention programs—we need to make is more appealing and “sexier” so to speak.**
* Review Chapter rewards—are they the right ones?
* Be innovative and creative. Find new ways to solve old problems.
* Improve communications links from Chapters to Divisions to HQ AFSA.
* Continue to team with Air Force leadership—strive for additional AFSA support and acceptance.
* Look for creative ways in terms of compensation and benefits to reward our worthy AFSA staff.
* Become the “premier” news source within the TMC.
* **Ensure our awards program is distinctive—revise cookie cutter approaches.**
* **Improve ability of the AFSA staff to become more proactive partners with the EC.**
* **Website updates. We have improved—but we can do better. AFSA website is not as “cool” and up-to-date as some.**
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# Part III: Talking Papers and New Business

* Nominations for Elected Positions at International: A proposal to eliminate nominations for International elected offices from the floor at PAC—and require all nominees to declare based on current By-Law processes was approved and will be voted on at the PAC.
* New Membership Award: A new membership award was approved to honor the SKY High, Hi Flyer, or Twin Flyer who excels above the rest effective in 2015.
* Gains and Losses Report: HQ AFSA will generate a new Chapter gain and loss report to allow for better tracking of incoming and outgoing members.
* Chapter Information Updates: HQ AFSA will create a new and easier method for Chapters to update their basic information such as Chapter President, meeting times and place, etc. This information will automatically be provided to new members when they join!
* Chapter Mergers: The Executive Council will review current processes for Chapter mergers to ensure the current manual guidance is straight forward and comprehensive!
* BIG Auxiliary Changes: The current status of Auxiliary members was discussed. It was recommended we change the By-Laws at PAC through a formal vote to:
	+ Change the category of Auxiliary to Family Member. Auxiliary is an outdated term.
	+ The EC approved a vote to allow Family Members (Auxiliary) to run for office and vote at the ***Chapter*** level. It was determined that this change does not jeopardize our 501 c 19 status.
	+ We were advised to NOT implement this change at Division and International as the current 501 c 19 rules do not support allowing this at above Chapter level.
* Buy American: The EC unanimously concurred that every effort should be made by AFSA to support American companies through our procurement and purchases.
* Membership by Allotment: Support for this initiative is high. We will review and present recommendations at PAC this year.
* New Marketing Task Force: Trustee Mike Warren is leading a group to take a look at our overall marketing strategy and make recommendations that we will review at PAC this year!

# Part IV: Other Discussions

* Auto Renewal Task Force Ends: We determined that the need for a Task Force to improve our auto-renewal process is no longer required. We feel we solved this issue and are moving forward smartly.
* F8888 Task Force Ends: Many thanks to VP Tim Litherland, DP Cary Hatzinger, and DP Jim Crissinger for their hard work to hammer out a method that allows us to better manage our Technical School new members and not allow them to be “lost in space” so to speak. PDS 610 defines our process and is available to all. As such, this Task Force ends.
* Membership Dues Analysis Task Force Continues: We have much work to do here. Our current support for each member exceeds our costs. VP Tim Litherland will lead a Task Force to analyze this area and make recommendations.
* Manual Update Task Force Continues: DP Fred Dembinski and his team have done a great job reviewing and updating AFSA’s massive library of manuals. There is still work to be accomplished so the Task Force continues.
* Family Support Task Force: We have many opportunities to better support our existing family members, and encourage new Family members to join. DP Cary Hatzinger continues this Task Force with hopefully new recommendations for review at this year’s PAC.
* Allotment Feasibility Task Force: This Task Force under the guidance of DP Cary Hatzinger continues as well. We will provide a recommendation at this year’s PAC to potentially move forward.
* CEO McCauslin Retirement: We had a lovely ceremony for a special man at the Mid-Year. CEO McCauslin remains on track to retire on 24 May of this year. We plan to announce the new CEO select in early April.
* PAC Elections: We are electing an International President for a two-year term and Trustee, Uniformed Services for two-years. Please ensure all candidates submit resumes in accordance with our procedures to ensure Chapters are allowed to choose smartly. To date:
	+ International President: Declared: CMSgt (Ret) Dan Yeomans, Incumbent
	+ Trustee: None Declared
* Division Award Winner Support: The EC passed a resolution to allow HQ AFSA to fund all hotel costs for our Airman of the Year, NCO of the Year, and member of the Year winners. This change will become permanent from this year on.

Thanks to all in the Executive Council—and thanks to our terrific AFSA Staff, for making this year’s mid-year meet beneficial and productive. I look forward to seeing you all at the PAC. God Bless.

Feel free to mail me at AFSA.President@roisc.com with any comments/questions you may have.

Dan Yeomans