

2009 Summer Seminar Article

The Summer Seminar program continues to evolve while maintaining the high standards that the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) is known for. The program started in the early 1980s and was originally called Summer Scientific Seminar due to its focus on academics. Over the past few years the program has deliberately evolved into a more balanced representation of cadet life at USAFA. The program, now called Summer Seminar, focuses on the academic, military, athletic and character aspects of USAFA in order to attract and inspire diverse, highly-qualified candidates to pursue Academy appointments. The program is organized by the USAFA Office of Admissions, but is executed and run on a daily basis by cadets.

The 2008 Summer Seminar had over 2,000 applicants for two sessions, and had 750 students attend one of two sessions. It was so successful that the 2009 program will be adding a third session to allow 50% more motivated rising high school seniors to participate.

In order to showcase the Academy and provide a representative USAFA experiences in a five day session the students are very busy. On arrival day students are immediately immersed in USAFA through campus tours, military drill and evening briefings. Students also spend one on one time with their cadet cadre setting expectations and goals for the session.

The second and third day in the program are designed to model a cadet's life during the academic year. The days begin at 0530 with organized physical training, military drill and breakfast. Students then head off to two, three hour Academic Seminars, with noon meal formation and lunch in between. After the academic seminars, students participate in intramurals on one day and a practice Candidate Fitness Assessment on the other day. Athletic events are followed by dinner and evening briefings about different aspects of USAFA. Each day ends with informal Element Leader time where students get to spend time with cadets asking questions about USAFA and cadet life.

The fourth day of Summer Seminar is called "Doolie for a Day". On this day students experience a taste of what Basic training and freshman year at USAFA is like. The morning starts our early with teambuilding exercises in the hallways and Basic style physical training. Students are then flow controlled to morning meal where they eat at attention using ridged Fourth Class Cadet decorum. Breakfast is immediately followed by a formal room inspection, a military knowledge test and the Element Challenge where each student element gets to compete against other elements on an obstacle course. Throughout the day the students also attend a Character Class and an Airmanship Seminar. The day is topped off with Retreat, graduation dinner and a graduation ceremony.

The Summer Seminar program has always received rave reviews from students who attend. Students consistently enjoy the facilities and the direct interaction with cadets who provide them first hand knowledge about the phenomenal opportunities the Academy offers. Historically, students who attend Summer Seminar make up 40% of the next USAFA class, an even higher percentage attend one of the federal service academies. Furthermore, the attrition of Summer Seminar attendees in the Cadet Wing is 10% lower than cadets who did not attend Summer Seminar. By expanding Summer Seminar to more students these numbers are likely to increase in the future.

If you know a high school junior who is considering USAFA or another service academy please encourage them to apply for Summer Seminar at AcademyAdmissions.com. Although not required for admission to USAFA, the program provides an outstanding experience to students and helps them decide if USAFA is right for them. The Summer Seminar 2009 application window is 1 December 2008 to 28 February 2009 and the three sessions are June 3-7, June 9-13 and June 15-19 (2009 cost is \$325 per session).