

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
USAF ACADEMY COLORADO**



30 July 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR CH COL MICHAEL WHITTINGTON

FROM: CH CAPT MELINDA MORTON
HQ USAFA/HCX
1ST GROUP CHAPLAIN

SUBJECT: After Action Report: BCT II Chaplain Practicum Training: Special Program in Pastoral Care, with the resources, supervision and selected students of Yale Divinity School.

1. 22 July – 28 July Dr. Kristen Leslie and Graduate Students from the Yale Divinity School, along with USAFA active duty and reserve chaplains, participated in a BCT II, Specialized Practicum in Pastoral Care.
 - 1.1. The Yale team participated in all aspects of USAFA BCT Chaplain pastoral care exclusive of privileged communication.
 - 1.2. Yale team members lived in Jack's Valley with USAFA Chaplains, observing and actively participating in worship services, Basic Cadet and Cadre visitation, SPIRE, BCT training courses (LCR, Obstacle, Confidence, and Assault), Self-Aid Buddy Care and Honor instruction. In addition, practicum members observed and participated in Cadet Chapel services, and GE briefings, services and general pastoral care.
2. The Program Objectives for BCT II Chaplain Practicum Training: Special Program in Pastoral Care were as follows:
 - 2.1. Provide USAFA/HC chaplains rigorous assessment and advanced training in specialized pastoral care to victims of sexualized violence and practical methodologies for the prevention of sexual assault
 - 2.2. Provide USAFA/HC chaplains this detailed assessment and specialized pastoral care training in the demanding practicum environment of Basic Cadet Training. Improve chaplain mission support (care to cadets) through real-time, practical and supervised application of enhanced chaplain counseling techniques, cadet-centered pastoral interaction and specifically directed ministry of presence.
 - 2.3. Improve USAFA/HC chaplain crises and pastoral care response to cadets by addressing pastoral care issues in the training environment.

- 2.4. Provide a dynamic practicum environment where USAFA/HC chaplains may work with credentialed experts in the field of pastoral care to victims of sexualized violence.
- 2.5. Provide critical reflection on the USAFA/HC chaplain role in the Academy Response Team (ART) process.
- 2.6. Provide the USAFA/HC team well-developed feedback on pastoral care for victims of sexualized violence, cadet ministry and worship events, organization of ministry of presence, general and crisis pastoral counseling protocols and implementation of Agenda for Change items.
- 2.7. Provide USAFA/HC chaplains resources to extensively and critically examine cultural influences prevalent in the cadet population. Develop practical and pro-active chaplain ministry skill-sets to positively influence USAFA climate and culture changes.
3. Yale Practicum Team (YPT) members provided daily structured feedback and detailed observations to the USAFA Practicum coordinator, Chaplain Morton. Chaplain Morton passed all feedback to Chaplain Watties, the USAFA chaplain in charge of all BCT and Summer Ministries.
4. On 28 July 2004, the Yale Practicum team provided the entire USAFA Chapel staff extensive verbal assessment. This feedback session occurred following a regularly scheduled staff meeting, held in the USAFA BCT Chapel tent, Jack's Valley.
5. YPT major assessments and suggestions for improvement of USAFA pastoral care are as follows:
 - 5.1. Talent and enthusiasm of USAFA Chaplains. YPT noted the enthusiasm and individual talent of chaplains delivering consistent and intentional pastoral care. The staff was appropriately organized and scheduled to serve BCT cadets and cadre as well as cadets experiencing GE and other summer training and academic environments.
 - 5.2. Credibility bolstered by chaplain presence. YPT indicated that an appropriate number of active duty and reserve chaplains were available for pastoral care and counseling. In addition, chaplain's ministry of presence at training courses, tent visitation and throughout the BCT program lent credibility to statements of care and concern.
 - 5.3. Gender issues. On the assault course, YPT observed women cadre confronting women BCT cadet trainees. (Challenging verbal confrontation is appropriate to training in the Assault Course environment.) The YPT noted that these verbal critiques were focus on gender rather than on performance as a contribution to the team. This very public and gender-based interaction may contribute to a perpetuation of negative climate and culture. Women Cadre indicated that they were trying to make the trainees "strong and emotionally well-prepared for cadet life." Chaplains observing these interactions apparently did not recognize these exchanges as inappropriate training.
 - 5.4. Challenges to pluralism. YPT observed consistent specific articulations of Evangelical Christian themes during general protestant services. (BCT and GE) Protestant Cadets were encouraged to chant the phrase, "This is our Chapel and the Lord is our God." Protestant Basic Cadets were encouraged to pray for the salvation of fellow BCT members who chose not to attend worship. During general protestant worship in Jack's Valley, attending Basic Cadets were encouraged to return to tents, proselytize fellow BCT members, and remind them of the consequences of apostasy. (Protestant Basic Cadets were reminded that those not "born again will burn in the fires of hell.") Protestant Basic Cadets were regularly encouraged to "witness" to fellow Basic Cadets. Protestant Basic Cadets were commonly told that Jesus had "called" them to the Academy and military life. Protestant Basic Cadets were informed that God's plan for their life included attending USAFA.
 - 5.5. YPT clearly articulated a concern that such stridently Evangelical themes challenged the necessarily pluralistic environment of BCT. YPT expressed a concern that the

overwhelmingly Evangelical tone of general protestant worship encouraged religious divisions rather than fostering spiritual understanding among Basic Cadets. YPT suggested that the USAFA Chaplain Service reconsider the worship dynamics and Chaplain/Basic Cadet interaction during BCT. YPT suggested focusing on aspects of ecumenical teamwork and developing an appreciation of spiritual diversity.

6. The YPT expresses great appreciation for the USAFA Practicum Experience. Active Duty and Reserve Chaplains gave graciously of their time and experience, creating a helpful learning environment and facilitating the assessment process.

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