

PROGRAM/INTERVENTION

Undergraduate Management Research as Deliberate Development of Leaders of Character?

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ABSTRACT

The United States Air Force Academy's mission is to "educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the U.S. Air Force and Space Force in service to our nation." Leaders of character are expected to (1) Live Honorably, (2) Lift Others, and (3) Elevate Performance through three critical steps of owning, engaging, and practicing their own development journey. The Cadet Summer Research Program (CSRP) is an institution-wide program that provides selected cadets the opportunity to function as independent adults while conducting research outside the classroom, in both military and civilian institutions. Cadets work on research projects in partnership with organizations across the country and are expected to produce results with real-world applications. Given the considerations explored above, we undertook a nascent exploration of the connection between management majors' CSRP journey and our deliberate approach in developing leaders of character. We strongly suggest that CSRP, as experienced by management majors, unfolds as a transformative experience that contributes to cadets owning the pursuit of their own identity, engaging in purposeful experiences, and practicing habits of thought and action.

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During this multifaceted process, cadets put into practice what it takes to live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance in socio-technical systems. In many ways, these systems replicate those they will serve as officers, better preparing them to lead in future conflicts.

Keywords: Leaders of Character, Cadet Summer Research Program, Socio-technical systems, Experiential learning, Undergraduate business management research

Introduction

The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) has as its mission “to educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the U.S. Air Force and Space Force in service to our nation.”¹ Leaders of character are expected to “respect the dignity of others and practice habits consistent with the Air Force core values by (1) Living Honorably, (2) Lifting Others, and (3) Elevating Performance (USAFA Manual 36-3526, 2022). As others have explored, the ever-present focus to develop into a leader of character (LOC) is evident in the day-to-day operations of the Air Force Academy and in the lives of cadets as they undertake a 47-month Bachelor of Science program that combines education and leader development through experiential learning (Silveria, 2018). At USAFA, the Cadet Summer Research Program (CSRP) provides rising seniors the chance to continue their journey as learners in their fields of study. CSRP is a great example of one of the many programs at USAFA that gives students an experiential learning opportunity. In “Developing Leaders of Character for the 21st Century,” USAFA’s current Superintendent, General Richard Clark, encourages permanent party and faculty to learn and integrate the LOC framework into organizational processes, strategic plans, and in our conversations with cadets and our dialogue with one another (2021, p. 2). As such, we believe one such

integration opportunity lies in the administration of USAFA CSRP processes.

CSRP cadets conduct research and learn as independent adults outside of the “learning laboratory” of USAFA. As compared to the USAFA environment, this transition to the “real world” offers a strong contrast; cadets become exposed to the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment found across corporate America and other organizations (Lindsay, 2020). Therefore, CSRP offers our student scholars in the field of management the ability to “study individuals, organizations, markets, and the interactions amongst them” (Lederman, 2019).

As both management researchers and current and former directors of CSRP, we wanted to undertake a more deliberate approach to facilitate cadet engagement in purposeful experiences at the organizational level. By changing our processes and making students more aware and reflective of the interactions and relationships among individuals, teams, and organizations, we hoped to further their development as leaders of character. (USAFAMAN 36-3526, 2022). Therefore, beginning in the summer 2023 CSRP cycle, we sought to better understand whether and how an undergraduate management research program can contribute to the deliberate development of leaders of character. In integrating the LOC framework within the Department of Management CSRP, we modified our processes and

1 <https://www.usafa.edu/about/mission/>

adopted five new techniques, to include: (1) explicitly communicating our standards and expectations to both sponsor organizations and cadets and getting their commitment and agreement to adhere; (2) utilizing a whole-person approach in our selection of CSRP participants; (3) establishing a cadre of CSRP faculty mentors from which to pair cadets; (4) hosting a “research boot-camp” to outline potential research methods and process consultation approaches; and (5) requiring cadets to reflect on and journal their CSRP journey. Based on our insights, we believe this approach can be applied to other undergraduate research programs seeking ways to further develop learners and leaders of character.

Background

Cadet Summer Research Program

The Dean of Faculty (DF) at USAFA runs CSRP, a five- to six-week summer program that takes place from late May through early July every year. Each department has a CSRP director who is responsible for getting research agreements with sponsor organizations reviewed and approved at the institutional level. Additionally, directors are expected to develop and maintain relationships with sponsor organizations’ designated representatives so that, when DF allocates CSRP slots, they can advertise specific research projects to their majors and competitively select and match cadets to various organizations across the country. Sponsor organizations present our students with complex problems and issues that may or may not have a solution, much less a simple one. Selected cadets travel to and work directly with personnel in both military and civilian institutions (i.e., government and military organizations, defense contractors, and firms in the civilian and private sectors), where they conduct basic or applied research on specified problem sets. In coordination with an assigned mentor or project team within that organization, cadets are expected to produce, deliver, and communicate the results of their research before returning to USAFA.

Research, as undertaken by management majors, differs from the more traditional research undertaken by science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors who, by and large, constitute most of the cadet population at USAFA. Many STEM cadets undertake CSRP in the field or in a laboratory, where there is often a clear link between the CSRP experience and the exploration and testing of propositions that result in the advancement of knowledge about technical issues in sponsoring organizations. This exploration is often conducted through traditional means, employing predictions based on hypothesis testing, with iterations of testing based on results and revised hypotheses. Management majors do this as well; yet the application of the scientific method unfolds less observably and with greater involvement of the researcher and participants as integral elements of the process. With this understanding in mind, we will review how management majors conduct social science research and how their CSRP experiences support their formation as leaders of character.

Department of Management CSRP

Besides the required USAFA core curriculum, which includes many STEM courses, the curriculum for management majors includes foundational topics such as the principles of management, organizational behavior, accounting, economics, finance, human resources, marketing, strategy, and several elective courses associated with management, such as business ethics and quantitative decision making. Our majors utilize existing management theory and practice to positively impact CSRP organizations in real time. In doing so, they act as action researchers. Action researchers are, traditionally, insiders who conduct research while operating in the context of their organizations (Reason & Bradbury-Huang, 2001). While not being members of the organization, management CSRP participants are not strictly objective researchers; they are also expected to provide their insights and perspectives on the issues they are examining. Thus, participants embed themselves in the

socio-technical context, characterized as a system where individuals and technology interact as operations are performed to produce outcomes (Cooper & Foster, 1971). Changes, such as those wrought by applied research, must consider how relationships across an organization's various social and technical subsystems will be impacted, given that they are interdependent (Appelbaum, 1997) and have, as objectives, joint optimization (Molleman & Broekhuis, 2001). Thus, the researcher has direct involvement with the production and application of relevant research outcomes.

The above type of management research is executed through what is often a cyclical and iterative that includes problem identification, action planning and action taking, observation and reflection, and discussions with members of the organization to consider the applications of what was learned. The latter is important so that organizational contexts can be transformed to align with desired states more closely. Thus, the cadet, as a management researcher, is a temporary facilitator of organizational learning; management majors experience CSRP in a socio-technical system whereby data is collected by the cadet, the organization makes sense of the data, and then both the cadet and organization apply what they have learned to contribute to closing the gap between the initial state and the desired state (Mirvis, 1996). Management majors can contribute to the knowledge resident in the systems of their CSRP clients, even when their projects may not appear, at least on the surface, to be traditional forms of research. We believe this intersection of a management major as both a researcher and a LOC presents a fruitful avenue of exploration.

CSRP Integration Techniques

In our attempt to make a connection between undergraduate management research programs and their role in developing leaders of character, we employed five different techniques in the administration of Department of Management CSRP processes and, subsequently, collected data from current and former CSRP participants

and program directors. The visible manifestations of many of these techniques can be obtained from the authors. First, well before certain program deadlines, we outlined a clear set of expectations and guidelines for both our sponsor organization and cadet CSRP participants (see Appendices A & B). The expectations for the sponsor help laid the foundation for the value that the cadet could bring to their organization while the expectations for the cadet emphasized that they will be representing the Air Force Academy and the Department of Management and should act accordingly. Second, despite some of the minimum standards to participate in CSRP, as outlined in a Dean of Faculty Operating Instruction (OI), we took a whole-person approach to selection; we did not strictly adhere to minimum academic requirements. We actively pursued grade point average (GPA) waivers for those cadets who might not meet the standards described in the OI but who might otherwise be an excellent candidate for the program (e.g. based on past and current instructor feedback from their classroom engagement and performance). Third, we established a cadre of faculty mentors at USAFA who were available throughout the year for CSRP cadets to reach back to with any research questions and concerns (see Appendix C for our initial announcement soliciting faculty mentor volunteers). In addition, these faculty mentors were asked to help their assigned cadet(s) make connections between the process of developing leaders of character and management research at the individual, team, and organizational levels (e.g. providing guidance on what to communicate in email correspondence and how best to follow-up). Fourth, we hosted a "research bootcamp" for our CSRP cadets before they departed and explained, in greater detail, the simultaneous research and process consultation approaches inherent in action research. In line with previous guidance, the bootcamp ensured that each of the participating cadets had a similar understanding of the requirements and process we expected them to follow while on CSRP. We also emphasized the collaborative effort (with their sponsor) of developing a specific and defined research question that would be

useful in narrowing the scope of their projects. Finally, we required reflective journaling throughout the cadets' CSRP journey, which proved useful in enabling them to recall and extract the knowledge and meaningful insights they gained from their research experience. Additionally, we coupled the journaling with a required narrative summary submission upon a cadet's return from CSRP. This summary captured overarching insights on both their research process and their further development as leaders of character. As part of our regular processes (as outlined in a department OI), at the start of the fall semester, cadets gave a presentation to the CSRP directors and other faculty members highlighting how concepts they learned in management courses were observed and how they applied concepts learned in those courses to resolve or improve an issue at their sponsor organization. In addition to anecdotal evidence from cadet recollections of their CSRP experience during presentations and faculty members (who had either participated in CSRP as cadets or had been a CSRP director in the past), quotes from cadet journal entries and narrative summaries constituted the data collected to inform our insights. Below, we incorporate quotes from the latter to describe what we learned from our nascent exploration of whether and how an undergraduate management research program contributes to the deliberate development of leaders of character.

Insights

The LOC framework provides a useful lens through which to evaluate the benefits of our deliberate interventions on management majors' CSRP experience. In their capacity as CSRP participants, conducting research and engaging in experiential learning, cadets have a unique opportunity to own the pursuit of their identity, engage in purposeful experiences, and practice habits of thought and action (Clark, 2021; Easterby-Smith, 1997). To sponsor organizations, cadets may also offer a unique perspective, where their evidence-driven solutions and recommendations have the potential to enhance and elevate organizational performance. Given the context and

management research considerations outlined above, we highlight how our integration techniques interacted with CSRP cadet experiences to enhance the development of management majors as leaders of character.

Living Honorably

When cadets accepted their CSRP slots, among other expectations, they were charged with communicating effectively and with integrity. In the more operational setting of their CSRP projects, cadets practiced and reflected upon the proficiency of their communication skills as they interacted with diverse stakeholders. Further, as they began to engage in applied management research, some cadets were confronted with and had the opportunity to navigate ethical challenges. Through these experiences, cadets practice living honorably as they must handle complex situations with integrity, especially in how they communicate with their sponsors. One member of a four person CSRP team shared:

“This morning, we gave the final presentation to [sponsor organization]. It was special. From a presentation standpoint, it was like nothing I had ever done. Giving a brief to forty people in an atmosphere to improve [the organization] was different than anything I have done.” Member of Management Department CSRP Team #2

While cadets frequently reported that communications within the client system went smoothly, some experienced and reflected upon incidents where communication led to misunderstandings. These cadets shared that they took ownership of the opportunity to learn and do better:

“[I] learned a valuable lesson in communicating today. We let our supervisors know we'd be working from home but did not inform the person directly in charge of our day-to-day. Thus, the confusion.” – Management Department CSRP Participant #9

Each CSRP participant was expected to contribute positively to the organization and, by extension, its stakeholders. Therefore, cadets approached their research with a sense of responsibility to do their best for the sponsor organization, keeping in mind the implications of their work as it was applied in the broader and interconnected system. There were times when cadet observations led to reconsidering how they could lead and manage with integrity, especially as it relates to how people are treated and how organizational performance is impacted:

“There seems to be a ginormous information and understanding gap here between those who are working on the floor and those who are setting the standards for their operations. This disconnect could very well feed the human error probability by putting unreasonable expectations for the work to be completed in too short of a time and causing operators to hurry or even fudge some numbers.”
Management Department CSRP Participant #5

Lifting Others

Each CSRP experience included working closely with members of the sponsor organization and better understanding their unique challenges, history, and personal experiences. Successful collaboration with organizational members fostered shared responsibility and mutual support throughout the project. We believe this knowledge contributes to fine tuning cadets' skillsets as it pertains to lifting others to their best possible selves and, in so doing, improve the performance of their teams.

As cadets engaged with members of the sponsoring organization, their use of and proficiency with interpersonal skills were enhanced, as reflected in personal journals. Cadets not only focused on the tasks or projects they were assigned but also needed to make sure they were building and supporting positive relationships and constructive environments. After CSRP participants returned to campus, their presentations often cited how positive relationships were built. One cadet noted this importance:

“This CSRP far exceeded my expectations, and I am grateful for the incredible [sponsor organization] employees I was able to build relationships with.” Management Department CSRP participant #7

Another CSRP participant wrote:

“People mold to their environment, it is human nature. There needs to be a more foundational structure from the start in order to start changing towards a better culture. Structuring and implementing a useful onboarding process will be beneficial towards strengthening communications.”
Management Department CSRP Participant #3

Elevating Performance

Organizational problems embedded within CSRP projects allowed cadets to embark on a process to solve them, which, inevitably, came with surprises and unexpected challenges. Thus, cadets needed to adapt and demonstrate resilience in the moment. In addition to helping sponsoring organizations solve problems and achieve goals, cadets also enhanced their own problem-solving capabilities. We postulate that, when cadets are called upon to address real-world organizational challenges, they will be spurred to think critically and at a more strategic level. This development will also serve them well as officers of the U.S. Air Force and Space Force, leading people in future conflict.

What they had previously learned as management majors was applied during CSRP in a practical context. Cadets directly experienced how management theories, models, and practices can be leveraged to better understand and solve organizational problems. This led to a deeper understanding of what it takes to be an effective leader, expected to positively facilitate organizational performance. In the following quote, one cadet expressed concern about being able to both strategically and accurately represent his work for the benefit of the organization; specifically, it captures how they had to

make choices that, on one hand, were in line with research objectives, but, on the other, were (mis)aligned with competing ideals.

“I am used to being given a clear set of guidance in terms of what the final project looks like. Here I am not sure what my final product should be, and I am fearful that I am not doing enough. My project asked for no more than a one-page summary of my recommendations. How do I put 60,000+ rows of data and two weeks of extensive work onto one page while still explaining what I want to explain? I submitted a one-page summary today with a slideshow in case they ask me to present it, but I feel like I was not able to share the justification behind my final recommendation.”
Management Department CSRP Participant #8

Inherent in many sponsor organizations’ research projects was the expectation for cadets to develop innovative solutions to existing problems. This fostered a mindset of continuous improvement, which is critical for proactively and reactively dealing with dynamic and evolving environments. As the below quotes demonstrate, even though optimal conditions and structures may not exist within an organization, cadets realized business decisions must continue to be made and executed:

“A key takeaway from all of today was realizing how interconnected the entire company is, yet they fail to create synergies amongst certain business areas which leads to certain bumps in the road.” – Management Department CSRP Team #2

“Today the union votes on whether to end the strike and accept the proposal put forth by [sponsor organization]. Going to work today was a little more tense. Most meetings were cancelled, and there were still only 4 people in office. My boss got heckled on her way into work this morning.” – Management Department CSRP Participant #3

“During the discussion there was an interesting dialogue between [my mentor #1] and me

regarding the fundamental question of whether the [sponsor organization] program is incentivizing the right aspects. It is a thought-provoking question from [my mentor #2] that has been on my mind for some time. Even [my mentor #1] himself expressed uncertainty about this matter. We acknowledged the importance of critically examining the program’s incentives and evaluating whether they align with the desired outcomes. This ongoing exploration needs some further consideration, and I am committed to delving deeper into this topic and formulating a well-rounded answer for my final briefing.” Management Department CSRP Participant #1

This last selection of quotes also reflects several motivations for management majors’ preparation and participation in CSRP, to include a desire to best serve the sponsoring institution and to enrich the cadet’s formation as a LOC.

Discussion and Conclusion

We believe the five program elements, newly implemented in our 2023 CSRP cycle, are critical building blocks for the management CSRP at USAFA and can be leveraged in other undergraduate business management research programs. First, by including specific guidelines and expectations for both participants and sponsors, we emphasized our priority of connecting CSRP participants with committed and experienced organizations. Second, by taking a whole-person approach to CSRP selection, we moved beyond a cadet’s academic performance and selected participants based on their interest and past engagement across the major, as well as our belief they would be a great fit for the program. Third, by establishing a cadre of faculty mentors at USAFA, cadets had access to dedicated resources they could reach back to and connect with to address any research concerns. Fourth, we conducted a “research bootcamp” to establish a common understanding of potential research methods and consultation approaches. Finally, we required

reflective journaling so that participants could better extract the knowledge gained from their research experience while continuing their formation as leaders of character.

What we, as faculty, learned strongly suggests that CSRP, as experienced by management majors, unfolds as a transformative experience that contributes to the formation of leaders of character. Embedded in socio-technical systems that, in many ways, replicate the systems they will serve in as officers and leaders, cadets undertake a multi-faceted process to put into action what it takes to live honorably (i.e., by pursuing their own identity), lift others (i.e., by engaging in purposeful experiences), and elevate performance (i.e., by practicing habits of thought and action). In unfamiliar, VUCA environments and exposed to the broader environmental and mental complexities of humanity, cadets observe and practice what they have learned from the USAFA curriculum; they apply both their discipline's proven research methods as well as what they have previously learned about being leaders of character (i.e., a VUCAH² leadership approach to innovatively solve problems). By being outside of both the classroom and USAFA's "leadership laboratory" and fully engaging in CSRP, cadets can function independently and take advantage of the unique opportunity to add value to and elevate the performance of an organization, before they are expected to as officers in our U.S. Air and Space Forces.

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² Lindsay's (2020) "Letter from the Editor" explaining USAFA's strategic goals within a VUCAH [volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, and humility component of leadership] backdrop.

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Appendix A

DFMA CSRP Sponsor Organization Guidance and Expectations

1. **What the cadet brings to the table:** USAFA cadets participating in the CSRP experience with your organization have developed knowledge and skills related to the USAFA outcomes and courses (see attached “The Management Major at a Glance.docx”). Projects you assign to cadets are expected to challenge the cadets to apply what they have learned and reasonably expand their knowledge and skill-sets. Keep in mind that the cadets begin their major courses as juniors, and your cadets have completed one year of coursework in their management major.
2. **Point of contact:** The Point of Contact (POC) for the cadet shall be a person who has decision-making power to direct the cadet’s activities and is the person the cadet reports to. The POC should NOT be a relative or family friend, although the cadet may have a personal relationship with someone in the client system. This stipulation is intended to minimize conflicts of interest, political considerations, and presumptions about as well as over-familiarity with the host organization.
3. **CSRP project:** The client has a situation (dilemma, problem or desired state identified) within his/her organization that can be framed as a question or objective. Please see attached “Sponsor Org Project Request Form.docx” for a template you can use to outline and communicate details of your proposed research project. To date, the organization is seeking help with:
 - a. clearly identifying the “problem” and/or
 - b. figuring out how to approach the “problem” or opportunity and/or
 - c. developing a plan of action and/or
 - d. acting on a project that has already covered a, b, and c
4. **Felt need for CSRP project:** The POC him/herself has embraced the organization’s “felt need” or urgency to realize outcomes from the project assigned to the cadet. We ask that hosting organizations do their best to avoid projects that are not of importance to the organization in order to support USAFA or the cadet CSRP.
5. **Mutual understanding of CSRP project, Part I:** The CSRP occurs over a five- or six-week period, which is a very short time period. Communicating the scope of the project should be discussed in-depth with the cadet at the beginning of the engagement. In the early stages of the CSRP experience, the situation is framed as a project where the generation of new (and actionable) knowledge for the client system is the primary goal. (This more closely aligns with research as opposed to a traditional internship.)
6. **Mutual understanding of CSRP project, Part II:** The POC and cadet are expected to mutually discuss their understanding of the project and articulate a desired state that may be reached by the end of the five- or six-week CSRP. The POC and cadet should meet periodically (at least once per week) to review the agreement and make necessary modifications to the project specifics or scope of the project.
7. **Cadet understanding of the context of the CSRP project:** Note that we advise the cadet to take some time (1–3 days) at the beginning of their residency to explore the context in which the project resides. This may involve talking to people within the organization, reading existing materials, plant tours, etc. This gives the cadet an opportunity to understand the context and the specifics of the project before they dive into the work. At the conclusion of this brief period, we suggest that the cadet and POC meet to review their earlier understanding of the scope of the project. Discussions during this period should serve align the cadet’s understanding of the project and how to proceed and that these match the expectations of the POC.

Based on the above, the scope of the CSRP project may include a, b, c, and/or d.

8. **Cadet role in CSR project:** The client agrees that the project is such that the cadet must serve as a researcher and be more than a pair of hands and is expected to develop an understanding of the business of the organization (or unit), the context in which the project resides, the resources available for pursuit of the research, access to the POC and others who are involved with the project, clear scope of project and expectations, and the agency to undertake the project employing his/her decision making skills and applying his/her knowledge. (A pair of hands is

someone who does simply performs tasks as assigned by the client, often not requiring much discernment and input on the part of the cadet. The pair of hands projects are often straightforward, even simple, tasks that the client could easily perform but has simply not had the time or manpower.)

*The cadets will also be receiving this information to use as they begin their interactions with you and your organization.

Appendix B

Guidelines for Management Majors to Accept CSRP

Congratulations!

You have been selected for the Department of Management (DFM) Cadet Summer Research Program (CSRP). CSRP is a great program, and we are excited to work with you throughout next semester and the summer to make this a valuable experience.

To make this official and confirm your slot selection, you must accept the CSRP guidelines and expectations below by replying to this email and confirming your intent (regardless of whether you want an in-person, remote, or hybrid CSRP project).

- Once you commit to CSRP (by accepting your slot in reply to this email), you will be removed from consideration for Cadet Summer Language Immersion Program (CSLIP) summer leadership positions, Foreign Academy Visits (FAV), Cultural Immersion Programs (CIP), Powered Flight, etc. (CSRP takes priority.)
- CSRP will take place during the first and second summer periods and you are still required to work a cadre program during third period. Therefore, you must be willing to give up all or most of your summer break to participate.
 - o If you have not already been asked to do so, you will get a form to fill out your summer preferences. I am aware that CSRP is not an option. Unless you withdraw from CSRP, your summer schedule will reflect CSRP for the first two periods regardless of your preferences. However, please still be honest with your summer preferences so you can get your desired program during third period.
 - § You cannot participate in a leadership position that takes up more than one summer period.

- Be familiar with the goals of the DFM CSRP: To help you become better leaders, managers and problem solvers by providing you with opportunities to:
 - o Reinforce your understanding of management concepts by seeing them applied outside of the classroom.
 - o Apply management concepts and conduct research to help an external sponsor organization.
 - o Bring innovative best practices from sponsor organizations back to USAFA for continual improvement to our program.
- Your sole job is CSRP during this time. Expect to work a typical office shift schedule throughout your CSRP (Monday-Friday, 0730-1630). Your sponsor organization will update you with their specific expectations.
- Uniform of the Day (UOD) will be determined by your sponsor organization. We will update you as we receive that information.
- At the end of your CSRP, each sponsor organization will have expectations for your final deliverable that they will brief to you at the beginning of your CSRP.
- In addition, and following your return from CSRP, each of you will be required to produce a presentation and brief the Management Department, describing your research and what you accomplished over the summer. This will include (at a minimum):
 - § How concepts you learned in USAFA Management courses were observed at the sponsor organization.
 - § How you applied concepts you learned in USAFA Management courses to resolve/improve an issue/component of your sponsor organization.
 - § Presentations should follow the basic sequence of background information, objective, research conducted, ranking of alternatives, resolution proposed, implementation analysis (if possible), and lessons learned.

- While we will consider your preferences for research projects and sponsoring organizations, you understand that you may not get your top choices (to include those who sought to create their own project with an org of their choosing).
- You are expected to meet both your sponsor's and our expectations at the end of this CSRP. If you encounter any issues, you should coordinate with us early and often so we can get you on the right path. Letting us know at the end of your CSRP that you will not be able to meet our expectations is too late and may result in disciplinary action.
 - o If your CSRP sponsor reaches out to you, please provide them the information they request and cc both of your DFM CSRP Directors on the response.
 - § However, NEVER sign any paperwork without coordinating with us beforehand (all paperwork will have to undergo a legal review before you can sign-we will coordinate the legal review).
- Your CSRP sponsors are paying USAFA for all of your travel expenses (airfare, per diem, lodging, transportation or rental car, if they choose to allow one). They send the money to the Air Force and you are reimbursed via the Defense Travel System (DTS). This means that your travel must follow all government regulations and will be based on what works best for the sponsor organization.
- Before we can book your travel for CSRP, I will need each of you to verify that your Government Travel Card (GTC) is active
 - o Call the number on the back of your card and "check account status" and ensure that the expiration date extends past Aug 2023.
 - o If you don't have a GTC or there are issues, please let me know as soon as possible (ASAP) and coordinate with your Academy Military Trainer (AMT) to resolve the issue.
- Ensure your DTS profile is updated, including your Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) bank account and GTC information
 - o You can log into DTS here: <https://dtsproweb.defensetravel.osd.mil/dts-app/pubsite/all/view>
 - o If you do not have a DTS profile, please coordinate with your AMT ASAP to have an account created and let me know this is the case.
- In April, we will be scheduling meeting(s) with you all to begin discussing summer logistics, your research projects, and what it means to conduct research. You are expected to make every effort to attend these meetings and communicate with us in advance if you cannot.
- Until summer schedules are released, you can anticipate/plan on the following itinerary for your CSRP (understanding that dates may shift a few days in either direction):
 - o Travel to CSRP Location: Beginning Monday after graduation week (You are most likely traveling on Memorial Day, but this allows you to start your CSRP on Tuesday morning (and saves your sponsors money over the weekend). Your sponsors have all approved or requested this itinerary.)
 - o Return/Travel to Colorado Springs or Break Location o/a the beginning of the fourth of July holiday
 - § You will most likely have a week of summer break following your CSRP. You can travel to a break location of your choice or you can return to USAFA. You will need to decide what you'd like to do by the time we create your DTS authorization. DO NOT BOOK ANY PERSONAL TRAVEL UNTIL WE GIVE YOU THE APPROVAL.

Appendix C

Initial Announcement Soliciting CSRP Faculty Mentors

Message to faculty: looking for CSRP mentors

DFM's CSRP Directors are seeking help from our amazing faculty in the department to guide cadets in certain operational/functional setting they will be headed into over their summer CSRP project. For example, if you are familiar with Statistical Process Control (SPC) techniques to control production in manufacturing facilities or inventory level analysis and maximization procedures, we would pair you up with cadets sponsored by an (organization that designs, develops, and sells gear solutions for the DoD and other large industrial corporations.

The time commitment of participating as a faculty mentor should be minimal (e.g., 2–4 meetings these next

few months leading up to their departure o/a 28 May). Our goal is for you to support our CSRP program by acting as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) SMEs and working with the cadets to better understand and refine the scope of their projects and to answer questions related to the research context (e.g. operational setting, functional unit) and provide applicable theories/frameworks/training/certifications/analytical tools/etc that may be useful to them in conducting research and solving problems for their sponsor org. Additionally, the mentoring role could include how best to communicate back and forth with the sponsor org POC, as they may seek additional info or clarification, throughout this journey.

Would this be something you'd be interested in? If so, please let us know. I will also be adding a list of the research projects (once we get them from sponsors) to our Teams channel for you to review to determine the best fit.