

DCN 4901
Executive Correspondence



BOB TAFT
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

BRAC Commission

JUL 19 2005

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July 19, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman, Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to realign or relocate the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) at Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

As you may be aware, AFIT has been studied many times throughout its long and distinguished history, dating back to 1919 with the establishment of the Air School of Application at McCook Field. Each time the same conclusions are reached. AFIT meets core long-term science and technology needs of the Air Force in a highly efficient and effective manner that cannot be duplicated in the private sector.

The issue of private graduate education versus military graduate education has been uniquely addressed by the Air Force through the establishment of a strategic partnership, the Dayton Area Graduate Studies Institute (DAGSI). The University of Dayton, Wright State University and AFIT realize the benefits of leveraging and integrating their combined resources and access to faculty, facilities and equipment unique to each institution. The continued success of DAGSI brought in three additional member institutions. These are The Ohio State University, the University of Cincinnati and Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. This relationship successfully makes available Defense and Non-Defense courses, meeting not only the need for educating military officers and civil servants, but also providing a fertile recruiting base for the entry level civilian scientist and engineering needs of the many technical organizations at Wright Patterson.

The Air Force has been at transformational organization throughout its history. One key enabler to transformational thinking is the graduate education of officers and civilian leaders in emerging technologies. The synergy of locating graduate engineering programs next to the Air Force Research Laboratories (AFRL) provides an environment found nowhere else in the Department of Defense. This proximity enables the curriculum to be current and relevant to the emerging requirements of the Air Force. This relationship is further enhanced by the acquisition and logistics functions which are also located at Wright Patterson.

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A Booz Allen & Hamilton study performed for Air University in 1998 concluded, "The primary contributor to AFIT's extreme benefit is its ability to focus on unique technologies that are key to the evolution of the USAF's warfighting capability." AFIT, through its Civilian Institution Program, strikes a perfect balance between seeking the best programs from public and private institutions and maintaining an in-house capability tailored to unique Air Force needs. The DAGSI program extends that opportunity within the AFIT residence curriculum.

In addition, AFIT students conduct more than 400 research projects each year that are directly relevant to current Air Force needs. The value of this work approaches \$30 million annually. This benefit would erode significantly without the collocation of AFRL and the ability to easily accommodate the conduct of research at the classified level.

AFIT operates modern classrooms, libraries and laboratories. The faculty, a 50-50 mix of civilian and military professors is amongst the finest found anywhere. Each accreditation of the graduate programs has been for the maximum allowed duration, a testament to the quality of the degree programs.

AFIT provides tremendous military value to the Air Force, with the right people, the right programs, and the right location to provide transformational capabilities long into the future. I strongly urge you to leave AFIT in its present location and find ways to add programs that will enhance its excellence and relevance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Taft", written over a horizontal line.

Bob Taft
Governor