Incoming Air Force ROTC cadets,

My name is Cadet Michelle Ford. I am a rising senior at Valparaiso University majoring in Meteorology and have been a cadet in Air Force ROTC for three years. First and foremost, congratulations on your acceptance to one of the schools in Detachment 225! I am excited that you are interested in joining AFROTC at our Det. I remember when I was making the same decisions you are making now. I was nervous about whether or not AFROTC was the right fit for me and how it would impact my college career. Nonetheless, I joined Det 225 fall of freshman year and have never looked back. I have made incredibly close friends, learned invaluable leadership skills, become a more focused student, and improved my physical fitness. All in all, AFROTC is a tremendous opportunity, and you get out what you put into this program.

At Det 225, you will join an organization which includes a diverse group of students from Bethel College, Holy Cross College, Indiana University-South Bend, Saint Mary’s College, Trine University, University of Notre Dame, and Valparaiso University. Members of Det 225 are a close-knit community who are firmly dedicated to integrity, service, and excellence. At the detachment, you will be able to participate in a wide range of unique opportunities such as base visits where you fly A-10 and B-2 simulators, flying with the local Civil Air Patrol units, competing against the Army and Navy ROTC units in physical challenges and sports, presenting the American flag at sporting events then watching the game from the sidelines, community service, and a myriad of other opportunities too numerous to list.

If you decide to join Air Force ROTC at Det 225, I highly encourage attending our New Cadet Orientation Program (NCOP). Due to the timing of semester schedules for our different schools, NCOP will be slightly different this year than it has been previously. There will be an introductory day on either Friday, August 16 for Trine and Valparaiso cadets, or Thursday, August 22 for Notre Dame, Holy Cross, Bethel, Saint Mary’s, and IUSB cadets. Then, there will be an orientation weekend starting in the evening on Friday, September 6, running through the early afternoon on Sunday, September 8. We realize that this is in the midst of the academic year, but we will ensure that you do not miss any classes on Friday and that you will have adequate time to complete assignments over the weekend.

The experience and knowledge you gain from this weekend will be highly beneficial to your AFROTC and college career, and you will not want to miss out! The introductory day will cover pertinent material to being an AFROTC cadet and new college student, including getting to know your classmates, informational briefings, and issuing official uniforms. The weekend orientation will introduce you to what it is like to be an Air Force cadet, teach you the basics of military life, bond with your class, and inform you of the vast opportunities open to you as you work to become an Officer in the World’s Greatest Air Force. You will learn and practice military customs and courtesies, marching, and drill and participate in group leadership scenarios.
and PT (physical training). This weekend will also help you transition from being a high school student to a college student and provide tips and advice from upperclassmen on managing the demands of academics, ROTC, and the host of other extracurricular activities the schools offer. NCOP is an incredible opportunity to develop close relationships within your class and obtain the tools you need to succeed in your first semester in ROTC. I have outstanding memories and lasting friendships from my NCOP and am excited to provide the same experience to you and your fellow cadets!

If you plan to attend the introductory day, please arrive on Friday, August 16 (Trine and Valpo) or Thursday, August 22 (Notre Dame and other local schools) between 0800-0830 at Pasquerilla Center, University of Notre Dame. The introductory day will last until 1500. The final great part of NCOP Introductory Day is that all cadets may move into their permanent dorms a day early!

If you plan to attend the Notre Dame Marching Band camp, please let us know. Band cadets and parents will arrive at Pasquerilla Center on Wednesday, August 21 between 0800-0830 for the first part of introductory day, and will be dismissed at 1045. The following day, Thursday, August 22, cadets will be able to participate in the March-Out with the band, then rejoin their class at Pasquerilla Center for the remainder of Introductory Day at 1215. Up to a third of the cadet wing is in the Band and we have a great working relationship with Dr. Dye and his team.

For your parents, the Detachment will host a reception the morning of Friday, August 16 (Trine and Valpo), Wednesday, August 21 (Band), or Thursday, August 22 (ND and locals) followed by a Welcome Briefing and Q&A session with Colonel Ramsby, our Detachment commander, other cadre members, and upperclassmen cadets so your parents can learn about your life as a ROTC cadet. Parents will then have an opportunity to tour campus with a current cadet to acquaint themselves with our ROTC facilities and environment.

Upon the beginning of the academic year, you will receive further information and guidance on the Orientation Weekend. However, please reserve 6-8 September (starting at 1700, or 5:00 pm, on Friday until 1330, or 1:30 pm on Sunday) on your calendar so you are able to attend this highly valuable training and team building weekend.

Again, thank you for your interest in our Air Force ROTC program. I hope to see you all at NCOP. It is an incredible opportunity to meet other cadets who, like you, want to be part of something bigger than themselves. Should you decide to pursue ROTC here at Det 225, you will be rewarded with amazing experiences and lifelong friendships made throughout your college career. Until August 16, 21, or 22, have a safe and relaxing summer and take pride in knowing that you will be joining one of the most prestigious and powerful organizations in the world, the United States Air Force.

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MICHELLE J. FORD, C/Col, NCOP Commander