AFROTC DETACHMENT 485:

a management analysis

Team Project T4
Group 8
Management Skills Spring 2025

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PART 1: COMPANY ACCESS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

AFROTC Detachment 485 is a detachment in the Northeast Region of the United States Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), a pivotal commissioning source for United States Air Force and Space Force officers known for its rigorous training and extensive track record of fostering excellence in cadets. AFROTC is not a corporation, business, or club, but a military training organization. Located on College Avenue, Detachment 485 is Rutgers University's Air Force ROTC detachment. Run by cadets attending Rutgers, Middlesex Community College, The College of New Jersey, and Princeton University, Detachment 485 abides closely by its mission and vision statements:

MISSION

To recruit, develop, and empower students to commission as leaders of character in our Nation's Air and Space Forces.

VISION

An AFROTC detachment built on trust, united in purpose, driven by warrior ethos and esprit de corps.

These statements guide the organization's best practices such as aligning training with requirements set by the chain of command, educating cadets on current events, providing leadership opportunities, arranging trips to learn about the Air Force, and empowering cadets through physical and mental fitness.

While there is no direct competition in a business sense, AFROTC Detachment 485 competes with other AFROTC detachments nationwide for scholarship opportunities, field training slots, and aeronautically rated career slots (e.g., pilot slots). ROTC detachments

representing different military branches also compete for recruits. As a result, the Cadet Wing (the organization consisting of all the cadets in the detachment) introduced one of its largest classes of freshman cadets ever in the Fall of 2024.

Jobs available to AFROTC cadets reflect the group's overarching purpose to develop officers and leaders of character. For instance, cadets are held accountable by the wing's Inspector General, a position staffed by a senior cadet. Additionally, the detachment has a Training and Education Squadron that oversees physical training, the academic curriculum for cadets, and an Operations Group that houses Beginning Cadet (BC) and Beginning Cadet Leader (BCL) squadrons. BC cadets are cadets in their first year of AFROTC, and BCL cadets are cadets in their second year. BCL cadets will receive their AFROTC contract and scholarship over the summer.

Cadets are rotated each semester through jobs differing in levels of interaction with junior cadets and overall organizational responsibility in order to develop their leadership skills and prepare to be officers after getting their degrees. Each cadet's rank is assigned based on the job's complexity and level of responsibility. For example, the Cadet Wing Commander is assigned the rank of Cadet Colonel, while the Recruiting Officer is assigned the rank of Cadet Second Lieutenant.

Detachment 485 has about 80 cadets. All cadets are full-time college students, most of whom are between 18 and 23 years old. About 27% of the total Cadet Wing is female. Of the female cadets with contracts to join active duty after graduation, 40% will be commissioned into the U.S. Space Force. The Cadet Wing is about 40% White, 40% Asian, and 10% Black. With respect to leadership decisions, from the commanding officers in the detachment to the President, can impact training decisions made by the Cadet Wing. Military uniforms, ceremonial rifles, and

other military equipment are primarily purchased through military vendors. If some items, such as Velcro name tapes for operational camouflage uniforms, are out of stock or cannot be procured through military vendors in a reasonable time, private vendors such as Amazon are utilized on an individual basis.

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTION AND SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW AND SURVEY DATA

Data collection for this project was conducted by Emmanuel George, both our team member and a seasoned AFROTC cadet with connections to cadets of all ranks within the detachment. In both his experience as well as the cadets he interviewed, some of the most common problems occurring in the organization came down to human factors such as stress, motivation, and work-life balance; all of which played a huge part in how well the cadets could support each other on their journey to becoming officers.

Our interviews revealed how cadets navigated these issues by finding unique strategies to cope. Our questions sought to connect the realities of a military training program with the concepts of management covered in class. Given that officers are placed in leadership positions, the overlap between the content taught in Management Skills and Leadership Lab–AFROTC's weekly 3-hour leadership course–is high.

We spoke with one of the most junior-ranking AFROTC cadets (those who joined ROTC in the Fall 2024 semester as freshmen), one cadet who is just over halfway through the program, and one of the senior-ranking cadets who is commissioning this summer.

Burnout and lack of motivation were among the most common problems identified in the Cadet Wing. Newer cadets similarly mentioned a lack of motivation. The role of being an

AFROTC cadet can become stressful when trying to manage all the responsibilities that come with doing well in the program, along with trying to balance schoolwork and social activities.

According to more senior cadets, prolonged stress leads to burnout. Causes of stress include failing to communicate and not taking breaks from AFROTC. Cadet Captain Esha Jain, who is in charge of Detachment 485's Communications and Outreach Group, stated that "sometimes, talking to someone can relieve the stress because the emotional and mental stress can build up and cause poor quality of work." (Appendix C, Jain, 4). Similarly, with respect to motivation, Cadet Captain Jain stressed the importance of having a support system. "Having [a support system] will help [cadets] improve and feel like they are part of a team," she said (Appendix C, Jain, 2).

Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Tom, the Operations Group Commander, and the most senior cadet we interviewed, stated that taking time to focus on yourself is a great way to stay motivated and reduce stress. "Setting boundaries is the biggest stress management tool," he said, describing how AFROTC should not be the overwhelming theme of college life and that variety is needed to stay motivated (Appendix C, Tom, 4).

Cadet Third Class Grady Crumpler, the most junior cadet we interviewed, proposed that stress can be mitigated organizationally, e.g., a lack of coordination or command leads to surprises down the road, hindering the team's ability to focus on performing. Speaking on motivation, Crumpler stated that the primary drivers of motivation for cadets of his rank are the leadership of senior cadets, respect for fellow cadets, and the fear of failing (Appendix C, Crumpler, 3).

Our interviews identified motivation and diversity as key levers in team performance. Students join ROTC with a variety of motivations. Some students join just to explore the

military, while others may join in pursuit of specific careers such as cybersecurity or being a pilot. Beyond this, people have also joined Detachment 485 in search of community and friendship. Students who want to be pilots have to compete nationally for pilot slots, motivating them to become high performers in the program. In contrast, a cadet who is exploring their interests and opportunities does not have to feel the same pressure. When it comes time to work as a team, motivation within the team can be unbalanced. Those who feel the pressure to perform are proactive and invest more time into improving their skills, leading up to physical training and leadership classes, while others may seek to perform at the bare minimum.

PART 3: COURSE CONCEPT IDENTIFICATION

Of the topics discussed in Management Skills, intrinsic and extrinsic employee motivations were the most prevalent in the interviews we conducted. Both junior and senior cadets directly cited a lack of motivation hindering greater team performance. Cadet Captain Jain, Cadet Third Class Crumpler, and Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Tom talk about ways they motivate higher-ranking mentors, peers, and lower-ranking classmen. For instance, Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Tom tries "to determine the root cause" of their issues, and "seeks to find the intrinsic motivation" within the people he leads by finding and assigning them tasks they are passionate about (Appendix C, Tom, 2). Cadet Captain Jain has a slightly different method: "building relationships with [her] team, taking time to know them," using personal connection to understand why people may not be performing to their full potential (Appendix C, Jain, 2). Her strategy is to offer a support system to help them improve and feel part of the team, fostering an intrinsic motivator of teamwork and camaraderie. Cadet Third Class Crumpler emphasizes how the collective culture deliberately created in military training creates intrinsic motivation. For example, the fear of letting their fellow wingmen down, he says, is an intrinsic factor that helps

keep cadets motivated. This contrasts with the more individualistic civilian culture found in American society. Cadet Crumpler also references extrinsic motivators, saying that in addition to his authority over other cadets, there is the simple motivation to keep one's job, including at Detachment 485. There are minimum requirements to not be discharged, including meeting certain GPA and physical requirements, per AFROTC's website, and longevity gets one promoted to higher ranks. However, in addition to this, cadets seeking competitive career fields, such as pilot or intelligence officer, are extrinsically motivated to win awards and earn recognition for demonstrating excellence and dedication, since those metrics improve their chances of getting into those careers.

PART 4: FURTHER ANALYSIS OF OUTPUT PROBLEM AND INTEGRATION WITH COURSE CONTENT

The first concept from the course that we have chosen to highlight in order to analyze the output problem is that of employee motivation. Employee motivation refers to the internal and external forces that push individuals to act. Extrinsic motivation refers to physical and obvious rewards like monetary compensation, recognition, and the avoidance of failure. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, depends on the individual's desire to succeed in order to have meaning for what they do. Both of these forms of motivation are reflected with Detachment 485 through the implementation of ranks and rewards, but also internal motivators that push cadets.

The course concept of employee motivation is directly connected to the interviews we conducted. For example, Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Tom described how he motivates cadets by identifying what drives them personally, saying that he tries "to determine the root cause" of underperformance, which allows him to "find the intrinsic motivation within" his team (Appendix C, Tom, 2). This directly correlates to the concept of intrinsic motivation, as he aligns

internal goals. In contrast, Cadet Third Class Grady Crumpler shows the importance of extrinsic motivators. This includes meeting GPA requirements, physical standards, and remaining in the program. He notes that cadets not wanting to let their fellow wingmen down serves as an important motivator in the culture of the detachment.

The study of employee motivation provides an illustration of why the output problem of burnout occurs within AFROTC Detachment 485. Through our interviews, burnout stems from having prolonged stress through academic, physical, and organizational demands. When cadets and leadership alike are not intrinsically motivated for a sustainable amount of time, they begin to disengage. For example, Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Tom discussed the importance of finding what personally motivates cadets to help them stay invested in their responsibilities. Without aligning the group's tasks to intrinsic drivers, cadets are further exposed to experiencing fatigue and feeling disconnected. The reason Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Tom emphasizes this is due to his past experiences of how not focusing on intrinsic motivation can lead to a lack of motivation. Extrinsically, junior cadets like Cadet Grady Crumpler described how meeting standards and fear of failure are dominant motivators. These pressures lead to prolonged stress that can lead to burnout, which occurs within the organization. This is because extrinsic motivation can be effective in the short term, but if it's not combined with internal motivation, it can cause a lack of productivity in the long term.

Students are attracted to AFROTC for a myriad of reasons, as discussed previously. Military management principles are far disconnected from these financial, social, and ethical incentives that drive prospective cadets to recruitment offices however, aiming above all to manufacture a product: soldiers. While Detachment 485's mission and vision statements speak to ideals of unity, trust, and camaraderie, ROTC, as the nation's largest source of commissioned

officers across all branches, is dually critical in laying the framework for learning and operating in military contexts (Embry-Riddle, Army ROTC). Diversity, defined as internal and external differences between individuals, is not so much a goal of ROTC or the military at large, but rather a management challenge, similar in the way private enterprises perceive it. The military poses no surface-level diversity initiatives in its recruitment and enlistment criteria, instead requiring candidates to meet citizenship, age, education, and physical and medical standards (usa.gov, Requirements for Joining the U.S. Military); ROTC recruitment is much the same.

A failure of ROTC to indoctrinate cadets can create threats inhibiting tactical and strategic goals (Raabe, pp. 23). Thus, ROTC and military education is greatly standardized, requiring all cadets to undergo a set curriculum. Surface-level diversity takes on a new meaning in ROTC, through faultlines created along rank, age, experience, leadership positions, and their established norms. Cadets at all levels play a critical role in motivating one another and encouraging self-determination–i.e., competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Additionally, the rigid hierarchical structure of an ROTC detachment – similar to active duty – can hinder deep diversity that may lead to more creative decision-making, higher rates of satisfaction, and improvements to organizational performance. While the military outpaces many corporations in its diversity management, with many companies looking to the military to model their diversity initiatives (Deakin, "The U.S. Armed Forces"), it is arguable that ROTC and the military cannot meaningfully integrate corporate diversity management principles without compromising their command structure. ROTC's organizational structure is similar to that of businesses operating with highly vertical configurations or high-power distance and low individualism, such as China or Russia (Cultural Factor Group, Country Comparison Tool).

Diversity is implicitly addressed in responses from Detachment 485. Though the militaristic hierarchy in AFROTC makes it difficult to observe diversity in group decision-making (Raabe, pp. 31), as mentioned in *Chapter 2: Diversity and Inclusion at Work*, cadets in leadership positions overseeing subordinates consider individual perspectives while balancing often contradictory duties to uphold ROTC cultural norms of respect and trust. Cadet Captain Esha Jain stated,

> "Within ROTC and the military in general, no matter what base or even branch you are in, there is a similar culture. We follow a strict schedule and we listen to what our chain of command is expecting us to do. This makes leadership in the military sort of standardized in a manner where we all sort of share similar cultural norms. Whereas in the civilian world, we are working with people who are probably not used to making such huge sacrifices as those in the military, and there are more prominent, unique perspectives. This makes leadership require a lot of adaptability because you have to understand the different dynamics." (Appendix C, Jain, 3)

ROTC systemically fails to address surface-level diversity, leaving it to trusted leaders to interpret the commands of higher-ups. Interviewees noted that cadet leadership in conflict management can be extremely variable, potentially leading to operational hazards. Leaders over-relying on ROTC norms to address operational goals or settle conflicts can fail to recognize the importance of interpersonal understanding that builds motivation in groups. Strategic diversity initiatives could be used in AFROTC to set norms in addressing identity-related friction instead of leaving it to leaders to just "pick up on it," thereby reducing variability and increasing operational efficiency.

Together, the course concepts of employee motivation and diversity provide clarification as to why burnout challenges the cadets of Detachment 485. Motivation through external means provides a source of pressure that leads to prolonged stress. Until management accommodates internal motivators, stress can lead to burnout that negatively affects the organization. Furthermore, the course concept of diversity highlights how ROTC largely leaves issues relating to the personal differences between cadets unclarified, overburdening leaders with guesswork and leading to burnout. Laying a framework for leaders to address diversity issues could greatly reduce variation in conflict management and improve operational efficiency without compromising ROTC's robust command chain. It is crucial that Detachment 485 addresses motivation and diversity in order to prevent further burnout from cadets.

PART 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

Mentorship Program. To help with the problem of motivation in cadets, Detachment 485 should implement a mentorship program. The cadet mentorship program would provide intrinsic motivation for cadets of all experience levels. The goal of this program would be to boost cadet motivation, decrease burnout, and create a strong bond between beginning cadets and experienced cadet leaders. It creates a structured and meaningful relationship that allows cadets to learn from someone they can become comfortable with and familiarize themselves with. The goals of the program within AFROTC would be to develop leaders, manage stress for new cadets, and increase cadet retention. This program would be helpful because cadets can experience low motivation in their first few years, caused primarily by a lack of direction at the beginning of their time. Additionally, cadets have a hard time adjusting to the demands of the AFROTC and their coursework, leading to burnout or fatigue. Without a sense of support, cadets could only be engaged by extrinsic factors, such as fears of failure and discharge, or scholarships

and military careers. Therefore, a mentorship program that focuses on intrinsic drivers can help strengthen the personal connection to the AFROTC mission and their unit, offering a sense of belonging in the community. The program would start by laying out the idea to the detachment cadre (the active-duty officers and senior enlisted leaders) who supervise the Cadet Wing, and securing approval. The next step would be to begin training potential leaders on their responsibilities and how they are expected to fulfill them. After that, they will be paired with cadets, and the program will kick off.

An example of a mentorship program is the Eisenhower Leadership Development (ELDP) Program and the Tactical Officers (TAC) within the program. The program consists of courses and field training that prepares them to train a cadet. Tactical Officers are expected to "Coach, teach, and mentor the cadet chain of command by empowering them to take ownership and responsibility for their Cadet Company" (West Point, Tactical Officers). This program gives cadets quality guidance and a solid foundation to start their journey at West Point. It allows cadets to focus on their training and not feel overwhelmed by other potential concerns about adjusting, creating a strong bond between the cadets and the TAC.

Another example of a mentorship program is General Electric Aerospace's US Development Programs. The two-year rotational program is designed to grow the skills and knowledge of entry-level employees in critical functions in the company, and features rotational assignments, experience on projects with a business impact, technical and leadership experience, a strong sense of community and support, and active coaching and connection with experienced employees. Since the program was created, "Over 25% of today's top leaders at GE started on these programs" (GE Aerospace, Global Development Programs), showing how successful the program has been and serving as a great example of how guidance at the beginning of an

employee's career can set them up for success. Mentorship programs like these give employees the confidence and support they need to succeed in their role at the company, and therefore, a substantial way to learn the necessary technical skills and build strong relationships to feel comfortable.

Mentorship Downsides. While the cadet mentorship program is great in theory, there are some potential reasons that it may not work. One reason is that not all senior cadets may be skilled enough or motivated enough to properly mentor the new cadets. Additionally, some senior cadets may not absorb the information about leadership fully, therefore struggling with mentoring the cadet they get paired with. Some other senior cadets may not be motivated enough and view it as an extra task or chore they must complete. Others may view it as something that looks good on a resume or transcript, rather than as a potential opportunity to be part of something meaningful. They may not be participating in the program for the right reasons, which would harm the program's effectiveness. The biggest cost of the program is time, as senior cadets will have to devote their time to getting trained, training their cadets, and monitoring their cadets' progress. The cadets themselves will have to complete anything asked of them by their mentor, they will need to check in, and if any potential problems arise, they will have to spend more time solving them. The program can backfire if it is poorly implemented and cadets don't take the program seriously, leading to them just going through the motions and not grasping the meaning behind their work. Members will become disengaged and not get the full benefits of the program, causing disappointment among the mentees and decreasing faith in the program, and therefore its efficacy.

Communicating Mentorship Results. One influence principle that should be used is the principle of social proof. Social proof relates to people seeing something work for someone else

and being influenced to believe it could also work for them. Showing the examples at West Point and General Electric will provide credibility to the recommendation, especially given the former's relation to the AFROTC organization. This will influence the AFROTC to believe in the idea and trust it enough to implement it. Another influence principle that would be effective is the liking principle. We can do this by complimenting and praising the AFROTC to provide the idea that we believe in what they are doing. Constructive criticism is important because if we only talk negatively about their work, they will not have a positive opinion of our group and will be less likely to accept and implement our recommendations. For this reason, some tact will be needed to offer our advice, including praising what they are doing well already, such as some senior cadets already taking initiatives similar to our suggestion, while also criticizing other issues, such as lack of motivation and burnout amongst cadets.

Diversity Initiatives. Addressing deep-diversity, AFROTC Detachment 485 can implement diversity training programs in its Training and Education Squadron, tasked with teaching leadership how to accommodate interpersonal differences in the execution of command objectives. Applying this program in the intermediate phases of a cadet's tenure with ROTC would allow them to transition into leadership roles with the training, minimizing time spent in the program and maximizing its effects as cadets assume more and more responsibility in the organization.

Demonstrating the positive effects of diversity training in highly vertical organizational structures, Alibaba Group, a multinational technologies company based in Hangzhou, China, has successfully implemented diversity training to increase the number of women at all levels. At a 2019 summit on women's entrepreneurship, Chairman Jack Ma stated, "Our secret of success is the women in our company, which also makes us distinct." (chinadaily.com.cn, Women are key

to Alibaba's success: Jack Ma). On 31 March, 2024, women accounted for over 47 percent of total employees, 41 percent of management and 30 percent of senior executives (ESG, pp. 56). Alibaba Group has enshrined diversity in their Code of Business Conduct, their compensation structure, and company learning (ESG, pp. 57). Importantly, Alibaba has implemented an internal online messaging system to reduce barriers between employees and management, transcending hierarchy and eliminating siloing (ESG, pp. 58).

Another example of the transformative powers of diversity in an organization is Accenture, a professional services company renowned for their "Inclusion Starts with I" program (forbes.com, America's Best Employers of Diversity). The initiative promotes diversity through interactive workshops, awareness campaigns, and engagement from individuals at all levels of Accenture. By using real-life scenarios to demonstrate diversity concepts, Accenture was able to build a more understanding and inclusive culture primed for effective communication and quick yet empathetic conflict management.

Diversity Downsides. There are notable downsides to implementing diversity initiatives in AFROTC, the largest being compatibility with existing organizational structure and another being usefulness to target recruitment segmentations. It is likely AFROTC has not developed programs promoting and understanding diversity because it could conflict with the militaristic command culture. Though internal development of a diversity program would be cheap and a negligible time commitment, Cadet leadership may find needing to understand the underlying diversity of their subordinates creates a bottleneck, particularly in low-impact decision-making. Relating closely to this is the potential issue that the deep-diversity of population segments targeted by ROTC recruiters lacks enough variability to make the development of diversity programs worthwhile. For example, addressing diversity of ideologies in AFROTC detachments

would result in minimal yields considering military veterans, by and large, vote Republican (Pew Research, "Military Veterans Remains Republican Group").

Communicating Diversity Results. To properly implement a diversity training program, the Cadet Wing will need to seek approval of the Detachment 485 cadre who supervise the Cadet Wing. One influence principle we could use is consistency, given the military in general is historically diverse, being some of the first organizations to desegregate, for instance. Therefore, Detachment 485 should be receptive to the suggestions of these initiatives and wish to remain consistent with the military's historical diversity. The second influence principle we should utilize is Social Proof. Given the widespread use of diversity programs in both the public and private sector, Detachment 485 should be additionally willing to hear out our suggestions and join the many other organizations that have diversity initiatives.

PART 6: BIBLIOGRAPHY, ENDNOTES AND APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Individuals Interviewed	Rank/Position	Date Contacted	Date Interviewed
Cadet Fourth Class Grady Crumpler	Basic Cadet; Drill and Ceremonies Officer Assistant	3/12/2025	3/12/2025
Cadet Captain Esha Jain	Intermediate Cadet; Communications and Outreach Group Commander	3/12/2025	3/12/2025
Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Tom	Senior Cadet; Operations Group Commander	3/12/2025	3/12/2025

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you adjust your leadership style when working with people of different personalities? If so, how?

2. How do you motivate team members who are not performing at their best and are holding the team back? How do you help those who struggle in the organization?

3. What do you think the difference in leadership styles between ROTC and traditional (civilian, public, or private) organizations is like?

4. How do you deal with the stresses of leading such an important organization? How do you help your team members with stress?

5. How do you mediate disputes between members of the team or yourself and members of the team? Is there a difference between ROTC and traditional organizations, and if so, do you think it is more or less effective than the methods of traditional organizations?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Cadet Captain Esha Jain, Intermediate Cadet

1. I will adjust depending on the situation. The most important thing for me that I will stand on is my morales, ethics, values and goals. If I am leading, I will lead with these principles because it defines who I am and the team I lead. Not everyone has the same personality as me so it is important for me to understand their personalities so that I can manage and lead them to achieve a common goal. While I ensure to keep true to my principles and nature, I respect and follow my teammates boundaries and cues so that I can make them feel comfortable and better understand them.

2. I motivate my team by getting to know them. I think by building a relationship with them and taking the time to really want to know them builds a friendship and a better bond with them. Maybe then I can understand why they aren't performing as well and I can help them do better. Building a relationship with my team is crucial to help them improve. I personally help the members who are struggling by becoming their friend/mentor. If they are struggling, I want them to have a support system and/or someone in their corner who has their eye on them. Having support will help them improve and feel like they are part of a team.

3. Within ROTC and the military in general, no matter what base you or even branch you are in, there is a similar culture. We follow and strict schedule and we listen to what our chain of command is expecting us to do. This makes leadership in the military sort of standardized in a manner where we all sort of share similar cultural norms. Whereas in the civilian world, we are working with people who are probably not used to making such huge sacrifices as those in the military, and there are more prominent unique perspectives. This makes leadership require a lot of adaptability because you have to understand the different dynamics. That doesn't mean that there aren't dynamics in the military. There are members who have unique and different personalities, the military is "one organization" that has a common goal of protecting and serving our nation, so we are all trying to achieve the same thing through different means.

4. To help with the stressors, I confide in my chain of command. Sometimes getting advice and perspective from someone who has been in the organization or even the same job as you for many years can really help put things into perspective. I will even confide in my friends and people that I trust to have a more emotional and deeper connection for stress relief. Sometimes talking to someone can really relieve the stress because the emotional and mental stress can really build up and cause poor quality of work. And I helped my team by doing the same for them. I am that open ear for them if they need someone and more importantly, I reach out to them. I try to ask them how they're doing and I tried to tell them that you do not have to tell me that everything is OK rather I want you to be honest and please do not feel that nothing can be changed. At least you took a big step by saying something.

5. To mediate disputes between team members, I find that hearing the situation from both members is important that I can better understand the situation. Then I will make them meet and talk it through. Before they meet, I try to help them think through their thoughts and also try to understand the other person's perspective. I tried to tell them that your own feelings and thoughts are valid and this is how you respect the other person's perspective. It is important to try to help the other person be able to communicate their thoughts, and I try to teach them the lessons of active listening. If I'm having a dispute with a team member, I ask them questions and I try to engage in a conversation where I'm hearing their perspective. Then I asked them questions on how they feel about something and how they think the situation could've gone or if there's a different path that it could've taken. I thank them for sharing their thoughts, and then I share my thoughts and perspective while telling them that I have my opinions, and I still respect their point of view. From there, I try to ask them saying what can we do to be better whether that is do we try to understand each other's cues? How do I understand your thought process?

Cadet Third Class Grady Crumpler, Basic Cadet

1. My leadership style adjusts depending on the situation and, occasionally, the person. When I am leading my whole team, I have a consistent leadership style that can adjust slightly as needed. However, I switch my leadership style when I am one-on-one to help motivate people depending on their personality. In ROTC, when you come together as a group, most people's individuality fades away into one personality that is deliberately created in military training. This is extremely helpful when leading as it allows me to have an expectation of what will work and what won't. I

do shift how I lead when I need to motivate a person one-on-one to help fit their individual needs. The main way I shift it is in what motivates them and how I present it. I may present new punishments or rewards that relate directly to the individual, adjust the tone I use with them, and shift my vocabulary to meet their needs.

2. It depends on why the team member is underperforming. If it is because they are not putting enough effort in, I will try and figure out why they aren't. If it is because they are choosing not to, I will tell them in a professionally firm way that they need to start improving or risk some kind of punishment. If they cannot put enough effort in because of things happening in their life or out of their control, I will work with them to divide their workload with other team members until they can return to normal. If they are underperforming because of a lack of training, I will change their workload to fit their strengths while training them in other areas.

3. The main difference between ROTC and a traditional organization is the execution of leadership. Both jobs thrive or fail under the same kinds of leadership. Both need a decisive leader who deliberates with experienced members of the team and leaders who work FOR their teams. However, how these leadership traits manifest themselves differs wildly between the organizations. In ROTC, there is a much more professionally critical environment than a normal environment. Leaders in ROTC are very direct and inform cadets exactly where they are failing to meet standards and how it hurts their wingmen. The leader will also ensure they provide every opportunity for the cadets to improve themselves. In a traditional environment, a leader might have a private meeting with someone and calmly discuss areas they would like the employee to improve in, the manager knowing how these improvements would help the team while not having to directly accuse the employee of failing their teammates. In both situations, the leader provides ways for the person to improve to help the team. In the traditional environment, the manager can be more relaxed because their authority comes through a relationship; the motivation comes from the employee's desire to keep their job. On the other hand, the ROTC leader is direct, leading from respect, and pushes the cadets with the fear of failing their wingmen as a motivator. Leaders can take many forms, and it is hard to nail down that one thing is specifically ROTC or traditional, but those were the most general differences.

4. I help lead my team in many ways, but the biggest thing I do is try and avoid stress for everyone. I lean on my wingmen, pushing them to get their part done so that, as a whole, the flight can stress less and perform more. It is also helpful that everyone understands mistakes will be made, so the stress of minor errors is lessened as long as you can recover in the moment. Lastly, if there ever is a time the stress on me gets too high, I have teammates I can trust to take up the slack and get our job done.

5. Disputes have to be handled on a case-by-case basis. If it is an emotional issue, it focuses more on interpersonal skills; these are the most varied and take the most personal decision-making. The best I can do for those is trust what I think is best at the time. Professional disputes are slightly different in ROTC from those in a traditional organization; one example is that both have a chain of command, but in ROTC, it is much more apparent. In the event of a professional dispute, I want to individually hear why each person thinks their plan is the best. Then, I would deliberate with my second-in-command about the best course of action before making the final decision.

Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Shaun Tom, Senior Cadet

1. I do not adjust my leadership style. Instead I adjust my approach to how I apply it to them.

2. To motivate people who aren't doing their best, I first try to determine the root cause of the issue. I seek to find intrinsic motivation within the people I lead and find a task they are passionate in. If someone is struggling I try to help with their issues on a personal level.

3. Leadership styles in ROTC and the real world are very similar. I think in ROTC those styles are exaggerated and we see them more but it is reflected in the real world. Also ROTC attracts many more leaders and people who like to speak out.

4. I like to deal with stress by separating my time and not dealing with ROTC matters during personal time. Setting boundaries is the biggest stress management tool. I also like to cook, play music, and exercise to de-stress. To help my people destress l, I try to deconflict what I ask of them so their schedules are better. Listening to them and trying to take some of their workload when needed.

5. To mediate disputes I like to sit people down and focus on the systems causing the issue rather than the person. I think what make ROTC different than a traditional organization is that in ROTC we focus more on mission and try to separate emotional aspects.