

President's LOG(istics)

As the old saying goes, education does not come by bumping your head against the schoolhouse. One of the primary goals of LOA embraces the concept of growing future leaders and building a stronger cadre of logistics professionals. Therefore, this quarter, I thought I would include a couple of ideas to encourage this objective. Take the next few paragraphs as a gentle nudge, reminding you to tear one eye away from your e-mail and focus instead on our real resource ... the logistician.

MENTOR: When did you last spend time performing one on one mentoring? Mentoring can take several forms; it can be performed formally or informally. Mentoring may be accomplished either overtly or as an unintended but beneficial happenstance in our normal workday interactions. When you stop to consider them, you realize that the opportunities to mentor are endless.

The Roman philosopher Seneca once stated, "Even while they teach, men learn." In a mentoring relationship, learning is a two way street. Currently, I am in a great position to work with some fantastic young officers. One effective technique I employ is to hard schedule 30 minute blocks of time to discuss all manner of topics with any officer who is looking for that opportunity. Although I can't speak for the individuals I have mentored, I can state with certainty that I personally have benefited from the time I have set aside for discourse with up-and-coming young officers. In a mentoring relationship, both individuals should learn and both should teach.

Whether you are a civilian item manager, a contractor project lead, or a squadron commander, our experiences make us unique. That experience, when shared, grows exponentially. I strongly believe that as much as you learn from your own mistakes, you can also learn from someone else's mistakes. "Mistake" is a euphemism for experience. Although our schedules are busy, set aside 30 minutes to talk with the next generation of Air Force logisticians; you will be surprised at how much you both learn. One-on-one discourse is just one mentoring technique. Obviously, there are numerous others, but I would also like to turn the spotlight on the study of logistics issues and professional networking as means of growing the next generation of people who will lead our Air Force.

STUDY LOGISTICS ISSUES: Attention students! Summer is the time of year when many of us find ourselves headed to professional schools around the country. LOA is currently gathering ideas for research papers and short investigatory projects. LOA research may be something that is right up your alley as a student. Research is a great way to learn about an aspect of logistics that you are unfamiliar with or an excellent opportunity to expand you knowledge on a subject with which you already have a high level of expertise. Either way, research can push the envelope in the way logisticians do business. Through research, both the Air Force and Air Force logisticians benefit. We are looking for both visionary concepts and ideas that tackle current tactical problems. We welcome research ideas, so this call out is not only for those who are headed to school, but also for those who are not currently students but who have an idea for a logistics challenge that needs to be researched and solved. Please contact me at president@loanational.org if you have ideas or the opportunity to conduct academic research this summer.

ATTEND THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE: Attendance at the LOA National Conference is fast becoming a professional essential. The Wright Brothers Chapter at WPAFB is doing an incredible job getting ready for this year's conference. You will find this conference professionally rewarding, and an invaluable opportunity to NETWORK with your fellow logistics professionals. So many changes are facing our Air Force that we need to understand and discuss the implications of those changes in open forum. The more effectively we communicate and discuss deployments, supply chain initiatives and aging fleet challenges, the better our chances become to improve our operations across the Air Force. The LOA conference is the perfect forum to further the lean principle of standardizing our operations and processes. Sharing our best practices is one giant step toward standardizing to improve our ops. Follow through is key to making changes that stick. That is a professional responsibility for us all, so I urge each of you to take full advantage of the largest single gathering of Air Force logisticians this year. Come to Columbus in October 2008. Registration opens in June! Until I see you in Columbus or elsewhere, stay focused, stay safe, and stay ahead of the pack.

Enjoy this edition of the ER and help us continue our transformation journey.

—EVAN MILLER, COL USAF
PRESIDENT, LOGISTICS OFFICER ASSOCIATION



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