It is through programs like the associates program here at TSA that you give a valued opportunity for us to excel and the empowerment of education, which enables us to overcome adversity in an articulate and educated manner. It is this positive, knowledgeable persona that will be presented and recognized by the thousands of passengers that we come into contact with on a daily basis. By giving us the opportunity to build and enhance our knowledge and education (through the associates program), you have allowed us to become better cultivated, more capable employees and citizens. Martin Luther King stated, “Intelligence-plus character- that is the goal of true education.” You have given us the tools we require to build intelligence and character; this directly reflects a true education.

Having a degree doesn’t make you smarter; it makes you more educated. In life we should be defined by our contributions not our job titles. The more knowledge you acquire the better equipped you are to succeed and contribute. How you use that comprehension empowers and enlightens us to grow as individuals in our life and steers us in the contributions that we are capable of making. It gives us an opportunity to have a greater impact in this world as we roll forward through the peaks and valleys of life. An unknown author once said, “Education should consist of a series of enchantments, each raising the individual to a higher level of awareness, understanding and kinship with all living things.” It is through our minds that we stimulate change and perception. The impact of how we develop the knowledge that we gain enhances our education by adding fuel to our minds. This fuel is the fire and driving force behind our ability to adapt and deal with challenges and it enables us to grow as individuals. As our knowledge base grows so does our capacity to understand our environment and the opportunities that are created. How we deal with and overcome those encounters through an educated mind, will facilitate and give significance to the world around us.

In my opinion there is an incorrect perception by the public and other entities of the government that TSA is not as well educated as other branches. It is through this program that you give us the tools and support that we need to overcome these perceptions. One of my favorite quotes that truly articulates my personal opinion surrounding our time in the associates program is, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” This quote epitomizes the combustion and enthusiasm myself and the workforce are capable of projecting if given the possibility to learn and excel. I believe that an education is an invaluable gift, whether it is in a structured classroom setting, through new experiences or by the changes and challenges that present themselves. By allowing me to participate in this program its greatest success is not in educating me as to the material that was taught but in opening my mind up to all the new entities, questions and possibilities that are presented in the material that we learned. It opens up new avenues of thought, giving me the desire to better myself, learn more about our history, the present, the future and the differences that I can make. Charles W. Eliot said, “The fruit of liberal education is not learning, but the capacity and desire to learn,… not knowledge, but the power.” Humans are untapped resources; portals of power, you never know what you are capable of achieving unless you try. I firmly believe that the only limitations we have are those that we put on ourselves and the sky’s the limit only if you don’t aspire to go any higher.

In closing, I would like to thank you for giving me the sovereignty of knowledge and the vision to grow to my potential.