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President's Forum

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



Our Sailors must be empowered to operate and fight in a vast array of environments. . . . They must be equipped with the tools and skills to meet these challenges and to develop as leaders. We must . . . encourage and reward continuing education and training. . . [and] institutionalize executive development.

ADMIRAL MIKE MULLEN, USN, CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

EARLIER THIS YEAR, the Chief of Naval Operations articulated eight tenets that guide his vision for the twenty-first-century Navy. In the excerpt above (from his “What I Believe,” in the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* of January 2006), he cites the need for all members of the Navy manpower team (officer, enlisted, and civilian) to develop the skills and competencies needed to succeed in the wide array of circumstances they will encounter in the decades ahead. The Naval War College (NWC) is now actively engaged in helping the Navy’s leadership to define an approach to Navy professional development that, first, empowers and enables individuals to manage their own career growth, and second, provides them with the critical guidance and milestone data they need to craft personalized paths of lifelong learning. This is vital work, since our greatest strength as a military service comes from the hard work and genius of the men and women who transform our Navy into an effective instrument of national power.

Since the service’s founding over two centuries ago, Navy personnel have gained the maritime skills needed to serve at sea and ashore through a combination of *training, education, and experience*. As technology progressed from sail to steam to nuclear power, this process became more formalized, but the primary components remained the same: *training* to develop basic skills, *education* to enhance critical thinking abilities, and *experience* to put the knowledge gained through study into practical application.

It is highly appropriate that much of the current thinking about Navy lifelong learning is taking place in Newport, since it was here in 1875 that then-Captain Stephen B. Luce established the U.S. Navy’s apprentice training program (aboard USS *New Hampshire*, anchored off the city of Newport), and that ultimately the headquarters of the apprentice training squadron was established (on

Coasters Harbor Island, which in 1884 would also become the home of the Naval War College).

Today, faculty and staff from the Navy's most senior school for officers, the Naval War College, and its most senior school for enlisted personnel, the Senior Enlisted Academy, are working closely together to develop a Professional Military Education (PME) Continuum that will serve as the armature for developing leaders from seaman to admiral. The creation of the PME Continuum will be facilitated by the establishment of processes and procedures that foster effectiveness, collaboration, alignment, and efficiency among the Navy's flagship educational institutions that will ultimately be tasked with executing the program. Efforts are well under way to harness the collective intellectual energy of these institutions in a manner that maximizes their positive impact on the development of our future leaders at all levels.

The Professional Military Education Continuum

Developing sailors begins with the accession process, and considerable time and money go into ensuring that sailors are as prepared as possible when we "pull the trigger" and send them to their first assignment. But just as midcourse guidance is necessary to keep a modern cruise missile on track, we must be prepared to provide our men and women with the additional learning opportunities they need to help them adjust to the changing environment as they progress in their careers. The evolving PME Continuum will be an orderly and prescribed series of learning opportunities, spread over an entire career, that will provide personnel with the skills and competencies necessary to serve effectively in positions of increasing responsibility and complexity. The challenge of managing this continuum belongs to the Naval War College.

In a November 2004 general message to the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations directed the establishment of the PME Continuum, to be a career-long series of educational opportunities that are relevant to accomplishing the Navy's missions and also supportive of the professional and personal growth of all sailors. He stated, "We must adopt a more comprehensive approach to education that fully acknowledges the relevance of education to combat effectiveness and mission success." The continuum applies to the Total Force, including all officers and enlisted personnel in both the active and reserve components. Professional Military Education will: (1) equip all sailors with the right knowledge and skills at the right time; (2) be a key factor in billet assignment and career progression; and (3) use the Five Vector Model and the Integrated Learning Environment to deliver blended learning options.*

* The Five Vector Model is a pictorial representation of an individual's career, with key milestones identified along five different developmental vectors. The Integrated Learning Environment includes both resident and nonresident education and training opportunities, blended together in an integrated learning program.

The Naval War College is now responsible for coordinating the creation and maintenance of the educational content and for sequencing the delivery of the various elements of the PME Continuum. The generic term "PME" has been defined to include:

- *Navy Professional Military Education* (NPME), educational content that teaches sailors about the various Navy warfare communities and the individuals and organizations that support them. It provides a broad and common understanding of the Navy and its full capabilities, thereby preparing our sailors to perform their mission effectively across the full spectrum of naval and joint military operations.
- *Joint Professional Military Education* (JPME), education about the capabilities and limitations of the various military departments within the Department of Defense and other governmental agencies that work together in "joint warfare." This education will enhance the ability of naval leaders to provide unique and complementary warfighting from the sea to joint commanders.

Primary-Level Professional Military Education. In collaboration with a number of Navy subject-matter experts (from such institutions as the Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval Academy, the Navy Historical Center, the Naval Justice School, the Navy Warfare Development Command, and the various warfare community schools), we have developed an integrated multimedia course to provide graduates with:

- A basic understanding of the tenets of naval science
- An introductory-level understanding of service capabilities and the fundamentals of joint warfare
- A primary-level ability to function as maritime advocates and spokespersons.

The course, to be delivered over the Internet from the Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) portal, will be a self-paced course consisting of approximately sixty-five hours of instruction, organized into five general themes: The Culture of the Navy, Governance of the Navy, How the Navy Thinks about War, How the Navy Plans Its Operations, and Technology and Warfare in the Maritime Domain.

Enrollment is planned to start in May 2006. Consistent with the notion of the continuum as a series of related learning opportunities that build upon one another, it is expected that completion of this course will become a requirement for promotion to lieutenant commander and a prerequisite for enrollment in an

Intermediate-Level College (ILC) program. Course completion may also become a prerequisite for attendance at the Senior Enlisted Academy. With the establishment of the Primary PME course, and for the first time in the Navy's history, all individuals (regardless of commissioning source, designator, or career subspecialty) moving toward leadership positions will have common and integrating educational experiences that provide a unifying vision of the capabilities, limitations, and goals of the institution they have sworn to serve.

Intermediate-Level PME. Once the new Primary PME course has commenced, the College of Naval Command and Staff (CNC&S), which has always been officially designated by the Joint Staff as an Intermediate-Level College, will become an intermediate course in fact, falling between the primary and senior-level programs offered by NWC. Since all sailors will now report to NWC as graduates of the Primary course, we have been able to restructure the CNC&S curricula to focus more tightly on the competencies appropriate to the midgrade professional.

It is expected that graduates of both the resident and nonresident versions of the CNC&S course will be skilled in applying operational art to maritime, joint, multi-agency, and multinational warfighting; skilled in the joint and Navy planning processes; capable of critical thought with operational perspectives; prepared for operational-level leadership challenges; and expert in conveying the maritime perspective. Over the past twelve months, a great deal of work has gone into revising the intermediate curricula, but I am convinced—and our fleet commanders have confirmed—that we are on the right track toward helping our students prepare themselves confidently and effectively to support, drive, and lead joint, multinational, and interagency processes both in Washington and in major headquarters staffs and activities around the world.

Senior-Level PME. The third level of the PME Continuum is provided by the College of Naval Warfare curriculum. This curriculum, which is currently only available to resident students on our home campus in Newport, provides students with executive-level preparation for higher responsibilities as senior captains/colonels and flag/general officers and members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). In contrast to the outcomes expected from the intermediate-level graduates just discussed above, senior-level graduates will be skilled in formulating and executing strategy and U.S. policy; skilled in joint war fighting, theater strategy, and campaign planning; capable of strategically minded critical thinking; and capable of excelling in positions of strategic leadership. These desired outcomes are clearly focused on the skills needed by senior leaders, which most graduates will either become or closely support those needed at the executive level.

Flag-Level Education. In previous issues of the *Review*, we have discussed our efforts to establish the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC) course (see, particularly, Winter 2006). The leadership of our Navy has recently embraced the JFMCC concept as the way to optimize the employment of naval and other military capabilities within the joint force. The JFMCC is the joint force commander's maritime war fighter, reporting to and advising the commander on the proper employment of maritime forces. Our newly developed course provides flag and general officers hands-on exposure to the issues involved in directing maritime forces in a joint, multinational, and interagency context. The JFMCC course also improves the ability of its graduates to analyze and clearly articulate how maritime forces can help achieve the joint commander's objectives, so that the commander is fully aware, at all levels and stages of planning and execution, of the effects—critical to campaign objectives—that naval capabilities and unique modes of employment from the sea can yield. The JFMCC course will be offered several times during the remainder of calendar year 2006.

Next Steps

In the year ahead, the College will be working closely with the Senior Enlisted Academy and others to develop the components of the PME Continuum applicable to the junior and midlevel enlisted ranks. Actions are well under way to formulate the myriad of elements that will constitute a complete PME Continuum and to put into place the administrative processes needed to manage the program. The resources expended in this effort are indeed investments in the future, and the return on investment will be seen in the level of improved leadership and decision making that result. This is an ever-changing environment, and the professional development of our people will always be a work in progress. The full intellectual capacity of the College's faculty and staff will remain engaged in providing our students with the tools, skills, and competencies they will need to succeed in the future.

J. L. SHUFORD

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
President, Naval War College*