

UNCLASSIFIED

INFORMATION PAPER

Subj: MCWAR PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION “WAY AHEAD”

BLUF. The future of Professional Military Education (PME) at the Marine Corps War College (MCWAR) will include: (1) expanded emphasis on wargaming and case studies to hone students’ ability to pursue and achieve strategic and operational victory, (2) further focus on innovation and creative thinking; and (3) expanded use of classified material to provide needed depth and relevance to discussions of current and future security challenges.

1. Purpose. To provide the J-7 with MCWAR’s vision for PME in preparation for the Military Education Coordination Council (MECC) October 2018 meeting.
2. Context. The mission of the Marine Corps War College is to educate selected military and civilian professionals in order to develop *critical and creative thinkers, military strategists, joint warfighters, and strategic leaders* who are prepared to meet the challenges of a complex and dynamic security environment.

To this end, MCWAR graduates students who will:

1. Serve as critical and creative thinkers, able to frame ambiguity, evaluate information and arguments, ask the right questions, challenge assumptions, and find creative solutions to the challenges of a complex and dynamic security environment.
2. Serve as military strategists, able to apply the framework of ends, ways, means, and risk; evaluate the integration of all instruments of national power; and evaluate the utility (and limitations) of employing force or the threat of force in the pursuit of political objectives.
3. Serve as joint warfighters, able to evaluate the changing character and enduring nature of war; and apply the art and science of planning and conducting campaigns and major operations in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment.
4. Serve as strategic leaders, able to evaluate the challenges of leading large organizations and building trust in an environment of change and uncertainty, who demonstrate the essential attributes and ethical grounding necessary to succeed in senior leadership positions within their service or agency.

Our educational methodology is centered on active learning: 48% of contact hours focus on seminar discussion (including discussion of case studies), 34% of contact hours are spent in field studies, and 16% are dedicated to practical applications and war games. Only 2% of contact hours are devoted to lectures and exams.

3. PME Initiatives. Our initiatives center around our program goals and are informed by the guidance from President, MCU.
 - Critical and Creative Thinkers: MCWAR has increased curriculum focused on creative thinking and innovation over the past 3 years. This includes a discussion on innovation in large, complex organizations with the Executive Director of Enterprise Infrastructure at Morgan Stanley, a discussion on developing a learning organization and leveraging failure into strategic success with the Co-CEOs of Next Jump, participation in MCU’s annual Innovation Summit, and seminars on systems theory, operational design, and risk

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management. We have introduced the “InfoChess” wargame as a means to assess students’ ability to achieve strategic victory in an information-constrained and information-corrupted environment. Students play the game in the first and last months of the program so we can evaluate the development of their creative problem-solving skills over the academic year.

- Military Strategists: MCWAR takes the Chairman’s goal of developing strategically minded graduates seriously. To that end, in AY18 we developed the Campaigning for Strategic Effect (CSE) module as an immersive exploration of all facets of a major campaign, including its supporting campaigns and related political-military issues to illuminate essential and timeless aspects of strategy and operations. Students evaluate current operating concepts and strategies in the light of these examples and are therefore better prepared to think critically about future joint concepts, doctrine, plans, and force development. In addition, students study grand strategy, great power competition, strategic deterrence, and future war through a series of seminars, case studies, and war games.
- Joint Warfare: In order to increase our focus on joint warfighting, beginning in AY18, MCWAR split Joint Warfare into a stand-alone course and added 15 contact hours to the curriculum. Our Chairman’s Chair serves as course director and ensures students deepen their expertise in areas related to joint planning and risk analysis, operations at the COCOM level, globally integrated operations, Operations in the Information Environment (OIE), and cyber operations.
- Strategic Leadership: MCWAR devotes 11% of its curriculum to strategic leadership and ethics. Through interactions with strategic leaders, practical application, self-assessment, and seminar, our Leadership and Ethics course develops students’ abilities concerning 1. strategic perception, 2. critical thinking, 3. effective advocacy, and 4. the ability to operate in ambiguity.

4. Goals for AY19.

- Pending passage of OPMEP-F, develop a method to rank students’ strategic capability;
- Continue to develop curriculum related to space and EMS;
- Expose more students to complex war gaming through the use of our electives program;
- Leverage the expertise of the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Creativity through student participation in the Energy Scholars Program, the annual wargaming competition, and the Innovation Summit;
- Broaden MCWAR’s outreach and engage a broader set of experts through the launch of our podcast series, *Eagles, Globes, and Anchors*.

5. Thoughts on Wilhelm Letter. There is much to embrace from Gen Wilhelm’s letter. In particular, MCWAR will work to incorporate the following into the AY20 curriculum:

- Further develop our treatment of Centers of Gravity, Critical Vulnerabilities, and Critical Capabilities. While this is covered extensively at the Command and Staff College, not all of our students attend CSC for their JPME I education. Looking for ways to systematize

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engagement of these topics in seminars and wargames will help to develop our students' strategic and operational thinking.

- While our case studies and seminars focus on achieving victory, Gen Wilhelm's points about engaging risk to force ahead of risk to mission as equal elements of risk analysis and emphasizing the strategic and operational value of decisiveness are important lenses through which to evaluate and strengthen our curriculum. The InfoChess wargame is a great tool to identify which students are more or less aggressive in an uncertain environment.
- Several of our seminars and practical applications involve effective engagement and communication with civilian counterparts and developing expertise in how the military's role integrates with the larger whole of government construct. While improving our coverage of core warfighting competencies in a changing global environment, we will not sacrifice coverage of this critical component of effective strategic action.
- MCWAR engages a series of seminars to focus on the cognitive domain, including a new seminar on metacognition in AY19 that examines unconscious bias and a discussion with Morgan Stanley's head of machine learning and data analytics. We will consider how to integrate discussion of a 'cognitive domain' into these seminars and potentially others.

While we agree with Gen Wilhelm and SECDEF in principle on expanding international student participation in our program, that desire is held in tension with our need to conduct more of our curriculum in a classified environment. We cannot adequately cover cyber, OIE, future war, and contemporary force posture in a purely unclassified environment. We should also be careful of the message we send our international partners if we exclude them from large portions of our curriculum. **All JPME schools – especially JPME II schools – need help having commonly used, classified material (NSS, NDS, etc.) cleared for release to a pre-determined list of countries whose students will attend our programs.** Individual schools lack the ability to work the FDO process to a successful conclusion in all but the rarest cases (FVEY students at JAWS). This need has been identified at the MECC-WG level, and should be taken up by those who are in positions to take action.

6. Conclusion. MCWAR is committed to improving the lethality, mental agility, leadership ability, and strategic mindedness of our graduates. We offer a rigorous program that already addresses much of what is outlined by Gen Wilhelm and the Chairman. We look forward to further refining our curriculum to capture more of these important elements as we move forward.

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