

PRESIDENT'S FORUM



THE YEAR I SPENT AS A STUDENT at the Naval War College was truly one of the best experiences of my life. When I returned to Newport as President of the College, I found that the educational process I admired so much had been refined and updated and was still the best national security education available anywhere. But I also found that the College offers a number of tailored versions of the intermediate-level Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) course for the benefit of the many students whose careers do not afford them the opportunity to spend a year in full-time study yet want to receive this tremendous education.

Since 1914 the Naval War College has provided nonresident courses by way of the technological means prevailing at the time. In the early years, this meant correspondence courses delivered by the Postal Service. In the nearly one hundred years since the “Correspondence School” was established, the structure and name have changed with the times, and the majority of the College’s nonresident programs are now managed by the College of Distance Education (CDE).

Because the College’s nonresident student population is diverse, dispersed, and deployable, CDE offers six delivery methodologies. To highlight a few of these programs:

- The Fleet Seminar Program (FSP) is the delivery method that most closely matches the resident Newport classroom experience. Our students meet in faculty-led seminars one night per week over a thirty-three-week period, completing one of the College’s three core courses during each academic year. Over a three-year period, they can complete all of the requirements for Joint Professional Military Education Phase I (JPME-1) credit. These seminars are led by an exceptionally qualified and experienced adjunct faculty, of which the majority have taught in, or are graduates of, our resident

program. On the basis of my visits to FSP classes around the country and meeting with graduates, who often come to Newport for our June graduation ceremony, I can state unequivocally that these students are bright, highly motivated, and eager to learn. To take on the challenges of a rigorous Naval War College program while holding down a full-time job requires extra dedication and determination that I greatly admire.

- Our very successful partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey offers courses leading to JPME Phase I certification for the officers assigned there. The Monterey Program teaches tailored versions of all three core courses of the College, utilizing eighteen full-time NWC faculty members who are permanently assigned to the California campus.
- We also offer our core curriculum as an asynchronous Web-enabled course that was recognized in 2002 by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology with its prestigious Crystal Award for the most innovative distance-learning project in the nation.
- For almost a hundred years, the College employed a paper-based methodology to deliver PME via correspondence courses to officers where they lived and worked. In 2003 CDE embarked on a new educational venture, developing a CD-ROM-based correspondence course that was first deployed in April 2004.
- In the fall of 2001 the College launched the Nonresident Graduate Degree Program (NGDP). This program was a response to the CNO's "Vision Statement for Navy Education," which emphasized education as "crucially important" and called on the Navy's senior leadership to make education a priority in the development of the officer corps. Establishment of the NGDP created a unique opportunity for nonresident officers and senior federal civilian employees to attain JPME-1 and simultaneously earn the College's Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies degree. Students earn twenty-one graduate semester hours for completing the three core courses, and they round out the degree by completing an additional nine graduate semester hours of elective courses that have been screened and approved by the College. One hundred ninety-two NGDP students earned MA/NSSS degrees during the last academic year.
- In addition to the JPME Phase I variations offered by CDE, in May 2005 the College was named as the executive agent for the development, implementation, and management of both the officer and enlisted PME portions of the Navy Professional Military Education Continuum. The Primary PME course for junior officers is delivered by way of the Navy Knowledge Online system. We also offer a comparable course for senior enlisted personnel. To reach the Navy's most junior sailors, CDE administers Introductory and Basic Enlisted

PME. These courses meet Navy and Joint Professional Military Education requirements at both officer and enlisted career milestones, and they are designed to build on one another, thus preparing a student for an intermediate-level service school or Senior Enlisted Academy experience.

Enrollment in the various programs offered by the College of Distance Education has increased dramatically over the past decade, and today the College enrolls more than eighty thousand students in its programs across the United States, at overseas locations, and afloat. In June 2012, we graduated a record-high 1,060 students from our nonresident JPME programs. We are committed to providing high-quality nonresident education that parallels, to the maximum extent possible, the educational structure and quality of the resident experience in Newport.

The excellence of our CDE programs was evident recently in the course of my discussions with the chairman of the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE), who visited the College at the suggestion of Congressman James Langevin of Rhode Island. We will be working with the RIBGHE in the months to come, sharing with it the concepts and methodologies we have found to be successful and learning from it how other educational outreach programs are conducted. I want to thank Dr. Jay Hickey, director of the College of Distance Education, and his superb faculty and staff for helping extend the reach and impact of the Naval War College around the world.

I will close with a quote from one of our most distinguished alumni, the late Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, who once said of the Naval War College correspondence course, "I regarded that course as one of the most valuable experiences that I had," and that "it gave an excellent indication to the people in the office of Chief of Naval Personnel, when they were looking for someone to do a job, to look down the list of the people who had completed the Naval War College correspondence course and say, 'Well, here is a guy who can stick with it.'" I commend all of our nonresident students for their willingness to "stick with it" even when the demands of their regular jobs and their family commitments clamor for their time and attention. Your dedication to excellence will pay great dividends.

The Naval War College is utilizing technology and educational flexibility to reach sailors seeking to improve their professionalism, at all grade levels, wherever they work and live.

JOHN N. CHRISTENSON

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