

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: OFFICER IN-RESIDENCE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

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Introduction

Our Professional Military Education (PME) system is designed to prepare our officers at the tactical, operational and strategic levels for command and staff leadership opportunities. The Air Force Secretary and Chief of Staff have made developing our Airmen a top priority for the United States Air Force. In 1946, the first Air University Commander, Major General Fairchild, laid down a challenge to develop pre-war officer in-residence schools that look ahead to the next conflict versus post-war schools looking backwards to past conflicts. The mission today focuses on preparing officers to develop, employ and command air, space, and cyberspace power in Joint, Combined, and Multinational operations; in short, preparing the world's best joint strategic leaders. In addition, in-residence PME provides our Air Force members with the skills and knowledge to make strategic decisions in progressively more demanding leadership positions within the national security environment. PME strengthens the abilities and skills of our personnel to lead as strategic thinkers, planners and warfighters.

Development

In-residence PME is essential for officer and civilian development and ensures personnel receive the right education at the right time throughout their careers. PME expands knowledge and increases understanding of the role air, space and cyberspace power has in times of peace and war. PME prepares Air Force personnel to anticipate and meet diverse challenges across the range of military operations and is instrumental in building a professional corps.

Career Field Managers and Development Teams oversee force development to meet functional and institutional, tactical, operational, and strategic leadership requirements. Each group evaluates developmental opportunities and provides input into the selection process. Ultimately, an Airman's record of performance is critical in determining who is selected to attend PME in residence.

Employing Change

PME curricula meet Air Force goals for currency and relevance through a number of guiding apparatus. Curricula incorporate current doctrine to ensure students are exposed to the very latest in terms of Air Force and Joint lessons learned. Further, the Air Force Learning Committee (AFLC), chaired by the Director, Force Development, validates functional injects to PME curricula. The AFLC, comprised of Air Staff functionals, Major Command and Air University representatives, balances requested topics with senior leader priorities to determine which should be included in our PME programs. Relevant topics of immediate interest to the joint staff are also included as appropriate and directed.

School curricula are also influenced by faculty subject-matter experts across Air University, as well as student input. Their feedback is shaped by recent operational experiences and, through case studies and lessons learned, provides insight into the challenges and opportunities our nation faces, and in particular, our military forces. Their valuable input enhances the curricula and keeps it current, relevant, and specific to the needs of today's military professionals. One of the greatest challenges in adjudicating recommendations for special interest topics is a lack of understanding of the difference between training and education. To more effectively mediate the addition of interest items, the Air Force is establishing the baseline for PME curriculum through the AFLC, which will ensure Air Force requirements are balanced with special interest topics.

Operational lessons learned are also critical to employing changes to in-residence PME. Air University captures educationally appropriate lessons learned in several ways, to include: 1) the CJCSI 1800.01C, Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) or Joint Special Areas of Emphasis tasked for inclusion; 2) functional requests evaluated by the AFLC and determined to be aligned with AF senior leader priorities; 3) new curriculum development

research or clarification/amplification of required topic discussions; or 4) codified Air Force doctrine used for reference and study in academic programs.

Selection

Military and Air Force civilian students are selected for PME through a rigorous and competitive, Air Force-wide selection process. The officer institutional developmental continuum identifies the continuous PME opportunities available throughout an officer's career—from the basic level, through intermediate, and ultimately, at the strategic level. There are approximately 670 in-residence Intermediate Developmental Education (IDE) seats and 260 in-residence Senior Developmental Education (SDE) seats available for Academic Year 2010.

At the Basic Developmental Education (BDE) level, Air and Space Basic Course attendees are selected based on availability and must attend before they reach their 18th month of service following commission. The Air Force Personnel Center works with Major Commands and bases to ensure expedient attendance. At the IDE level, Squadron Officer School attendees are selected at the base level by the Wing Commander or equivalent, with an 80% opportunity rate for in-residence attendance.

The IDE/SDE selection process begins with results of promotion boards. The top 20% of promotees to major and top 15% of promotees to lieutenant colonel are identified as 'Selects.' Air Force policy is all 'Selects' will attend in-residence developmental education during their window of eligibility. Once officers are in their window of eligibility, they complete a preference sheet which is forwarded to the career field Development Team by their Senior Rater. Once convened, the Development Team rank orders all 'Selects' and a smaller number of 'Candidates,' (officers who are eligible, but not designated as a 'Select' by the promotion board).

Since school seats are pre-determined based on total number of school seats available, number of 'Selects' in each career field, and the eligible population of 'Selects' and 'Candidates,'

each Development Team selects primaries and alternates based on the number of allotted school seats. The Development Team recommendations then go before the Developmental Education Designation Board, which is chaired by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, to select the highest caliber officers to attend PME.

Civilians are selected through a similar selection process, but meet the Civilian Developmental Education Board, chaired by a Senior Executive Service-level panel prior to meeting the Developmental Education Designation Board. Selection of sister service and interagency students is done through those respective organizations. Selection of international officers is coordinated through the Secretary of the Air Force International Affairs office.

Faculty

Selection of faculty and senior staff are key to successful implementation of PME. Based on the school's unique mission needs, having the right faculty mix ensures the civilian-military faculty ratio promotes quality and stability in PME programs. The OPMEP requires 75% of the military faculty be graduates of an IDE/SDE-level PME program or be Joint Qualified Officers. Faculty selection is based on recognized academic and operational expertise.

All Air Force military faculty members are selected via the Air Force assignment system. Air University interfaces closely with the Air Force Personnel Center or Air Force Senior Leader Officer Management (Colonel's Group) to ensure highly qualified individuals are assigned as faculty to meet mission requirements of the schools.

Strategies for recruiting and retaining civilian faculty are also determined by the mission needs of the school. Schools follow rigorous recruiting and screening processes to hire civilian faculty members. They are often assisted by Civilian Personnel Offices, which place recruiting advertisements in USA Jobs, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and targeted professional journals. General criteria used for evaluating candidates for initial appointment include

professional competence, as evidenced by educational achievement and experience (degrees earned or other professional recognition), academic activity and service, publishing record, evidence of effective teaching, reputation in a field of academic or professional specialization, and promise of significant contribution to the mission and operation of Air University and its schools.

Military faculty manning is an ongoing challenge at service intermediate-level colleges. Air Command and Staff College is currently minimally manned and has difficulty meeting the 4:1 student-to-faculty ratio mandated by the Chairman in the OPMEP. A 4:1 student-to-faculty ratio is the accreditation standard for intermediate-level college resident programs. Small student-to-faculty ratios are essential to ensuring quality instruction.

At the Service senior-level colleges, the faculty mix is evenly balanced among approximately one-third Air Force colonels, one-third civilian PhDs, and one-third sister service, interagency, and international officers and civilians. Augmenting the assigned faculty are additional Air Force colonels and civilian PhDs assigned to Air University Academic Centers, but teaching at the college. These officers and civilians increase the cadre by the approximately 15% needed to meet the OPMEP-required student-to-faculty ration of 3.5-to-1.

Conclusion

Air University successfully incorporates joint curriculum that meets CJCSI 1800.01C (OPMEP) guidance, while at the same time maintains a distinctive air, space, and cyberspace understanding that meets Air Force requirements. The Process of Accreditation of Joint Education has also provided the desired accountability needed to ensure schools continue to meet the intent of the legislation. 'Jointness' has become the primary language at Air University and the Air Force is achieving objectives to provide PME to the Total Force.