



(Photo by Spc. Joshua Leonard, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team PAO)

Soldiers from 173rd Airborne Brigade, U.S. Army Europe, demonstrate room clearing procedures for Ukrainian marines and national guard soldiers 14 September 2014 during situational training at Exercise Rapid Trident 2014, near Yavoriv, Ukraine.

The Army University

Educating Leaders to Win in a Complex World

Lt. Gen. Robert B. Brown, U.S. Army

We must continue to educate and develop soldiers and civilians to grow the intellectual capacity to understand the complex contemporary security environment to better lead Army, joint, interagency, and multinational task forces and teams. Therefore, we will reinvest and transform our institutional educational programs for officers and noncommissioned officers in order to prepare for the complex future security environment.

-Secretary of the Army John McHugh

Beginning this year, the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is reorganizing the Army's professional military education programs into a university system to increase academic rigor, to create greater opportunities for

accreditation, and to enhance the quality of the force. *The Army University* aligns the commissioned officer, warrant officer, noncommissioned officer, and civilian education programs across TRADOC under a single academic structure with a consistent brand name. This



(Photo by Sgt. Gregory Williams, AFN Afghanistan)

Soldiers stand in line as they participate in the inaugural Kandahar Airfield college graduation ceremony 23 May 2012. The ceremony served to recognize those soldiers who completed their college degrees during their deployment to Afghanistan.

alignment streamlines academic governance, reduces stovepipes, facilitates accreditation of educational programs, and provides the opportunity to propagate best practices rapidly throughout the force. This effort is the first major innovation of the Army's *Force 2025 and Beyond* initiative.¹ It is also a visible statement that the Army is making a greater investment in our soldiers through improved education to increase their competence, enhance their character, and strengthen their commitment to the Army.

We are executing this change because our current system is inadequate for addressing the growing complexity, volatility, and uncertainty of the twenty-first century security environment, as outlined in the recently published *U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*. Winning in the future will require "innovative, adaptive leaders and cohesive teams who thrive in those complex and uncertain environments."²

Preparing leaders with the right skill sets to meet the complex world of tomorrow demands change today. The students in our schools today will be leading our Army tomorrow. The command sergeants major of that future force are already filling the seats of our basic leadership courses as young corporals and sergeants.

The brigade commanders of the Army of 2025 enter the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College this year. Building the right educational architecture for them and their peers is the most significant investment we can make to build the Army our nation needs for 2025 and beyond.

Within TRADOC, the Army's colleges, institutes, schools, and training centers currently provide high-quality education and training to soldiers and civilians worldwide. However, this system is not optimal for developing the critical and creative thinkers the Army will require in the future. If not upgraded, it will gradually become less efficient and less capable of delivering the kind of educational experience our force must have to meet the challenges of the future.

Defining the Problem

Five underlying factors currently inhibit the Army educational enterprise from realizing its full potential.

Industrial Age legacy. The previous professional military education system emerged more than a century ago when requirements for military leaders were very different. Consistent with the mass-production, industrial mindset of the time, the Army developed an

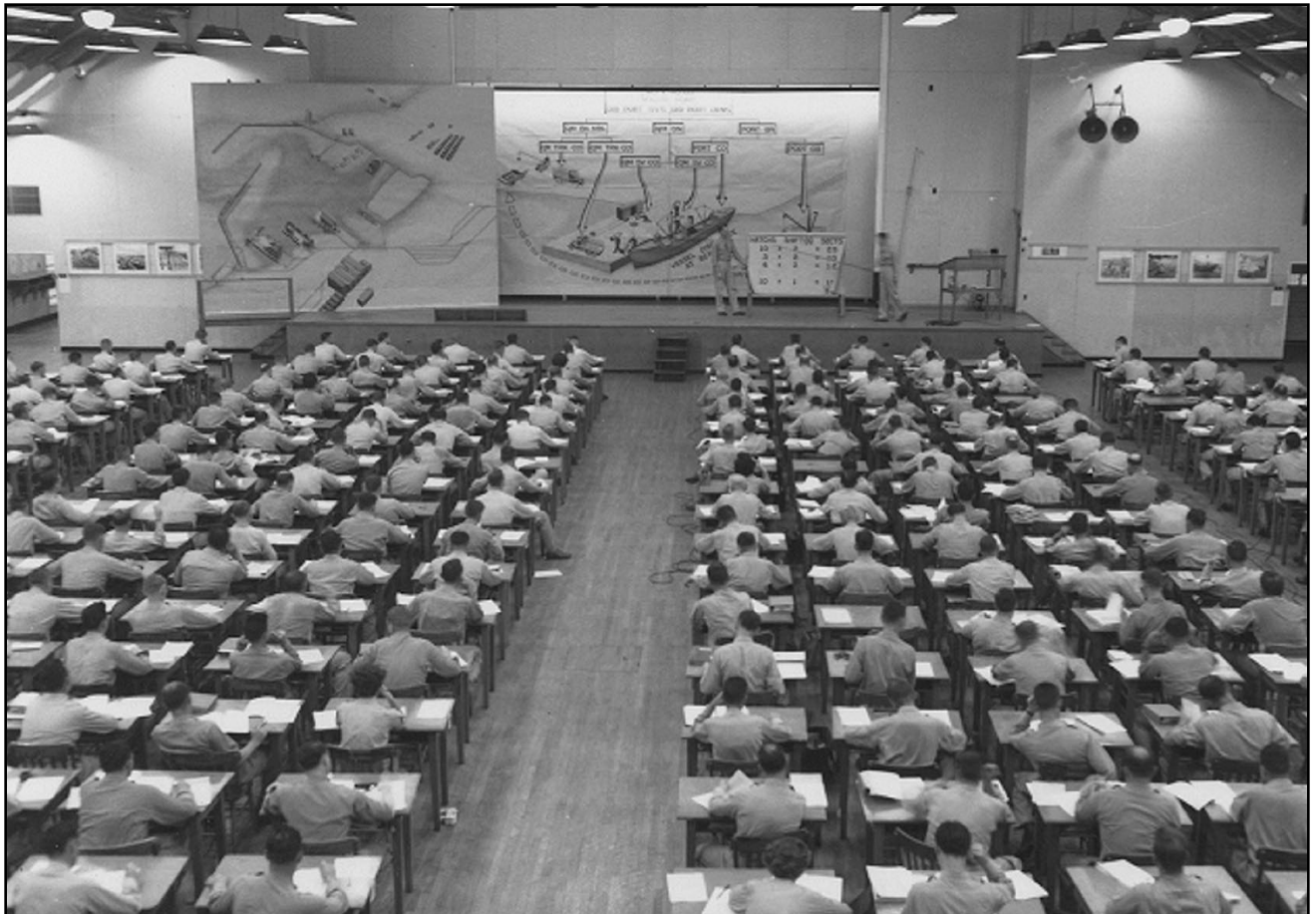
assembly-line approach to education that focused on conforming to established procedures based around branch-specific expertise.

Army education has evolved in its approach as it has incorporated new learning techniques appropriate for the challenges of emerging operational complexity. However, it still remains unduly constrained by a structural approach to its curriculum development process and a teaching methodology that is too rigid. It does not effectively cultivate or promote the kind of creative thinking and mental agility necessary to overcome the challenges of the future operational environment.

Incoherent focus. The education effort within TRADOC today includes at least seventy schools and a large number of independent research libraries. Although there is extraordinary innovation occurring independently in these educational facilities, synchronization and coherence of efforts

between them is spotty at best, resulting in tremendous inefficiency and needless duplication of effort. Moreover, bureaucratic stovepipes often inhibit diffusion of innovative best practices across the education enterprise.

Lack of identity. Army education lacks identity as a unified institution as well as a widely recognized brand. Individual TRADOC schools and centers collaborate with more than ninety different universities and colleges across the country. The civilian institutions are often enthusiastic about working with the military. However, they often complain that educational partnerships with the Army are too often temporary and localized to specific installations. Due to the creation of The Army University, we now have a centralized “front door” to attract, manage, and optimize such partnerships to meet the needs of the Army, a feature we previously lacked.



(Photo courtesy of Combined Arms Center PAO)

Command and General Staff officer course students listen to a lecture on port operations September 1945 in Andrews Hall (now the post museum), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. During World War II, the need to rapidly produce large numbers of Army staff officers resulted in adjustments to the schoolhouse curricula that focused instruction on individual staff-relevant branch specialty requirements and reduced the time of instruction to ten weeks.

Prestige gap in military education. The military community perceives that degrees and credentials from Army academic institutions carry less weight and prestige than those granted by the academic community. Army opinion surveys reflect that many soldiers do not regard professional military education as rigorous, valuable, or prestigious.³ This perception that Army education lacks the academic rigor of equivalent programs in civilian institutions is due to a misunderstanding of the accreditation process within the military.

Poor accreditation. Agencies recognized by the Department of Education accredit less than one-fourth of existing Army education programs. This generates an enormous hidden cost as soldiers pursue degrees and skill-credentialing, needlessly having to complete courses in civilian institutions similar to instruction they already mastered in the military. It is not uncommon to find career noncommissioned officers with

ample credit hours of education for formal recognition but no academic degree because those credit hours were acquired across a career in different programs at different installations. As a result, the Army routinely funds unnecessary and redundant education programs for soldiers because it has heretofore failed to provide them with academic equivalency credit hours for their Army education.

Why the Army Needs a University

Strategists dating back to Sun Tzu have argued that victory in war goes to the society that can best employ its inherent strengths to produce strategic advantage. Winning in a complex world demands that our Army finds and leverages the strengths of the United States to produce a competitive military advantage.

Over the last three decades, the United States led the world into the digital age by fostering a spirit of ingenuity,



(Photo by Dan Neal, Combined Arms Center)

Command and General Staff College students from the United States and the United Kingdom participate in Exercise Eagle Owl, 11 March 2015. The joint exercise was held in the recently upgraded classrooms of the Lewis and Clark Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

creativity, and innovation. Our world-class universities incubated this spirit. Today, the United States has the pre-eminent graduate-level education programs in the world.⁴ Its graduate schools are widely considered the destination of choice for foreign students able to study abroad.⁵

The U.S. advantage in higher education is not an accident of history. Other advanced nations abound with intelligent and dedicated critical thinkers as well as excellent schools of higher learning. However, our advantage stems from a U.S. higher education system that is built upon a proven model: the state university system. While there are many variants, this system organizes the academic efforts of each state into specialized centers of scholarly excellence. This collective approach produces a rate of innovation that is difficult to achieve in smaller, stand-alone programs. Consequently, the state university system produces high-quality critical and creative thinkers at a pace that makes it the envy of the world. Our goal is to apply this proven civilian model to the military education system to produce the agile and adaptive leaders required by the *U.S. Army Operating Concept*.

Why Now

There are two reasons we should act now. First, education is the most reliable strategic hedge in investment that the Army can make in the face of an uncertain future. In July 2014, the secretary of the Army called for a comprehensive strategy, oriented on the time frame of 2025 and beyond, which would “adapt the Army to a rapidly changing global security environment that is volatile, unstable, and increasingly threatening to U.S. interests.”⁶ Central to this strategy is recognition that the Army will require expert critical and creative thinkers to serve as innovative leaders who thrive in uncertainty and chaos.⁷ Those with the potential to become such leaders are already part of our Army today. Consequently, adequately training leaders for the future must begin immediately.

Second, history reveals that some of the best and longest-lasting transformations in military education occur in the aftermath of sustained conflicts. The Army today comprises a veteran force with real-world experience derived from years of sustained combat. Its experience informs our collective judgment, giving us a deeper appreciation for the complex and unpredictable challenges that lie ahead. This wealth of experience provides a fleeting window

of opportunity to reevaluate and reorient our approach to education.

Historical Precedent

The creation of a university structure to organize the educational efforts of a military department is neither new nor unprecedented. The Air Force established the Air University in 1946, and the Marine Corps activated the Marine Corps University in 1989. Both the Air and Marine Corps universities are useful models, and The Army University benefits from lessons learned in these organizations, such as avoiding the creation of an unnecessary bureaucratic structure.

The idea of an Army University dates back to 1949 when Lt. Gen. Manton Eddy, the commandant of the Command and General Staff College, proposed it to the War Department Military Education Board.⁸ Unfortunately, the broad geographic dispersion of the Army’s premier schools and different institutional agendas prevented the development of a university structure at that time. However, advances in digital technology and distance learning now enable the necessary collaboration for a university without requiring physical colocation.

Strategic Vision

To remain competitive and relevant in the future, the Army must develop an education enterprise that blends the most effective elements of its existing academic programs with the structure and best practices of America’s premier universities.

To achieve this, TRADOC is organizing its military education programs under a single university structure. Moreover, The Army University is operationalizing the Army’s philosophy of mission command within the education enterprise.⁹ The university, led by a board of regents and a chancellor, will design broad educational objectives and standards, but it will allow the colleges the autonomy to develop the programs to implement those standards for their unique student populations.

Scope

The Army University integrates all of the schools throughout TRADOC into a single educational structure, modeled after successful state university systems across our nation. This includes all elements of the commissioned officer, warrant officer,



(Photo by Spc. Paige Behringer, 10th Press Camp Headquarters)

Chief Warrant Officer 5 David Williams, the Army staff senior warrant officer, speaks with warrant officers from across Fort Bragg, North Carolina, during a warrant officer professional development seminar 27 February 2015. In addition to assessing any issues in the Warrant Officer Corps, Williams discussed education, professional development, leadership, and the future of warrant officers.

enlisted, and civilian education systems. It also includes educational programs in the active and reserve components, and the Reserve Officer Training Corps precommissioning program.

Army War College. The Army War College is an integral part of The Army University and serves as the enterprise coordinator for strategic education and research—while remaining a separately accredited and governed graduate college. As such, it retains a unique status as a direct reporting unit to the chief of staff of the Army. The commandant of the Army War College, however, also serves as The Army University's vice chancellor for strategic education, responsible for educating strategic leaders, providing enterprise-level guidance on strategic education across the Army, and conducting research for the Army senior leadership.

Education for the Total Force. The Army National Guard and Army Reserve have long been

equal partners in the professional military education system. The two are vital to The Army University and help connect the university with the nation it serves. Both organizations have many academic professionals who serve in both tenured faculty and senior academic administration positions in their civilian careers. They provide a valuable, untapped resource of expertise to help improve the quality of Army education.

Joint professional military education. Title 10 of the U.S. Code mandates specific educational programs for the military services in order to promote greater interservice collaboration and understanding.¹⁰ The Army University will maintain close coordination with the Joint Staff J-7 through its membership in the Military Education Coordination Council in order to uphold these statutory requirements. However, the creation of The Army University also has the potential to improve the objectives of the joint education program. Current practice exposes officers to the

“joint world” first at their intermediate level of education. Experience in the last decade of conflict suggests that some level of joint education may be valuable at the primary level of a commissioned officer’s education as well as for enlisted soldiers, warrant officers, and civilian cohorts. While this concept requires further exploration, The Army University is uniquely structured to promote this change. As an institution that is accredited for joint professional military education with direct academic oversight of military education across all cohorts, The Army University serves as a direct link between the Joint Staff and educational programs.

The Value Proposition

The creation of The Army University is both a symbolic and a substantive change in Army education. It is a visible symbol of the Army’s commitment to education. As The Army University brand grows in stature, it will send a powerful message that all of the Army educational programs carry the prestige of an academically rigorous, nationwide institution, affecting soldiers across the Total Force by accomplishing the following:

- ◆ supporting growth and development across a career of service in the Army

- ◆ developing agile, adaptive, and innovative leaders through increased academic rigor
- ◆ supporting the Total Army with increased educational opportunity for the Reserve and National Guard
- ◆ enhancing the ability of soldiers to integrate their military and civilian education through receiving valid academic credit for their educational investment
- ◆ reinforcing a soldier-for-life philosophy through improving soldiers’ ability to transition into quality employment opportunities after their service

Additionally, The Army University positively impacts the operating force in the following ways:

- ◆ providing operational units with leaders who can improve and thrive in chaos and uncertainty
- ◆ increasing the rate of innovation in military education to be more responsive to the needs of operational commanders
- ◆ increasing foreign partnerships and regional studies, prioritized by Army service component command, to better prepare leaders to serve in regionally aligned forces
- ◆ developing an educational common operating picture to enable shared understanding across the Army
- ◆ improving student research alignment with the needs of the operating force

Like its civilian counterparts, The Army University fosters innovation by identifying best practices and



(Photo by Christian Marquardt, 7th Army JMTTC PAO)

Soldiers enhance their communication and decision-making skills through virtual missions 2 October 2009 during training at the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy’s Warrior Leaders Course, Grafenwoehr Training Area, Grafenwoehr, Germany.

facilitating pilot programs. This empowers subordinate schools through shared understanding, building a network both within The Army University and with other universities.

Resourcing Strategy

The 2014 *Army Strategic Planning Guidance* identifies the education of adaptive leaders as the Army's number-one strategic priority.¹¹ Achieving this goal will require sustained investment. Recognizing this change is being initiated during a period of fiscal austerity, a phased approach will defer initial costs through internal reprogramming as new ways of operating are tested. After two years of experience with the university concept, we will have a better sense of the minimum essential administrative requirements. The ultimate goal is to improve the overall quality of educational outputs through better use of existing resources.¹²

Promoting Real Change in Army Education

The Army University is more than just a name change and a staff reorganization. As the university matures, it will drive a number of substantive changes in Army education.

World class faculty. Superior teaching quality is a key driver for a university to achieve excellence.¹³ The Army University faculty includes a stable core of subject matter experts who are skilled in facilitating adult learning, augmented by military personnel with recent operational experience.¹⁴ While tremendous faculty fill our academic programs today, preserving and expanding that talent in a very competitive labor market requires significant effort. Increasing faculty development will provide substantial benefit to the operating force in other ways as the military faculty return to the force with improved communication, critical thinking, and research skills. The Army University and the Army G-1 are working together to develop policies and regulations that attract, develop, and retain the right mixture of talented and relevant civilian and military faculty. Without an investment in faculty excellence, no amount of restructuring will produce the results we seek.

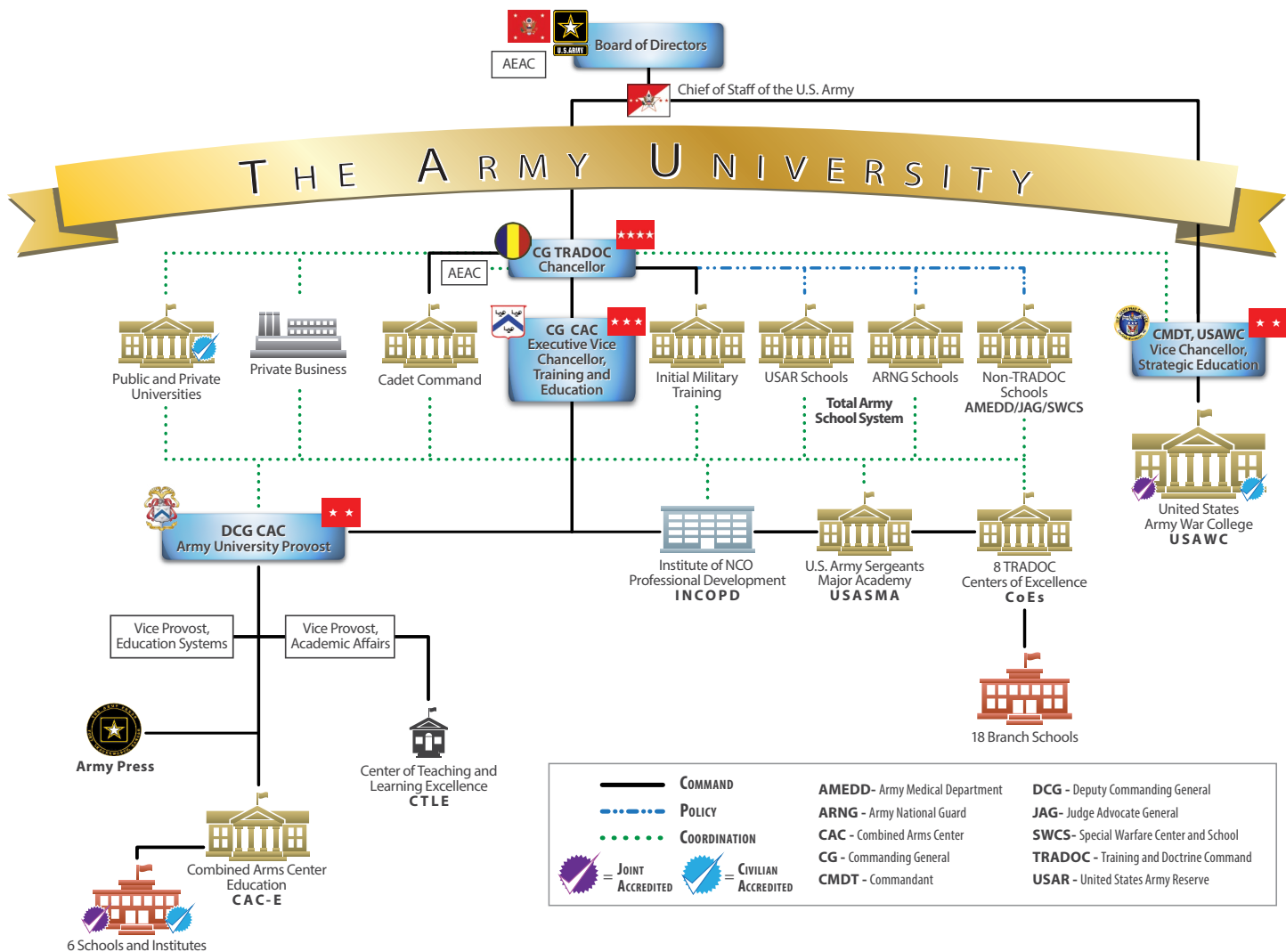


(Photo by Sgt. Ricardo Branch, 8th Theater Sustainment Command PAO)

Staff Sgt. Joel Velez, a small group leader, teaches Warrior Leader Course students how to plot eight-digit grid coordinates 11 January 2010 at the Non-commissioned Officer Academy Hawaii at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

External collaboration. The Army University leverages external collaboration to promote internal excellence through developing faculty exchanges, combined forums, and joint research. Tremendous opportunity exists with both public and private universities for training, cooperative education, research, internships, and more. At the same time, this network of partnerships connects the Army to an important segment of the society it serves.

Accreditation. One of the most exciting benefits of The Army University is its ability to drive comprehensive, nationwide accreditation for Army schools and training. Rigorous external accreditation improves the quality of our programs, reduces educational expenses, and enables soldiers to leave the military "career ready."¹⁵ Equally important, The Army University also enables Army civilians to receive academic credit for professional military education. Accreditation increases recruitment and retention for both military and civilian cohorts by providing another venue to



The Army University

achieve educational goals while continuing to serve. It also motivates soldiers and civilians to complete courses important to the Army, which enables them to receive college credit for their efforts. With hundreds of courses in its portfolio and tens of thousands of students, The Army University generates momentum in the accreditation process in ways that were difficult for individual Army schools to manage.

Academic rigor. Accreditation of The Army University courses requires rigorous standards for student performance. Much of this rigor is already in place but demands a renewed emphasis. Soldiers will maintain a transcript from The Army University throughout their careers, reflecting their performance in Army educational programs. The transcript will

enable better talent management through integrating a soldier's academic performance into his or her military record. Additionally, TRADOC and the Army G-1 are reviewing ways to improve performance reporting to place greater weight on academic assessment as an element of a soldier's total performance record.

Academic research. The Army University enables faculty to publish, research, and design courses to develop "well-rounded, more-respected professors."¹⁶ Much of this is already occurring, but, too often our institutions do not support or encourage these activities. In addition, these activities promote collaborative research with private industry, academia, and Army institutions such as the Army Research Institute and the Army Research Labs. As part of this effort, The

Army University will pursue congressional authority for the university president to accept grants—similar to the current authority of the commandant of the Army War College.¹⁷

The Army University will also empower students to write, debate, and improve the Army profession by actively working to publish their professional research in the broader national security dialogue. To better facilitate this effort, we are combining *Military Review* and the Combat Studies Institute to form the Army Press. This publishing venue will generate high-quality, peer-reviewed literature from Army scholars.

Increasing the rate of learning innovation.

Modern science has learned more about the brain in the last fifteen years than in all of human history.¹⁸ Educational science is rapidly evolving with the potential to transform the way we teach. The Army cannot afford to miss out on this innovation. With this in mind, The Army University will become the Army's center of innovation in the learning sciences and will empower and unleash creative educational approaches. It will do this by applying the philosophy of mission command across the educational enterprise to promote decentralized initiative—based on clear intent and trust among teams. To enable this internal networking, The Army University maintains an educational common operating picture to provide comprehensive awareness of every major initiative in Army education. These include best practices, pilot programs, civilian university broadening programs, and faculty exchanges.

Governing Structure

Existing models in the Air, Marine Corps, and National Defense universities influenced development of The Army University governing-structure concept. In addition, we developed the structure after collaboration

with the leadership of the California, Virginia, and Texas university systems, with the goal of employing common language to enable collaboration with other universities. A discussion of the major new leadership positions follows.



(Photo by Master Sgt. Seth Laughter, XVIII Airborne Corps PAO)

Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto, XVIII Airborne Corps senior enlisted adviser, speaks to a group of students and senior enlisted leaders 31 October 2014 at the Fort Bragg Noncommissioned Officer Academy during a noncommissioned officer professional development seminar.

Board of directors.

An Army-level board of directors led by the Army secretariat and chief of staff provides the strategic vision, strategic ends, and strategic priorities.

Chancellor. The TRADOC commanding general acts as university chancellor and provides the strategic direction and institutional policy; in execution, the chancellor reports directly to the chief of staff of the Army and board of directors.

Executive vice chancellor for training and education. The commanding general of the Combined Arms

Center at Fort Leavenworth acts as executive vice chancellor for training and education, providing oversight of academic quality and support programs, university finances, future development of the university system, and public representation for the university.

Vice chancellor for strategic education. The commandant of the Army War College acts as the vice chancellor for strategic education and is responsible for the integration of strategic education throughout The Army University. The vice chancellor for strategic education retains academic governance over the War College and reports directly to the chief of staff of the Army.

Provost. The deputy commanding general for the Combined Arms Center-Education acts as university provost and is responsible for long-term continuity, excellence, and vitality of the university's academic programs. The provost also manages the Army Learning Coordination Council to synchronize education activities across the Army.

Conclusion

Every day, tens of thousands of Army soldiers and civilians participate in professional education programs across the globe, making the Army's educational enterprise one of the largest academic systems in the United States. Transitioning this complex global enterprise into a single university structure may seem daunting. The benefits of doing so, however, are too significant

to ignore. Stewarding our profession demands action before rather than during or after a crisis. History shows that periods of significant change after sustained conflict open windows of opportunity. We intend to harness the energy and experience in our force to transform the way we educate Army leaders. Now is the time to seize this opportunity and prepare our profession for the uncertainty of tomorrow. ■

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Notes

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7. TP 525-3-1, 20.
8. Harry P. Ball, *Of Responsible Command: A History of the U.S. Army War College* (Pennsylvania: Alumni Association of the U. S. Army War College, 1983). Concern over competing roles between the Staff and War Colleges caused the original proposal's failure.
9. Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), 1. The Army defines

mission command as "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations"

10. U.S. Code 10, Chapter 107, establishes joint professional military education requirements for the military services.
11. John M. McHugh and Raymond T. Odierno, *2014 Army Strategic Planning Guidance*, 18-19, <http://www.defenseinnovationmarketplace.mil/resources/ASPG2014.pdf>, accessed 17 April 2015.
12. The Army University will submit any additional transitional costs in the FY18-22 Program Objective Memorandum.
13. Adams. Rankings of the world's best universities consistently show that those who are at the top of their professional fields are the best teachers.
14. TP 525-8-2, *The U.S. Army Learning Concept for 2015* (Fort Eustis, VA: U.S. Army TRADOC, 20 January 2011), 27.
15. The chief of staff of the Army recently established the Soldier for Life campaign designed to ensure soldiers, veterans, and families leave military service "career ready." The accreditation efforts within Army University support the goals established in Soldier for Life. See <http://soldierforlife.army.mil/>, accessed 5 March 2015.
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