



New Supply Chain Degree Program Blends Military, Business Theories

By Combined Arms Support Command Public Affairs

FORT LEE, Va. — The Army Logistics University and Virginia Commonwealth University have partnered to create a new degree program to support Soldiers. The Master of Supply Chain Management is slated to begin in fall 2014 and will emphasize innovation, critical thinking and logistics management.

In a ceremony Dec. 4, at the Richmond campus, Dr. Michael Rao, VCU president, and Maj. Gen. Larry D. Wyche, Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee commanding general, signed a Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, agreement to develop the program.

Combined Arms Support Command, known as CASCOM, a major subordinate command of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, is responsible for training over 185,000 students annually through more than 540 courses taught by the Ordnance, Quartermaster and Transportation schools, Soldier Support Institute and Army Logistics University, or ALU. The mission for the command is to train, educate and grow the sustainment community as well

as develop and integrate innovative Army and joint sustainment capabilities, concepts and doctrine to enable Unified Land Operations.

“I am proud to inaugurate an academic program that will be critically important for Central Virginia,” Rao said. “Central Virginia — led by VCU and Fort Lee — needs to be a national model for innovative logistics and supply chain management. At VCU, we understand this, and I’m so proud that my colleagues in the School of Business have become national leaders in this area.”

The MOU signing represents the culmination of a journey in partnership that began with a VCU leadership visit to Fort Lee in 2012. That visit established the foundation that has developed into this new cooperative graduate degree program. “We were so excited that VCU was not only interested in developing a joint graduate program in supply chain management but also in standing up a new teaching department to do so,” Wyche said.

“The program we have co-designed reflects our shared vision of the logistician who will master both the defense logistics system and the business of logistics,” Wyche said. “Together, we have designed a course of instruction that will, perhaps, be the best such program available to Department of Defense officers and civilians.”

The 12-month enhanced graduate degree program in the VCU School of Business will place special emphasis on innovation and creative thinking as well as the use and application of SAP enterprise software. Students will learn how to manage the complexities of global supply chains by using applied research programs, analyzing real-world problems and working with local firms and government agencies. The program will draw students from the corporate sector as well as from the military, and provide both the unique opportunity to learn from each other.

“The course reflects what the Army and defense department have wanted for years — a careful blending of government and business theories and practices involving the art and science of supply chain management and logistical support to our armed forces,” Wyche said.

VCU is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls nearly 31,000 students in 223 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences and humanities. Sixty-eight of the programs are unique in Virginia, many of them crossing the disciplines of VCU’s 13 schools and one college.

This program provides the Army a great opportunity, said Dr. Billy J. Davis, College of Professional and Continuing Education, ALU.

“The comprehensive curriculum will help prepare students for the rigorous demands of being a supply chain and logistics professional.” He further explained that ALU students will also be able to combine their studies in the Theater Logistics Planners Program with additional coursework taken at VCU.

“This collaboration will educate and help prepare military and civilian sustainment professionals to become innovative logisticians who are competent, committed and adaptive to their field of professional practice,” Davis said. “Collaborations, such as this, are instrumental in bridging and connecting the military sustainment professional to the intricacies of the global industrial base. The program will create an optimal learning environment where knowledge about supply chain and logistics throughout industries and applications can be shared.”

The program still requires approval from the VCU Board of Visitors and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

This new degree program represents the great teamwork between the defense and academic communities, Wyche said. “We are looking forward to a lasting and meaningful relationship.” ■

Virginia Commonwealth University Public Affairs contributed to this article.



<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/NCO-Journal/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NCOJournal>

<https://twitter.com/NCOJournal>

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the NCO Journal, the U.S. Army, or the Department of Defense.

