

Former Distance Education Director leaves a legacy of innovation

By Elena Patton, Public Affairs Office 23 June 2021



Dr. Clayton Chun retired from the U.S. Army War College in May 2021, having served 17 years as chair of the Department of Distance Education.

Today's Army War College students in the Distance Education Program are benefiting from almost two decades of innovation in both curriculum and teaching methods implemented by outgoing director of the program. Until his recent retirement, he put Army War College Distance Education at

the forefront of professional military education, according to USAWC leaders.

Dr. Clayton Chun served as chair of the USAWC Distance Education Department from 2004 to 2021. During those 17 years, he managed the faculty, curriculum, and information technology needed to deliver graduate education to 23,800 Active, National Guard, Reserve military, and civilian students.

Leaders and faculty alike credit him for a profound and transformational impact on Army War College Distance Education.

“His vision for [Distance Education] and his persistent pursuit of that vision produced a program that is unrivaled in Professional Military Education,” said Provost Dr. James Breckenridge.

“As chair, he transformed the already solid Department of Distance Education into the DoD’s gold standard for distance learning in PME,” said Dr. Kevin Weddle, Distance Education faculty member.

“He had given the DE program its modern life, from a box of books to the interactive activities,” he said, referring to synchronous and asynchronous forums and his commitment to figuring out a way to really engage the DE students,” said Dr. Richard Lacquement, who served as Dean of the School of Strategic Landpower through much of Chun’s tenure.

The Department of Distance Education is an arm of the School, specializing in remote learning methodologies and innovative technologies. Distance Education delivers in two years a curriculum equivalent to the one-year residential program. DEP students participate in face-to-face learning during two resident phases at Carlisle.

Weddle described multiple initiatives instituted during Chun’s leadership. He reduced the attrition rate for this demanding course from 50% to 20% by implementing a comprehensive in-person orientation program at Carlisle Barracks for each incoming class. And, he made that online experience richer for the students. Early in the online learning environment he instituted online student forums, and faculty mentor and writing programs to create a more collaborative student-faculty curriculum. As online learning matured, so too did the USAWC Distance Education Program, through strategic-level gaming and mini-elective choices.

For the resident phases of DEP, Chun created multiple new programs that parallel resident program experiences, including the Washington DC Staff

Ride, the Commandant's National Security Program, and the International Fellows Continued Education Program.

Lacquement noted, especially, Chun's major steps to make possible Joint Professional Military Education- Level II certification for Distance Education students. Roughly half of DE students will graduate with JPME-II certification, thanks to his work to build the faculty, curriculum and student body mix that meets Joint standards. Previously, Distance Education students earned JMPE-I certification as well as the graduate degree, while the Resident student body reflected the requisite Service diversity for JMPE-II.

"This is the only program where you get your senior service college credit, a graduate degree and, for half the DDE students, JPME II," said Deputy Provost David Dworak. "This is the only program that offers all three," he said about the unrivaled nature of the DDE program."

"He made sure that the leaders in the Reserve and National Guard have the same high-quality education opportunities as the full-time active-duty force," said Lacquement.

Chun's Air Force career spanned from missile launch operations with Strategic Command and Shuttle Mission planning with the 6595th Shuttle Test Group at Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA, to serving as Senior Economist for the Secretary of the Air Force, Assistant Dean in the School of Advanced Airpower Studies at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, and teaching at the Army War College.

He is the author of *Thunder over the Horizon: From V-2 Rockets to Ballistic Missiles (War, Technology, and History)* [2006], *Aerospace Power in the Twenty-First Century - A Basic Primer* (2012), and his most recent book, *Yalu River 1950-51: The Chinese spring the trap on MacArthur (Campaign Book 346)* [2020].

His multiple articles have appeared in Osprey Publications, Ashgate Publishing, Forbes Publishing, High Frontier: The Journal for Space & Missile Professionals, Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Global Encyclopedia, Air University Press, among others.

Chun earned his bachelor's degree and commission as a U.S. Air Force officer at the University of California, Berkeley. He received a master's in System Management at the University of Southern California, a master's in Economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis at RAND Graduate School. He is a graduate of the

U.S. Air War College.

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