

Army Vice Chief of Staff: Strategic leaders prioritize people first, disciplined training, cohesive units

By Robert Martin, USAWC PAO 14 September 2021



Army Vice Chief of Staff, Gen. Joseph Martin talks to Army War College students, Sep. 13 in Bliss Hall.

Gen. Joseph M. Martin, Army Vice Chief of Staff and 2007 graduate of the U.S. Army War College, addressed pressing Strategic Leadership issues with the resident class of 2022, in Bliss Hall, Sep. 13, 2021.

“General Martin visited us this week to discuss four of the harmful behaviors that are eroding trust in the Army,” said Col. Mike Hosie, chair of the Command Leadership and Management Dept. of faculty who plan and teach the Strategic Leadership Course.

Agile and adaptive leaders must maintain the foundation of strong, resilient Soldiers who strengthen the Army, and attack the harmful behaviors that weaken that foundation. Leaders must guide and mentor subordinate leaders to be problem solvers able to address obstacles to trust, focused on disciplined training management linked to building and maintaining cohesive teams, said the Army Vice Chief of Staff.

“These behaviors include suicide, sexual harassment/assault, racism, and extremism. Students this year are examining these behaviors through the lenses provided in the strategic leadership course and we will consolidate their analysis and provide feedback to Army Senior Leaders at the end of the Academic Year,” he said about the report expected in spring 2022.

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“Gen. Martin is heavily invested in this effort,” Hosie added.

“The Vice made a clear cause for the importance of sustaining recruiting and integration and the downstream effect of failing to do so,” said Army Col. Robert Shaw, USAWC student.

Martin talked about his own observations and insights for building units that foster relationships.

Martin identified the characteristics of an effective strategic leader, providing anecdotes from his own professional experience to underscore his points, about --

- Candor
- Preparation
- Competence & Character
- Approachability
- Listening
- Agility & Prioritization
- Teamwork
- Balance between one's unit and personal life
- Clarity
- Humility, and
- Dealing with adversity.

“It was enlightening to hear the consistency across all the senior leaders who have come here that the single most important trait for senior leaders is humility,” said

–Army Lt. Col. Phil Messer, USAWC student.

Finally, Martin talked through four numbers – 14 – 2 – 1 - 7 – that he associates with balance, the ability to persevere under continuous operations at the strategic level. Giving it a personal flavor, he noted that he tells his staff schedule no more than 14 hours each day, protect 2 hours of personal time reading, answering emails, and non-work-related breaks, prioritize 1 hour for physical training, and 7 for sleep.