

Program offers opportunity for students to learn, teach at civilian universities, organizations

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Col. Walter Piatt, an Army War College Fellow at Georgetown University, stands outside the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. Selected officers take part in a unique 10-month program that partners the Army and various universities, allied service schools, civilian "think tanks", corporations, and government agencies, in lieu of residence at a senior service college. courtesy photo.

Oct. 1, 2010 -- The art of strategic learning at the Army War College isn't limited to taking part in the USAWC resident or distance programs, selected officers have the opportunity to take part in a unique 10-month program that partners the Army and various universities, allied service schools, civilian "think tanks", corporations, and government agencies, in lieu of residence at a senior service college.

Each year, the Department of the Army selects a limited number of officers as Senior Service College Fellows. Officers from the active component, National Guard and Reserve are assigned to the USAWC to study and conduct research in this capacity during a given academic year. This year, 74 Senior Service College Fellows are taking part in the program, the largest in its 38-year history.

"The program serves as an opportunity for the officer to obtain an educational experience equivalent in quality to the resident course program based at a civilian institution where there are different goals and objectives," said Kevin Connelly, the program director. "They are able to see how the corporate and civilian worlds work strategically."

Originally started in 1972, the program began as the Army Research Associate Program, where selected

officers could volunteer for a year at an academic institution in lieu of attending a senior service college. In 1987, under the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the USAWC established a direct affiliation with the fellows and created the current program. Current fellowships include locations in the United States, France, Italy, Germany, and Canada. Former graduates of the program include Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. George W. Casey, Jr.

“Like many of the selectees I was forced to defer a few years due to operational deployments,” said Col. Walter Piatt, a fellow at Georgetown University. “I was honored and excited to be selected to a senior service college and plan to take full advantage of this opportunity to be with my family, stay healthy and learn from all the remarkable people I will come into contact with this year.”

Piatt said that he has been impressed with the experience so far as part of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

“Walking onto the campus at Georgetown for the first time was both impressive and a bit overwhelming,” he said. “As a career infantryman I felt a little humbled but proud to be able spend time with the brilliant faculty and students that make up Georgetown and the DC area. Everyone has so much to offer.”

The experience of the faculty at Georgetown University is one of the benefits of the program.



Fellows of the Army War College class of 2011 shared the USAWC resident experience in August, and gathered at Upton Hall.

“I get to work for and around people who have enormous experience dealing with international diplomacy and foreign policy,” he said. He said that he hopes the experience will help him gain a broader perspective of the issues facing the world.”

The fellows can also pursue a specific course of study that isn’t available at a military senior service school.

“For example there are universities that offer programs in strategic supply chain management, modeling and simulation, that are extremely beneficial for officers in that career field,” said Connelly.

Each year the program searches for new opportunities for fellows. One of this year’s new programs is the National Security Fellowship Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The

10-month program, hosted by the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the UNC Curriculum in Peace, War and Defense, allows the fellow to study a wide range of national security, public policy, public affairs and other subject matters offered by the UNC system.

Differences exist between senior service fellow, USAWC resident programs

There are some differences between the resident program and the SSCF besides their location. SSCF receive a USAWC certificate and will have satisfied all requirements expected for a DoD Senior College Graduate, but they do not receive credit for JPME Phase II, nor are they eligible for a USAWC Masters of Strategic Studies degree.

Another difference is the requirement of a civilian research paper and the publishing of an article.

“Each fellow is required to complete a research paper that is managed by the university or organization,” said Connelly. “This is similar to the USAWC student SRP but the entire process is managed by the university.”

USAWC, Carlisle Barracks resources made available to fellows

While the fellows may be at far-off locations, it doesn't mean that they don't receive many of the same services and opportunities as their resident and distance education counterparts.

“We speak or interact with each of the fellows on a daily basis,” said Connelly. The fellows have the opportunity to take part in the Army Physical Research Institute wellness assessments and Telehealth program, have access to the resources of the USAWC library and USAWC faculty.

“We try and replicate as much of the resident student experience for the fellows as we can,” said Connelly. “Whether it's making library resources available to them or providing them a POC to help with pay issues, the college and barracks really go out of their way to help.”

A portal page on AKO has also been set up to help organize and share information in a place they can access from anywhere.

“We've created with the help of the NEC a place where the fellows can come together to share experiences, photos, documents, almost anything,” said Connelly. “They can even take a look at the papers, articles and other program information from previous year's fellows. This really helps establish a network for them.”

On-site visits by Connelly and Professor Mike Pasquarett from the Center for Strategic leadership also provide an opportunity for communication between the fellows, the hosting university or institute and

the USAWC. Each fellow is also assigned a faculty mentor who provides them with guidance and assistance if necessary. These faculty members approve and grade the required papers and article with the same standards as the USAWC distance and resident education programs.

Program also supports USAWC strategic communication mission

Another important aspect of the program is the benefit of having a senior Army officer at a civilian institution where the learning can be two-fold.

“This experience builds a relationship between the Army, the schools and his classmates. The fellow, the university and the USAWC all benefit from this experience,” said Connelly.

“The fellow acts as a connected strategic scout for the Army and serves as an Ambassador from the Army to the host institution,” said Doug Campbell, director of the Center for Strategic Leadership. “The fellows active participation and involvement in the development of and learning from prominent national security professionals allow both the Army and the host institution to learn and grow to better serve the Nation.”

“In my opinion strategic communication and outreach is the central focus of the fellows program,” said Michael Pasquarett, professor in the National Security Strategy & Military Planning Center at CSL. “Education and research are very important, but I believe the Army leadership looks at the fellows as important deliverers of the Army message to past, present and future national security and foreign affairs professionals and as receivers for the thoughts and ideas on these important issues these professionals generate through conferences, seminars, discussion periods and their writings. The fellows reinforce that we as an organization and as individuals can contribute to the national security debate in meaningful and thoughtful ways.”

That mission isn't lost on Piatt.

“Everywhere I go on campus and in the city how much the American people respect service members,” he said. “My job now is to ensure I give something back to Georgetown and to the Army.”