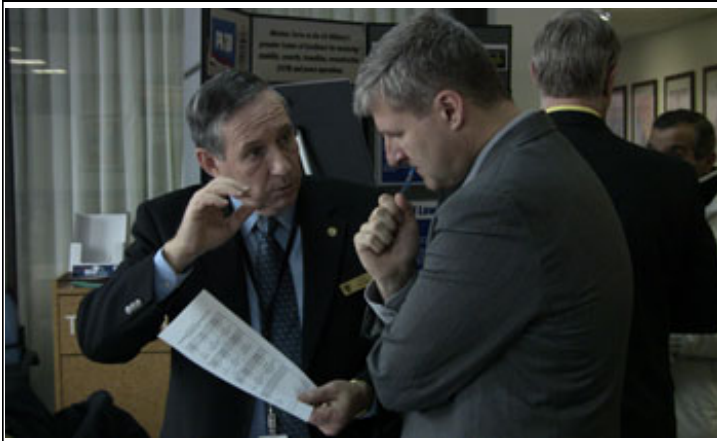


# PKSOI electives enrich USAWC student's experience

*Karen Finkenbinder, PKSOI*

## PKSOI electives enrich USAWC student's experience



*Rich Yarger, Peacekeeping Stability and Operations Institute, talks with a student during the recent Army War College elective fair. PKSOI teaches five electives during the academic year. courtesy photo.*

March 12, 2012 -- The Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute has been

teaching electives at the Army War College since 1995 – when PKSOI was still the Peacekeeping Institute and focused only on peace operations. Fast forward 12 years and PKSOI is teaching many more electives in peace and stability operations to a larger percentage of USAWC students. This year, PKSOI is teaching approximately 30 percent of resident students (92) in five electives.

A highly subscribed course is *Peace and Stability Operations Concepts, Principles, and Doctrine*, an overview course. The classes are a mix of International Fellows, most with broad experiences in peace and stability operations; military students anticipating assignments in such operations; military students that have been engaged in peace and stability operations; and a sprinkling of civilian students. The classes prepare students to engage in peacekeeping operations, to gather lessons learned from students recently returned from such operations, and to engage international fellows who have first-hand knowledge of working in a UN environment.

Army War College alumnus, **Col. Dave Krall**, said he anticipated being assigned to Afghanistan so he took PKSOI Electives on Afghanistan and the survey courses, *Peace & Stability Operations Concepts, Principles, and Doctrine* and *Peace & Stability Operations Strategy and Design*.

As it turned out, he went to Iraq as the Chief of Staff, Iraq Training Advisory Mission (ITAM)-Police and “used everything I was taught in 2219/2220 ... they were by the far the most valuable classes I took

to prepare me for my assignment,” he said. He credits the classes and the experienced slate of instructors for enabling him to effectively work in a police training assignment without a policing background as the courses covered policing and rule of law issues. He said that it was the combination of this academic experience coupled with his ability to apply it in action that resulted in his desire to come to PKSOI.

As operationally relevant as the courses may be, another great benefit is the opportunity to have the international students bring their wealth of experience to the discussions. Often, they are the only students in the room experienced in UN operations and understand the unique business practices of the UN. This allows for rich discussions between the students and allows the IF's to share their depth of knowledge and unique perspectives, particularly when most of these operations are conducted in coalitions and sometimes the U.S. is not in charge.

The electives also provide the opportunity for students to hear about peace and stability operations from the experts in the field - Department of State United States Agency for International Development, United Nations; a “think tank” such as the Stimson Center; or another PKSOI-like organization such as the Pearson Peacekeeping Center, -- participate in the electives, either by providing guest speakers and/or course materials. Thus, the students receive more than the “U.S. perspective.”

According to Professor **Bill Flavin**, PKSOI, another benefit to the Army is the *PKSOI Elective International Alumni* group that has been created over the years. The international officers that have participated in PKSOI electives are asked to share their knowledge and experiences in creating course materials, case studies, scenarios and other training and education materials. At present, there are more than 100 international fellows, many at the highest levels of their military and governments, who stay connected to PKSOI. This long-term relationship allows the electives to stay current but also informs doctrine and concepts.