

# Hammack talks sustainability considerations for senior leaders with USAWC students

By Lt. Col. Mark Mccann

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*The Hon. Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment discusses the importance of sustainability with students at the U.S. Army War College during an elective course focused on Army sustainability issues and challenges for senior leaders.*

May 31, 2012 – U.S. Army War College students discussed sustainability considerations for senior leaders and the Army Net Zero program with Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, the Hon. Katherine Hammack, during the capstone lecture in an elective class here.

“I think it is important that leaders understand the challenges we face,” Hammack said when discussing her interaction with the students here. “There are opportunities for War College students to bring new ideas and strategies to the attention of senior leaders, to think of ways to adjust things we do to make sure we have the resources to sustain operations. “

According to Col. Judith Robinson who teaches the elective, “Preserving Strategic Options for the Future: Sustainability Considerations for Strategic Leaders,” students explore ideas and address sustainability from a more strategic perspective.

“The purpose of this elective is to get students thinking about sustainability with the ability to look forward and think about how to address issues and challenges related to sustainability,” Robinson said.

“Sustainability is not an end product. It is a process of continual improvement.”

Robinson also said the elective gives students an exposure to different elements of sustainability including policy considerations, operations with some emphasis on the tactical side of sustainability.

During the elective period, students discussed how sustainability relates to training, contingency operations, procurement, and acquisition, and also how to integrate sustainability into installation planning. The course culminated with the final two class periods focusing on emerging issues in sustainability.

For this capstone class, Hammack talked with students about the main objectives of the Army sustainability program and how the Net Zero initiative seeks to change Army culture by focusing on management of critical resources – energy, water, waste – as a means to improve quality of life and ensure the Army maintains its ability to perform primary missions.

“Sustainability is about increasing mission capability at installations and during contingency operations,” Hammack said. “It is about the management of resources to eliminate single points of failure and reduce vulnerabilities.” Hammack explains, the reason we developed the Net Zero Initiative was to ensure that our facilities and installations can be enduring in an uncertain environment.

Hammack also said, “We don’t have a Net Zero policy. We have a Net Zero program, a Net Zero challenge.” And she talked about how installations are taking the challenge and competing among themselves to reach goals.

“If we can take our Army communities to Net Zero, it will be a wonderful example to other communities about what can be achieved,” she said.

The elective is one of several academic requirements students must complete before receiving their Master of Strategic Studies degrees at graduation in June.

“This is an area that doesn’t get much attention, at least not in the operational force,” said Col. Sam Russell, a student taking the elective. “The things we read, DA and DoD policy, I had not read before, and it broadened my horizons.”

