

Gen. Joseph M. Martin, the 37th Vice Chief of Staff of the Army speaks to USAWC students on Army Leader Day

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Along with Martin, 25 Army Staff principals met virtually with 25 seminars as part of this annual event that adds personal experience and insights to the lessons of the Strategic Leadership course. This event is designed to pass knowledge from current senior leadership in the Army to the future strategic leaders, each leader taking a unique approach to convey first principles, suggest personal and professional priorities, and take a wide range of questions.

Martin spoke first about the fundamental power of the people-first philosophy. When leaders are unwilling or unable to address the difficult issues, like sexual assault suicide and racism, they jeopardize the foundation of trust, respect and empathy.

“I really appreciated the discussion on ‘people first’ . . . and getting at the heart of what is eroding our organization, especially sexual assault and racism . . . and helping the organization by empowering those lower-level leaders with the resources to make the organization better ,” said student Col. Robert Horvath.

In the latter half of his presentation, Martin focused on identifying the characteristics of an effective strategic leader, providing anecdotes from his own professional experiences—

1. Candor
2. Preparation
3. Competence & Character
4. Approachability
5. Listening
6. Agility & Prioritization
7. Teamwork
8. Balance between one’s unit and personal life
9. Clarity
10. Humility
11. Dealing with adversity.

Several times throughout his presentation, Martin mentioned that when facing difficulties as a strategic leader, he returned to the notes and books that contain what he learned here at the war college as a student in 2007.

“Hearing Gen. Martin’s perspective, the perspective of the Army as an institution , absolutely enlightens all of the things we learn here and things we have done in the past ,” said student Lt. Col. Steven Thibodeau.

Lt. Gen. Charles Flynn, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G3/5/7, was one of 25 senior leaders who presented to individual seminars. Flynn talked about the challenge and imperative of meeting both today’s readiness demands and the need to modernize the Army’s training, equipment and personnel systems for the future.

Mai. Gen. Telita Crosland. the Deputy Surgeon General. Deputy

Commanding General of Operations and Chief, Medical Corps, gave an overview of Army medicine and the Surgeon General's priorities. Echoing many of Martin's points, she emphasized that people matter and reiterated the successful attributes of a strategic leadership: demonstrate empathy, be approachable, and maintain balance.

Brig. Gen. Brian S. Eifler spoke seminar 1 about the civil-military relationship carried out by the men and women of his organization, the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison and Congressional Members and staff. He described the contributions of Army Fellows serving in OCLL and the Army units around the world responding congressional and staff delegations, as important building blocks of trust. Foreshadowing the Defense Management course ahead this year, his career tip was to understand both the big strategic picture and how the Pentagon works –“how the sausage is made.”