

Army's most senior NCOS learn to become thought-leaders

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Paula Smith from the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs shares insights on executive communication with Sergeants Major at the Nominative Leader Course, sponsored by the Army Strategic Education Program, March 2022 in Carlisle, Pa.

Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston opened the Nominative Leader Course at the Army War College, Carlisle, Pa, March 21, 2022. The SMA presented the executive leader course in terms of the Army's vision and priorities.

The NLC provides a broad learning experience focused on thinking, leading, advising, and communicating at the strategic level. Students participate in curriculum activities related to the Army's operating environment; critical Army issues; senior leadership and Army functional issues.

The March 2022 NLC class consists of 26 active duty Army, 10 Army National Guard and 4 Army Reserve members.

“The Nominative Leader Course is the next step in educating our most senior noncommissioned officers for positions of greater responsibility,” said Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston, at a prior Nominative Leader Course. “Prior to establishing NLC, the last formal education a Sergeant Major had was the Sergeants Major Academy.

“NLC is the capstone course for the Army’s nominative Sergeants Major.”

NLC's first week largely centers on gaining a conceptual understanding of how strategic leadership differs from direct and organizational leadership that students have experienced thus far in their Army careers. The course’s second week examines strategic leadership in Army organizations at the enterprise level across the Total Force.

“The NLC offers our nominative sergeants major a valuable developmental opportunity to reflect on new leadership roles and responsibilities, gain new insights and perspectives, and build a community network that will serve them well after they return to their organizations,” said USAWC Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Flom. “NLC’s course material and facilitators expose our nominative leader population to concepts and ideas not addressed in other NCO professional military education settings or operational assignments. The learning that occurs as a result of this exposure enables nominative sergeants major to better serve their organizations,” said Flom.

NLC helps prepare and guide the Army’s most senior NCO's, selected for duty as senior enlisted leaders and advisors at the 1- and 2-star command level. The Army War College’s Army Strategic Education Program manages and develops executive education for the Army’s general officers and most senior sergeants major. AWC’s Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Flom and course director Erik ‘Sparky’ Anderson have collaborated with successive SMAs, since NLC began in 2014, to refine focus and evolve course methods to align with current and emerging Army priorities.

Students are exposed to senior military and civilian officials and recognized thought leaders in industry and world-renowned executive education programs throughout the course. Dr. Bob Johansen, *Institute for the Future*, spoke about the future strategic environment and the competencies strategic leaders need to be effective. Michael Quinn shared his thoughts on digital networking and building trust and influence at scale using social media. Burt Thompson, president of Data Machines Corporation, discussed strategic leadership practices, opportunities, and challenges in the civilian sector. TalentSmart’s Josh Rosenthal drew on his experience as director of training and Emotional Intelligence expert at TalentSmart by provided the students with a better understanding how a leader's emotional intelligence

impacts leadership effectiveness.

Grinston noted that NLC offers a complementary executive education seminar for the SGM spouses.

“We also established the Nominative Spouses Seminar to promote Total Force Readiness by preparing the spouses of our nominative sergeants major for the challenges of informal leadership roles at the senior executive level.

“We are extremely grateful for everything our spouses do for our Army,” he said.