

BULLET BACKGROUND PAPER

ON

OFFICER PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION–NON-RESIDENT EVOLUTION

PURPOSE

The proposed plan is a modern, comprehensive, Officer Professional Military Education (OPME) program which answers the need for creativity, innovation, and self-motivation. It utilizes a multilayer, multi-dimension, and multimedia approach, while leveraging real-time, events-based, two-way supportive learning in an interactive and enjoyable way. It will develop leaders to enhance the asymmetrical partner nation competitive advantage in perpetuity.

DISCUSSION

The program splits into core and elective curricula and Personal Interaction Milestones, delivered through a multi-domain, multimedia construct guided by AU instructors and OPME facilitators.

- Curriculum types:

- Core curriculum: 4-year cycles based on commissioning date. Completing cycles count as equivalency for that level of OPME in correspondence (i.e. 3 cycles for ACSC credit).
- Interactive blended learning: combines online, discussion boards, and face-to-face.
 - Events-based learning OPME that considers and analyzes real experiences.
 - Knowledge transfer: Practical application of concepts learned during lectures through training assignments that can be applied to real-world mission execution.
- Installation specific in-person OPME led by certified facilitators and managed by the base education office (e.g., Team Leadership Problems and Team Challenges).
 - Current OPME staff trains selected in-residence students as initial OPME certified facilitators (Phase 1).
 - Phase 1 continues, but will include an online elective to train additional OPME facilitators (Phase 2).
- Personal mentorship driven by students that guide them through their OPME experience.
 - Embedded in the learning process, but experiential and non-mandatory. Discussion boards can serve to track mentorship.
 - If desired, online database available that matches mentor and mentee. OPME graduates may submit their information to mentor students.

- Elective curriculum: students can study material to prepare for next position or broaden cognitive diversity. Commander's guidance desired at enrollment.
- Personal Interaction Milestone (PIM): after completion of each cycle's core curriculum member is authorized a 1-2 week, self-directed shadowing PIM funded by AETC.
 - Shadowing: a TDY to learn from business, local government, AF and/or JF agencies using a similar construct to LEAP/Enlisted Chief shadowing programs.
- Delivery method:
 - Multi-domain: convenient 24/7 platform (PC[work, home, SIPR, NIPR, JWICS, intelink], tablet, cell phone) anytime/anywhere learning.
 - Mirror universities' online platforms for convenience and range of teaching/learning techniques and vehicles.
 - Transparent: allows AU to track training and how it fits with individual and AF goals.
 - Real time persistent two-way feedback and useful inputs from academic environments via discussion board (i.e. AU Commander's Connection).
 - Career Avatar: digital individual profile of OPME progress, experience, and milestones.
 - Social network objective-based incentives motivate OPME student similar to gaming achievements; users click on objects to see career and PME-related accomplishments.
- Value added:
 - Flexible; self-paced study. Students can use the distance learning format in a convenient manner to learn as they choose. 24/7 access to course material and fellow students. This allows for Total Force participation.
 - Significant cost saving compared to in-residence attendance while improving the quality of distance learning (DL) to rival in-residence PME; distance learning geared towards preparing officers for in-residence PME programs.
 - Based on elective curriculum, officers earn an AU accredited master's degree or higher.
 - Degrees are timed in accordance with when the Air Force deems necessary.

SUMMARY

This paper summarizes characteristics of a career long, non-resident OPME approach. It focuses on combining online education and regional interactions divided among core and elective curricula and a Personal Interaction Milestone. The OPME is delivered through a multi-domain, multi-media construct guided by AU instructors, local mentors, and OPME facilitators.

