

Educating for the Future

Curriculum changes at Command and Staff College.

by Col John A. Toolan & Charles D. McKenna

Since its inception the Command and Staff College (CSC) has had to adjust, adapt, and change in as many ways as the world around it has changed. The global war on terrorism has raised a variety of issues that are not necessarily new but bring into sharper focus the character of irregular warfare (IW) and the complexity of the problems we are facing. Our National Military Strategy, the recent Defense Planning Guidance, Department of Defense's *Roadmap to Transformation*, our Commandant's recent *Vision Statement of the U.S. Marine Corps*, and a host of studies and analyses all clearly indicate a need to update our professional military education (PME) programs to enable them to be more current while not losing their timeless relevance. CSC has examined the issues and the guidance and has made significant adjustments to its curriculum. This article examines the areas of change and enhancements for CSC and the School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW).

The last time CSC substantially revised its curriculum occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The combination of the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 and the release of the report of the Panel on PME, chaired by Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO), provided the impetus for a serious reevaluation of both content and method at CSC. Faculty and curriculum both changed. The military faculty became more joint, with prerequisites of top-level school completion, lieutenant colonel-level command, and advanced civilian academic credentials, if possible. A dozen civilian doctoral faculty were hired in 1992, with degrees ranging from history to political science and national securities studies. The Marine Corps established its second year program at CSC when SAW welcomed its first class in July 1990. The curriculum that has been in place

since 1992 is as indicated in Figure 1. Beginning with the "Theory and Nature of War" course, the curriculum followed a top-down approach, proceeding from the theoretical to the practical. The warfighting portion of the curriculum emphasized Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) and joint issues. CSC is accredited by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for Joint PME (JPME) Phase I, and the CSC's Master of Military Studies Degree is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

During the past 2 years veterans of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) have challenged the limited treatment of IW and were looking for greater understanding regarding interagency operations, cultural intelligence, and improved campaign design techniques. These officers were immersed in both the planning and conduct of very complex operations that confronted our PME programs. The faculty at CSC, urged by Marine Corps leadership, set out to reexamine what we did and why we did it.

The results included improving the warfighting portion of the curriculum, especially in the area of planning; increasing emphasis on culture and interagency operations; and teaching Arabic to our students, all without compromising either CSC's JPME or SACS accreditations. And all adjustments were to begin in academic year 2005-06 (AY05-06). CSC formed an operational planning team, energized it with clear guidance, and proceeded to examine the curriculum from top to bottom. The results of that examination, approved by the Marine Corps University Curriculum Board, led to a significantly different CSC curriculum, both in method and content—a curriculum that remained entirely consistent with the university's curriculum linkages of warfighting studies, professional studies, leadership studies, communications studies, and cross-cultural studies.

Instead of a top-down approach, the revised academic program will adopt a concurrent curriculum model, with all four newly defined major areas of study; i.e., lines of operation proceeding apace throughout the year. This approach will allow students to apply professional concepts, such as the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP) and the cultural lens model, in a complementary manner throughout the syllabus. (See Figure 2.)

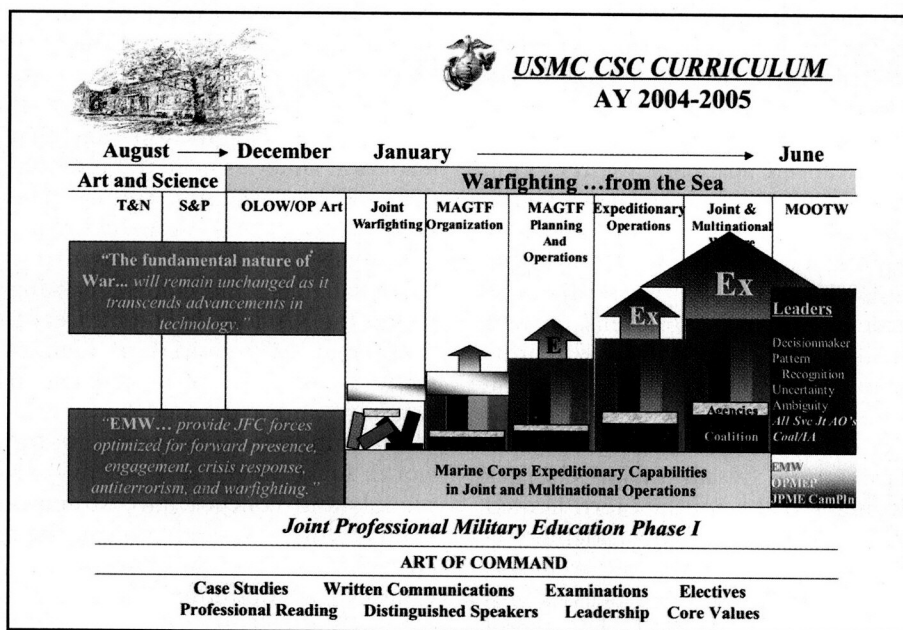


Figure 1.

CSC's mission is as follows:

Informed by the study of history and culture, CSC educates and trains its joint, multinational, and interagency professionals in order to produce skilled warfighting leaders able to overcome diverse 21st Century security challenges.

A principal aim of CSC is to produce skilled professional warfighters proficient in the application of the MCPP. The warfighting line of operation will continue to enable students to confront MAGTF and joint issues, understand the concept of campaign design, and specifically focus on the integration of all of the elements of national power. But practical applications and time for planning will more than double, and warfighting instruction will begin in August not December. The final exercise for AY05-06 is designed to study the issues facing Iraq, with the objective of defeating the insurgency and restoring a stable environment for the ratification of the constitution and Iraq's newly elected government. In AY06-07 the final exercise will be an Asian scenario, again designed to create a campaign plan that employs all of the elements of national power. These exercises avoid any pattern of fighting the last war and encourage creative and anticipatory thought on potential rivals and the methods for avoiding conflict through cleverly designed engagement strategies.

The study of history will remain extensive. Our seminar-based "Operational Art" course, using the case study approach, will examine the evo-

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lution of warfare across the range of joint and multinational operations, with special emphasis on IW. The "Culture and Interagency Operations" course will also use the case study approach in seminar, but the central theme is the national and international policies that span the full spectrum of diplomatic, informational, economic, and social elements. Culture will be closely examined during the "Culture and Interagency Op-

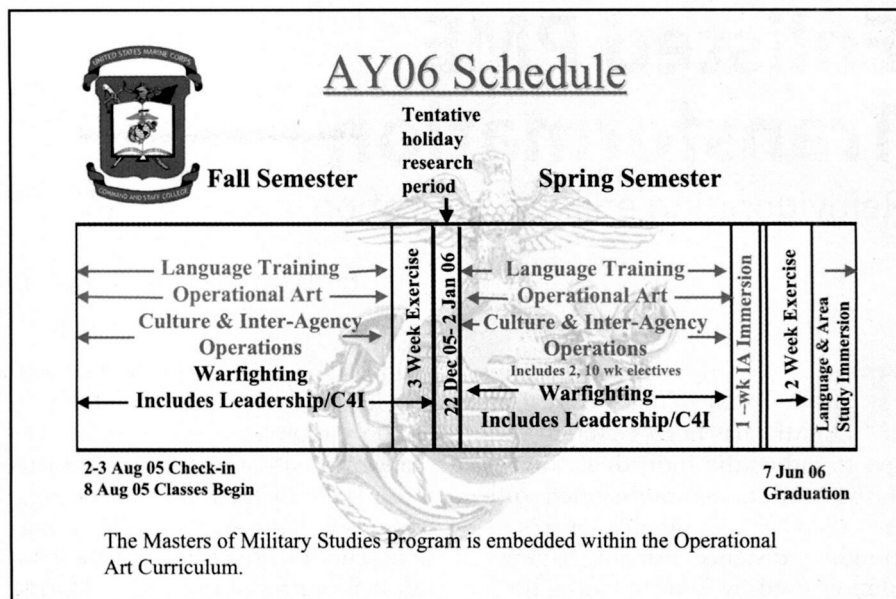


Figure 2.

erations" course by using a cultural lens model that highlights the importance of culture and how it impacts upon achieving progress. We will hone in on several regions of the world—Northeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Emphasizing cross-cultural operations, interagency integration will be fully examined, followed by an immersion program with various agencies. The students will use the final exercise scenario as a stepping off point for discussion and planning with their assigned agencies. The end result should be a well-designed campaign with clear objectives and measures of effectiveness.

The last major component of the new curriculum is the study of language. Language will concentrate on

ing the language training will involve role-playing a scenario that replicates the various types of negotiations that will be expected by warfighters assigned to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Finally, SAW is examining several improvements to its curriculum. The bar has been raised by CSC's efforts to produce competent Marine Corps planners. SAW will reach out to grasp the fundamentals of operational design, modeling and simulation, wargaming, and red celling. The concept is for SAW graduates to find the holes in the plans, determine the branches and sequels, and modify the plans as needed. SAW will stay engaged with CSC and provide a well-seasoned group of professional warfighters during their exercises and planning sessions.

The curriculum for AY05-06 is designed to enable graduates to emerge as more highly skilled warfighters and proficient planners, both necessary ingredients for success against whatever threats the 21st century brings.



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