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ROA WHITE PAPER

Senior Service School Distance Education Program Graduates, Who Meet JCS Accreditation Standards, Should Receive Joint Professional Military Education Phase II Credit

PURPOSE: This paper advocates that senior service school Distance Education Program graduates – who receive their education through hybrid (or blended) learning methods both in residence and through creative distance learning programs - should receive Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) credit similar to the credit given to the resident graduates of these schools - phase II credit. The overall applicable principle should be that officers and enlisted personnel who meet accreditation standards through distance learning should receive equal treatment to resident graduates. This paper will focus on the example of officer graduates of the distance learning programs of the senior service schools.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE:

Using the United States Army War College (USAWC) as an example, its programs for resident and distant education students, which have the same academic accreditation and have the same curriculum content, yield different Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) credit. Graduates of the USAWC Resident Education Program (REP) are awarded JPME phase II. Distance Education Program (DEP) graduates are awarded JPME phase I (which is largely meaningless since almost all students would have achieved this level many years earlier in their careers). This hinders a DEP graduate in attaining Joint Qualified Officer (JQO) designation (for which phase II is required) and may in the future prevent promotion to flag or general officer. It also forces a DEP graduate seeking the JQO designation to continue their education with nearly of year of addition distance learning through the AJPME – a very real, and needless, burden for a Reservist.

FACTORS BEARING ON THE ISSUE:

JPME phase II program of instruction requires specific curriculum content, student ratios, and faculty ratios. The USAWC DEP has the same academic accreditation and the same curriculum as the USAWC REP. Despite this, DEP students, who are mostly Reservists, must still complete a further course of study – also non-resident - at the 10 month Joint Forces Staff College to satisfy the senior level education requirement for Joint Qualified Officer (JQO) designation. This program is known as the Advanced Joint Professional Military Education course (AJPME).

Title 10 US Code directs JPME senior level education (phase II) must be taken in residence. However, CJCSI 1800.01D states RC officers may satisfy the senior level JPME requirement for JQO by completing the AJPME. Both the AJPME course (with one week and then three weeks in residence) and the USAWC DEP have 4 weeks in residence. Each provides at least 160 hours of classroom joint faculty/student contact. Upon meeting the student/faculty ratios required for the REP, the DEP should be recognized as satisfying the JQO senior level education requirement just as AJPME does.

Due to a limit on RC seats in resident courses and the time commitment required to be away from their civilian jobs to attend a course in residence, the non-resident JFSC AJPME course is the only viable option for most RC officers to satisfy the senior level education prerequisite to attain JQO designation. The option should be continued, but it is an unreasonable added burden – ten additional months of distance learning - for the DEP graduate who has already completed an accredited senior level service school. In that school, they are exposed to four weeks in residence with their joint colleagues and nearly two years of joint exposure through the numerous opportunities the DEP provides for joint interaction.

Both the resident and non-resident phases of the distance learning program provide ample opportunity for students – from the services, interagency or international fellows – to learn about and discuss other service operations, cultures,

and security issues. Numerous opportunities arise during the non-resident phase for students to network and form lifelong relationships: they are together for four weeks of residence training during which they interact at seminars, attend lectures, and participate in presentations by senior officers from services. After duty hours, they continue in both organized and informal fashion to meet, discuss and socialize. During the non-resident phases, the students also regularly engage in chat room discussions and utilize the Defense Connect On-line to discuss and develop various positions and papers.

Both the report of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves and the recent report of the Center for a New American Security support the conclusions of this paper.

JOINT QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

An officer is awarded the formal designation of Joint Qualified Officer (JQO) upon achieving Level III in the JQS. Level III is attained through joint education and joint experience as outlined in DOD Instruction 1300.19, Oct 2007.

For AC officers, level III requires a resident JPME II course and a minimum of 36 points accrued through joint experience and discretionary points. For RC officers, level III requires a resident JPME II course or the completion of the Joint Forces Staff College non-resident Advanced Joint Professional Military Education (AJPME) course, and a minimum of 36 points accrued through joint experience and discretionary points.

Per Title 10 US Code, Section 2155, JPME II instruction must be done in residence, include subjects specified in Title 10, section 2151(a), and meet specified student and faculty ratios. However, in 1999, a Congressional Committee with appropriate jurisdiction, directed the JFSC (via Director, Joint Staff) to develop a course for reserve component officers that was similar to the in-residence active component JPME II course which resulted in the non-resident AJPME course.

Graduates of the DEP, students who are primarily from the reserve components, complete the course in 24 months of on-line and 160 hours of in-resident phases while maintaining their civilian job and military commitments, earn a MSS, but are awarded only JPME I (84% of the class of 2010 were RC). Graduates of the Resident Program complete the course in 10 months of full time study, can earn a MSS, and are awarded JPME II (only 16% of the class of 2010 were RC).

BENEFITS OF PROVIDING PHASE II CREDIT TO DEP GRADUATES:

- Financial costs minimal. The USAWC already has the academic accreditation, faculty, and facilities in place and only modest costs would be incurred to bring the DEP program up to standard on the faculty/student ratio requirement of current law.
- Time and financial savings. Many more RC and AC officers will receive their JPME Phase II credentials at great savings to the military and the officers in time since they will not have to go to an additional school.
- RC and AC Officers will have a greater possibility of becoming JQO in compliance with laws and policies requiring them to be Level III qualified (which requires JPME Phase II completion and designated experience) for promotion to general officer and flag rank.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **Amend Title 10 of the United States Code and adjust policy to provide that Distance Education Program graduates of the Senior Service War College receive the same recognition and Joint Professional Military Education credit as Resident graduates of the senior service schools and graduates of the Joint Forces Staff College Advanced JPME (AJPME).**
2. **Authorize and fund the JFSC to permit expansion of its resident programs for both AC and RC officers and also open the AJPME to AC officers.**