



# The Army University White Paper

## Educating Leaders To Win in a Complex World

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25 February 2015

“The nation that will insist on drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to find its fighting done by fools and its thinking done by cowards.”

— *Thucydides*

## Foreword

*From the Commanding General  
Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth*

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This white paper describes the ongoing effort to create a unified university system for the Army. It outlines the rationale for this effort and makes a compelling case for why it must begin now. This paper also describes how this effort is both a symbolic and substantive change to the Army's approach to education. A separate Army University Business Strategy outlines the specific details of how the Army will implement this program.

Symbolically, the creation of the Army University sends a powerful message both within the Army and to external audiences. Internally, it demonstrates the Army's commitment to cutting-edge education, preparing leaders to succeed in the classroom and on the battlefield. Externally, the creation of the Army University signals that the Army is adopting a proven model of educational excellence and applying it to the military profession. This proven model will foster communication and ties between the Army and civilian educators and institutions.

Substantively, the Army University will enable more rigorous accreditation of existing education programs and encourage more internal collaboration among Army research institutions. The Army University includes the Army War College as an independently governed graduate college and matures existing relationships with the United States Military Academy through increased collaboration and sharing of best practices.

The Army Operating Concept outlined the challenging, complex nature of armed conflict in the future. Preparing leaders for this complexity demands an improved approach to education. The Army University embodies this improved approach and serves as the intellectual foundation for Army leaders to win in this complex world.



Robert B. Brown  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army  
Commanding

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## The Army University

*“We must continue to educate and develop Soldiers and Civilians to grow the intellectual capacity to understand the complex contemporary security environment to better lead Army, Joint, Interagency and Multinational task forces and teams. Therefore, we will reinvest and transform our institutional educational programs for officers and noncommissioned officers in order to prepare for the complex future security environment.”*

-Secretary of the Army John McHugh<sup>1</sup>

### Executive Summary

The Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is organizing our professional military education programs into a university system to increase academic rigor, create greater opportunities for accreditation, and enhance the quality of the force. Named “the Army University”, this system will align the officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer, and civilian education programs across TRADOC under a single academic structure with a consistent brand name. This alignment streamlines academic governance, reduces stovepipes, facilitates accreditation of educational programs, and promises the opportunity to diffuse best practices rapidly. The Army War College will be an integral part of the Army University while maintaining separate accreditation and governance. In addition, the Army University will increase collaboration and the sharing of best practices with one of the nation’s premier undergraduate institutions at the United States Military Academy. We are executing this change now because our current system is inadequate to the complex challenges outlined in the Army Operating Concept. This white paper describes TRADOC's vision and purpose for the Army University, and explains how this change will drive reform in our education enterprise.

### The Problem

The present Army education system, while among the best in the world, is inadequate to address the growing complexity of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century security environment. The recently published Army Operating Concept describes a world that is increasingly volatile and uncertain. Winning in this complex world will require “innovative, adaptive leaders and cohesive teams who thrive in those complex and uncertain environments.”<sup>2</sup> Preparing leaders for the complex world of tomorrow demands change today.

The students in our schools today will be leading our Total Army tomorrow. The brigade commanders of the Army of 2025 enter Command and General Staff College this year. The

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<sup>1</sup>John McHugh, *2014 Army Posture Statement*. Presented 25 March 2014 to the House Armed Services Committee.

<sup>2</sup>Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pam 525-3-1 *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, US Government Printing Office, Fort Eustis, VA, 31 October 2014, 12.

Command Sergeants Major of that future force already fill the seats of our basic leadership courses as young corporals and sergeants. Building the right educational architecture is the most significant investment we can make today to build the Army our nation needs for 2025.

Within TRADOC, the Army's colleges, institutes, schools and training centers provide high quality education and training to Soldiers and Civilians from across the world. This system however, is not optimal to develop the critical and creative thinkers the Army requires in the future. Five underlying causes inhibit the Army educational enterprise from realizing its full potential.

**Industrial Age Legacy.** The current professional military education system emerged over a century ago when requirements for military leaders were very different. To prepare officers to lead within the military industrial machine, the Army developed an assembly line approach to education focused on established procedures based around branch specific expertise. Army education has evolved, but retains its disjointed structure or rigid curriculum development process.

**Incoherent Focus.** The education effort within TRADOC today includes at least 70 separate schools and a large number of independent research libraries. While there is tremendous innovation going on, bureaucratic stovepipes often inhibit diffusion of innovative best practices across the education enterprise.

**Lack of Identity.** Army education lacks a consistent identity with a widely recognized brand. TRADOC schools and centers collaborate with over 90 different universities and colleges across the country. While these civilian institutions are often enthusiastic about working with the military, they often complain that educational partnerships with the Army are too often temporary and localized to specific installations. We lack a centralized 'front door' to attract, manage, and optimize these partnerships to meet the needs of the Army.

**Prestige Gap in Military Education.** Degrees and credentials from Army academic institutions carry less weight and prestige in the broader academic community. This is due, in part, to confusion and misunderstanding over the accreditation process within the military and a view that Army education lacks the academic rigor of equivalent programs in civilian institutions. Opinion surveys within the Army show that many Soldiers today do not perceive professional military education as valuable, prestigious, or rigorous.<sup>3</sup>

**Poor Accreditation.** Department of Education recognized agencies accredit less than one quarter of existing Army education programs. This generates an enormous hidden cost as Soldiers pursuing degrees must complete courses in civilian institutions similar to instruction that they already mastered in the military. It is not uncommon to find career non-commissioned officers with ample credit hours of education but no academic degree because those credit hours were

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<sup>3</sup>Joshua Hatfield, et al, *2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Education*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Leadership, 2011), 4-10. [http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/Repository/CASAL\\_TechReport2011-2\\_ArmyEducation.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/Repository/CASAL_TechReport2011-2_ArmyEducation.pdf). (accessed on 13 December 2014).

acquired across a career in different programs at different installations. As a result, the Army routinely funds unnecessary and redundant education programs for Soldiers because we failed to provide them with academic equivalency credit hours for their Army education.

## Why the Army Needs a University

Strategists since Sun Tzu have argued that victory in war goes to the society that can best employ inherent strengths to produce strategic advantage. Winning in a complex world demands that we find the best of America and leverage those advantages to produce a competitive military advantage.

Over the last three decades, the United States led the world into the digital age by fostering a spirit of ingenuity, creativity, and innovation. Our world-class universities incubated this spirit. Today, America has the best graduate level education programs in the world.<sup>4</sup> Its graduate schools are widely considered the destination of choice for foreign students able to study abroad.<sup>5</sup>

America's advantage in higher education is not an accident of history. Other advanced nations abound with intelligent and dedicated critical thinkers and excellent schools of higher learning. Our advantage exists because higher education in America is built upon a proven model: the state university system. While there are many variants, this system organizes the academic efforts of each state into centers of scholarly excellence producing a rate of innovation difficult to achieve in smaller, stand-alone programs. This system produces high-quality critical and creative thinkers at a pace that makes them the envy of the world. Our goal is to blend the best of this proven civilian model with military education to produce the agile and adaptive leaders required by the Army Operating Concept.

## Why Now?

There are two reasons that we must act now.

First, education is the most reliable strategic investment that the Army can make in the face of an uncertain future. In July of last year, the Secretary of the Army called for a comprehensive strategy oriented on the timeframe of 2025 and beyond that would “adapt the Army to a rapidly changing global security environment that is volatile, unstable, and increasingly threatening to U.S. interest.”<sup>6</sup> Central to this strategy is the recognition that the Army will require innovative leaders who are expert critical and creative thinkers and thrive in uncertainty and chaos.<sup>7</sup> Those leaders are already part of our Army today. Preparing them for the future must begin now.

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<sup>4</sup>“The World’s Top Universities 2014” *Forbes*, (October 1, 2014). <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2014/10/01/the-worlds-top-universities-2014/> (accessed on 13 December 2014).

<sup>5</sup>Derek Bok. *Higher Education in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Press, 2013) 2.

<sup>6</sup>John McHugh and Raymond Odierno, “Force 2025 and Beyond- Setting the Course”, July 22, 2014. [http://www.arcic.army.mil/app\\_Documents/TRADOC\\_Memo\\_Force-2025-and-Beyond-Setting-the-Course\\_06AUG2014.pdf](http://www.arcic.army.mil/app_Documents/TRADOC_Memo_Force-2025-and-Beyond-Setting-the-Course_06AUG2014.pdf) (accessed on 11 December 2014).

<sup>7</sup>TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, *Army Operating Concept*, 20.

Second, history reveals that some of the best and longest lasting transformations in military education occur in the aftermath of sustained conflicts. The Army today is a veteran force with real-world experience derived from years of sustained combat. This experience informs our judgment and gives us a deep appreciation for the complex and unpredictable challenges that lie ahead. This wealth of experience provides a fleeting window of opportunity to re-evaluate our approach to education.

## Historical Precedent

The creation of a university structure to organize the educational efforts of a military department is neither new nor unprecedented. The Air Force established Air University in 1946 and the Marine Corps activated the Marine Corps University in 1989. While Air and Marine Corps Universities are useful models, Army University will benefit from lessons learned in these organizations by avoiding the creation of unnecessary bureaucratic structure.

The idea of an Army University dates back to 1949 when LTG Manton Eddy first proposed it to the War Department Military Education Board.<sup>8</sup> The broad geographic dispersion of the Army's premier schools has prevented the development of a university structure in the past. Today however, advances in digital technology and distance learning enable collaboration without requiring colocation.

## Strategic Vision

To remain competitive and relevant in the future, the Army must develop an education enterprise that blends the most effective elements of our existing academic programs with the structure and best practices of America's premier universities. For this reason, TRADOC is organizing its military education programs under a single university structure. This Army University realizes the Army's philosophy of mission command within the education enterprise. The University, led by a Board of Regents and Chancellor will design broad educational objectives and standards allowing the colleges the autonomy to develop the programs to implement those standards for their unique student populations.<sup>9</sup> Our vision is that the Army University will become a premier learning institution for the Total Army developing military and civilian leaders to win in the future security environment. A separate document, the Army University Strategic Business Strategy describes in detail how we will achieve this vision.

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<sup>8</sup>Harry P. Ball, *Of Responsible Command: A History of the U.S. Army War College*. (Pennsylvania: Alumni Association of the United States Army War College) 1983. The proposal failed due to concern over the competing roles between the Staff College and War College.

<sup>9</sup>The Army defines Mission Command as "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations." Department of the Army, Army Doctrinal Publication 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC, 2013) 1.

## Scope

As shown in figure 1, the Army University integrates all of the schools across the TRADOC into a single educational structure modeled after many of the state university systems seen across our country. This includes all elements of officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer and civilian education systems. It includes educational programs in the active and reserve components and the ROTC pre-commissioning program.

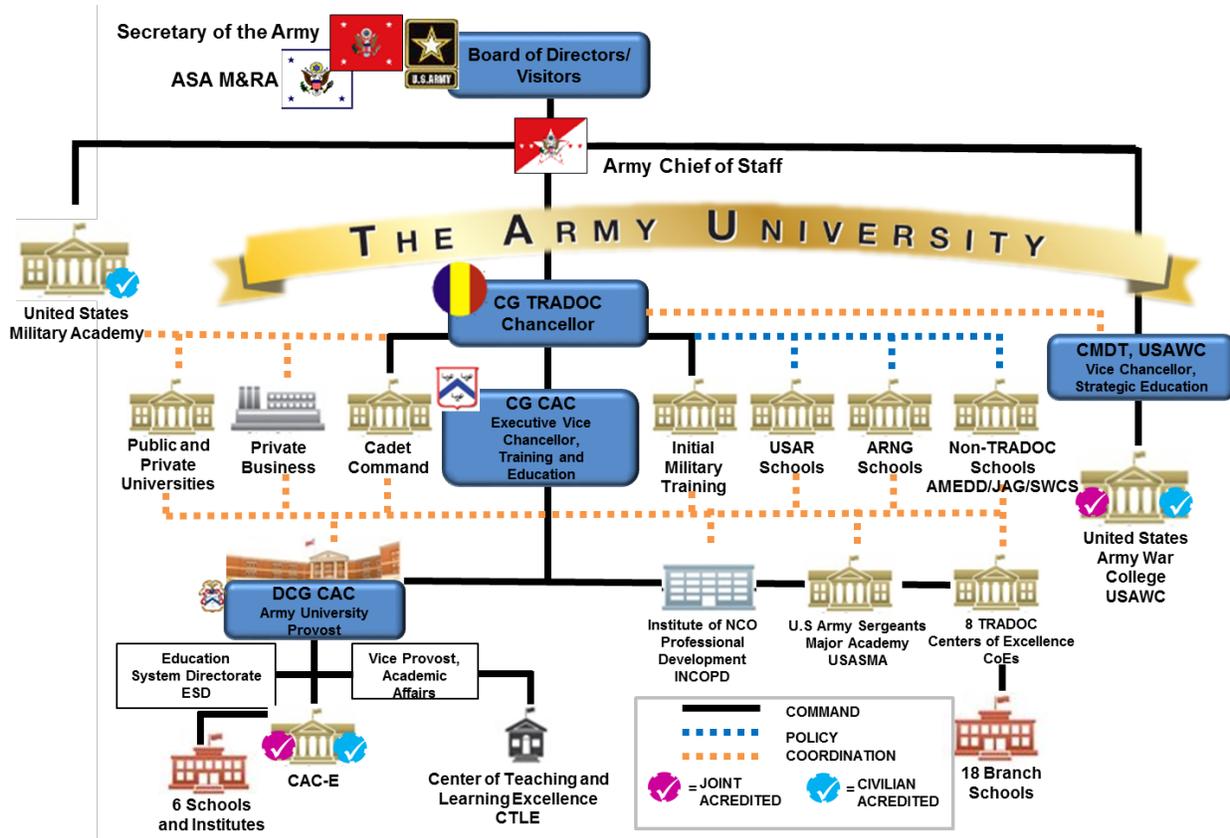


Figure 1: Army University Structure

**Army War College.** The Army War College will serve as the focal point and enterprise coordinator for strategic education and research in Army University while remaining a separately accredited and governed graduate college. As such, it retains a unique status as a direct reporting unit to the Chief of Staff of the Army. The Commandant of the Army War College will be dual-hatted as the Army University's Vice Chancellor for Strategic Education, responsible to educate strategic leaders, provide enterprise level guidance on strategic education across the Army, and conduct research for the Army senior leadership. The Army War College will receive direct guidance on its missions and strategic educational requirements from the Chief of Staff of the Army, maintain independent budget authority (including over any gifts received from its 501(c)(3) foundation), and operate under the oversight of a separate Board of Visitors. The Army War College will also continue to participate in all working groups and boards associated with the

Army and Joint Educational requirements.

The second driver for this unique status within the Army University is the statutory requirement for the Army War College to grant a master's degree. In order to award the master's degree required by US Code, the AWC must meet the standards of their regional accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, which is a different regional accrediting body than that of the Army University. The Middle States Commission requires the Army War College to control the academic governance of their institution through their Commandant and Provost in order to retain their regional accreditation. Likewise, the Army War College is accredited by the Joint Staff for its award of JPME II and thereby responds to the Military Education Coordination Council and J-7. Therefore, the Army War College must retain its unique status within the Army University and its direct report status with the Office of the Chief of Staff of the Army.

**United States Military Academy.** The United States Military Academy remains one of the most respected and prestigious undergraduate programs in the nation. While Title 10 United States Code (USC) prevents full integration of the Academy into the Army University, close coordination and sharing of best practices are essential to synchronizing educational outcomes. As such, Army University will maintain a full time liaison office at the Academy and collaborate educational programs closely through the Army Learning Coordination Council and the Military Education Coordination Council. Additionally, Army University will benefit from close partnership with the Army Cyber Institute, Counter-Terrorism Center and other research centers of excellence at USMA.

Specific legislation under Title 10 United States Code (USC), Chapter 403 directs the operation of the Military Academy and its degree granting authority. The United States Military Academy operations are separate and distinct from all other Army educational institutions that operate under Title 10 USC, Chapter 401. As such, the United States Military Academy will establish a close affiliation but separate reporting structure with the Army University and maintain its appropriate accreditations in higher education.

**Education for the Total Force.** The Army National Guard and Army Reserve have long been equal partners in the professional military education system. They will be a vital part of the Army University helping to connect the university with the nation it serves. Both organizations have a large number of academic professionals serving in both tenured faculty and senior academic administration positions in their civilian careers. They provide a valuable untapped resource of expertise to improve the quality of military education within the Army.

**Joint Professional Military Education.** Title 10 of the US Code mandates specific educational programs for the military services in order to promote greater inter-service collaboration and understanding.<sup>10</sup> Army University will continue its close coordination with the

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<sup>10</sup> 10 US Code Chapter 107 establishes Joint Professional Military Education requirements for the military services.

Joint Staff J7 through its membership in the Military Education Coordination Council in order to maintain these statutory requirements. The creation of Army University has the potential to improve the objectives of the joint education program. Current practice exposes officers to the joint world first at the intermediate level of education. Experience in the last decade of conflict suggests that some level of joint education may be valuable at the primary level of officer education and for the enlisted, warrant, and civilian cohorts. While this concept requires further exploration, Army University is uniquely structured to promote this change. As a JPME accredited institution with direct academic oversight of military education across all cohorts, Army University serves as a direct link between the Joint staff and these educational programs.

## The Value Proposition

The creation of Army University is both a symbolic and a substantive change in Army education. It is a visible symbol of the Army's commitment to education. As the Army University brand grows in stature, it sends a powerful message that all of the Army educational programs carry the prestige of an academically rigorous, nationwide institution. Like its civilian counterparts, the Army University fosters innovation by identifying best practices and facilitating pilot programs. This empowers subordinate schools through shared understanding building a network both within the AU and with other universities.

**Resourcing Strategy.** The 2014 Army Strategic Planning Guidance identifies the education of adaptive leaders as the Army's number one strategic priority. Realizing this goal will require sustained investment. Recognizing we initiate this change in a period of fiscal austerity, a phased approach will defer initial costs through internal reprogramming while we test new ways of operating. After two years of experience with the university concept, we will have a better sense of the minimum essential administrative requirements. The ultimate goal is to improve the overall quality of educational outputs through better use of existing resources.<sup>11</sup> The Army University Business Strategy outlines the details of this approach.

## Promoting Real Change in Army Education

The Army University is more than just a name change and a staff reorganization. As the Army University matures, it will drive a number of substantive changes in Army education.

**World Class Faculty.** Superior teaching quality is a key driver for a university to achieve excellence.<sup>12</sup> The Army University faculty includes a stable core of subject matter experts who are skilled in facilitating adult learners, augmented by military personnel with recent operational

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<sup>11</sup>Army University will submit any additional transitional costs in the FY18-22 Program Objective Memorandum.

<sup>12</sup>Rankings of the world's best universities consistently show that those who are at the top of their professional fields are the best teachers. "The World's Top Universities 2014" *Forbes*, (October 1, 2014). <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2014/10/01/the-worlds-top-universities-2014/> (accessed on 13 December 2014).

experience.<sup>13</sup> While tremendous faculty fill our academic programs today, preserving and expanding that talent in a very competitive labor market requires significant effort. Increasing faculty development benefits the operational force in other ways as our military faculty return back to the force with improved communication, critical thinking, and research skills. The Army University will work toward implementation of centralized board selection for military faculty as recommended in the Army Chief of Staff’s Leader Development Task Force Study.<sup>14</sup> Without investment in faculty excellence, no amount of restructuring will produce the results we seek.

**External Collaboration.** The Army University leverages external collaboration to promote internal excellence. It does this by developing faculty exchanges, combined forums, and joint research. Tremendous opportunity exists with both public and private universities for training, cooperative education, research, internships and more. At the same time, this network of partnerships connects the Army to an important segment of the society it serves.



**Accreditation.** One of the most exciting benefits of Army University is its ability to drive comprehensive nationwide accreditation for Army schools and training. Rigorous external accreditation will improve the quality of our programs, reduce educational expenses and enable Soldiers to leave the military “career ready.”<sup>15</sup> Equally important, the Army University will enable Civilians to receive academic credit for professional military education. Accreditation increases recruitment and retention for both cohorts by providing another venue to achieve educational goals while continuing to serve. It also motivates Soldiers and Civilians to complete courses important to the Army as they can then receive college credit for their efforts. With hundreds of courses in its portfolio and tens of thousands of students, the Army University generates momentum in the accreditation process in ways that, up until now, were difficult for individual Army schools to manage.

**Academic Rigor.** Accreditation of Army University courses requires rigorous standards of student performance. Much of this rigor is already in place, but demands a renewed emphasis. Soldiers will maintain an Army University transcript over the course of their careers that will reflect their performance in Army educational programs. This transcript enables better talent management by integrating a Soldier’s academic performance into their military record.

<sup>13</sup>Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pam 525-8-1 *The U.S. Army Learning Concept for 2015*, US Government Printing Office, Fort Eustis, VA, 20 January 2011, 27.

<sup>14</sup>Department of the Army, *2013 Chief of Staff of the Army Leader Development Task Force Final Report*, by David H. Huntoon, Jr. and Frederick M. Franks, Jr. (Washington, DC, 2013), 33.

<sup>15</sup>The Chief of Staff of the Army recently established the Soldier for Life campaign designed to ensure Soldiers, Veterans, and Families leave military service “career ready.” The accreditation efforts within Army University support the goals established in Soldier for Life. See [http://soldierforlife.army.mil/sites/default/files/content/docs/2014/SFL\\_Initiatives\\_09\\_2014.pdf](http://soldierforlife.army.mil/sites/default/files/content/docs/2014/SFL_Initiatives_09_2014.pdf).

Additionally, TRADOC and the Army G1 propose to replace the Academic Efficiency Report with the Officer Efficiency Report and NCO Efficiency Report to describe academic performance. This report will include a rigorous, quantified assessment of student performance relative to peers.

For graduate-level programs, the Army University will collaborate with Human Resources Command to develop an application and acceptance process similar to civilian graduate programs. This will eventually include broader use of standardized testing tools such as the Graduate Record Exam.<sup>16</sup> Soldiers desiring to attend the resident Command and General Staff College or the School for Advanced Military Science will apply for admission based on both leadership potential and demonstrated academic ability.

**Academic Research.** The Army University enables faculty to publish, research, and design courses and a wide range of other activities to develop “well-rounded, more respected professors.”<sup>17</sup> Much of this is already occurring, but too often, our institutions do not support or encourage it. In addition, it will promote collaborative research with private industry, academia, and Army institutions like the Army Research Institute and the Army Research Labs. As part of this effort, Army University will pursue Congressional authority for the University President to accept grants similar to the current authority of the Commandant, Army War College.<sup>18</sup>

**Scholarly Publication.** Army University also empowers students to write, debate, and improve the Army Profession by actively working to publish their professional research in the broader national security dialogue. To better facilitate this effort we are combining Military Review and Combat Studies Institute to form the Army Press. This publishing venue will generate high quality, peer reviewed literature from Army scholars.

**Increasing the Rate of Learning Innovation.** Modern science has learned more about the brain in the last fifteen years than in all of human history.<sup>19</sup> Educational science is a rapidly evolving field with the potential to transform the way we teach. The Army cannot afford to miss-out on this innovation. The Army University will become the Army’s center of innovation in learning sciences and will empower and unleash creative educational approaches. It will do this by applying the philosophy of mission command across the educational enterprise to promote decentralized initiative based on clear intent and trust among teams. To enable this internal networking, Army University will maintain an educational common operating picture (E-COP) to provide comprehensive awareness of everything transpiring in Army education. This includes best

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<sup>16</sup>As recommended in the *2013 Chief of Staff of the Army Leader Development Task Force Final Report*, by David H. Huntoon, Jr. and Frederick M. Franks, Jr. (Washington, DC, 2013), 41.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Scales, “Achieving Strategic Excellence in Army University”, 2014, <http://warontherocks.com/2014/11/achieving-strategic-excellence-in-army-university> (accessed 24 November 2014).

<sup>18</sup>The Army War College’s authority to accept research grants is established in 10 U.S.C. § 4417. Ideally, all educational institutions will operate under a single universal policy as directed by the Secretary of the Army.

<sup>19</sup>Michio Kaku. “The Golden Age of Neuroscience Has Arrived,” *Wall Street Journal* (20 August 2014) <http://www.wsj.com/articles/michio-kaku-the-golden-age-of-neuroscience-has-arrived-1408577023> (accessed on 13 December 2014).

practices, pilot programs, civilian university broadening programs, and faculty exchanges.

## Governing Structure

Existing models in the Air, Marine Corps, and National Defense Universities inform the Army University governing structure. In addition, we developed this structure after collaboration with leadership in the University of California, Virginia, and Texas systems. Our goal is to employ common language to enable collaboration with other universities.

**Board of Regents/Visitors.** An Army level Board of Regents/Visitors led by the Army Secretariat and Chief of Staff approves the vision, establishes the priorities, and champions the resources to produce the required learning environment.

**Chancellor.** The Commanding General TRADOC acts as University Chancellor and serves as the systems-wide integrator performing Chief Executive Officer duties. The Chancellor reports directly to the Chief of Staff of the Army and Board of Regents/Visitors.

**Executive Vice Chancellor for Training and Education.** The Commanding General of the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth acts as Executive Vice Chancellor for Training and Education providing oversight of academic quality and support programs; University finances; future development of the University system; and public representation for the University.

**Vice Chancellor for Strategic Education.** The Commandant of the Army War College acts as the Vice Chancellor to advise the Chancellor and the Chief of Staff of the Army on matters concerning strategic education. The Vice Chancellor is responsible the integration of strategic education throughout Army University. The Vice Chancellor for Strategic Education retains academic governance over the War College reporting directly to the Chief of Staff of the Army.

**Provost.** The Deputy Commanding General for the Combined Arms Center-Education acts as University Provost responsible for long-term continuity, excellence, and vitality of the University's academic programs. The Provost also serves at the manager of the Army Learning Coordination Council synchronizing education activities across the Army.

## Conclusion

Every day, tens of thousands of Army Soldiers and Civilians participate in professional education programs across the globe. This makes the Army's educational enterprise one of the largest academic systems in the United States. Transitioning this complex global enterprise into a single university structure may seem daunting. The benefits of doing so, however, are too significant to ignore. Stewarding our profession demands action prior to crisis, not during or in the aftermath of it. History offers that we have a unique window of opportunity during this period of unprecedented global change to harness the energy and experience in our force to transform the way we educate Army leaders. Now is the time to seize this opportunity and prepare our profession for the uncertainty of tomorrow.