



**NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY  
NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE  
WASHINGTON DC 20319-5066**

11 December 2023

Dear Member of the Class of 2025:

Congratulations on your selection to attend the National War College! We are an integral part of the nation's flagship platform for strategic-level joint professional military education, the National Defense University. Since its founding in 1946, the National War College's core mission has been to conduct a senior-level course in National Security Strategy. Throughout the academic year, we will put you in the shoes of national security decision-makers and focus relentlessly on helping you hone your strategy-making skills in preparation to wield the various instruments of national power. This is a rigorous program with weekly reading requirements augmented by several writing assignments. Upon completion, you will be prepared to serve at the most senior levels of our military and government and capable of dealing with the most challenging joint, interagency, and international environments. Our curriculum leads to a fully accredited Master of Science Degree in National Security Strategy. I encourage you to visit <http://nwc.ndu.edu/> to learn more about the program.

Our educational philosophy is centered on developing those critical thinking skills that lead to sound strategic analysis and synthesis. I want to underscore that we do not provide "school solutions." Our objective is to produce graduates who are exceptionally able to:

1. Critically analyze strategic problems and issues.
2. Communicate clearly and concisely.
3. Assess issues creatively and imaginatively.
4. Adapt to ambiguity and uncertainty.
5. Operate with a joint, interagency, and multi-national perspective.
6. Embrace an abiding structure of continuous learning about a dynamic and ever-changing global environment.

Our student body is unsurpassed in quality and represents the future leadership of our armed forces and government agencies. Historically, over one-third of National War College graduates have gone on to flag/general officer rank or the civilian equivalent in their careers. You and your classmates are national assets and among the finest officers and civil servants in the country.

The demographics of our student body include about 60% U.S. military officers, 25% federal government civilians, and 15% international fellows. Our non-DoD civilian students represent the State Department, the intelligence community, law enforcement, homeland security, and many other departments and agencies.

International Fellows will be among your classmates. They hail from more than 30 countries and participate as full members of your class. Historically, our international students are likewise extremely successful in their promotion rates to flag/general officer. Many of our National War College international alumni have gone on to become Chiefs of Defense, Chiefs of Services, senior ranking officers, and ambassadors in their home countries. You will find that interaction with your international colleagues will significantly enhance your educational experience. If you are interested in serving as a co-sponsor for an international fellow, in tandem with our assigned faculty members,

please let us know promptly. Co-sponsoring an international fellow can be an enriching experience for you and your entire family.

Our faculty will add another unique dimension to your educational experience. They are an outstanding group of civilian and military scholars. We have civilian academics, officers from all military services, State Department and USAID Foreign Service officers, and senior officials from DHS, FBI, CIA, NSA, DOT, NSA, and DIA. Combined, they give us a true joint and interagency perspective. In addition to strong academic credentials, the faculty brings a broad range of policy and leadership experience to the classroom. They have outstanding reputations for their excellence as teachers, practitioners, and mentors.

Your attendance in our 10-month program is an opportunity not only to enrich your mind but to improve your physical conditioning and general health as well. To that end, we offer a wide variety of physical training and exercise opportunities. You will also be afforded optional medical assessments offered by the Health and Fitness Department of the National Defense University. I encourage you to take full advantage of these services. More information will be provided during your orientation.

This academic year can also be a great time for your spouse and family. Enclosed is a short note from my wife regarding National War College spousal participation. As a NWC graduate myself, I can personally attest to how much our spouse programs add to the NWC experience. Please ask your spouse to consider participating in the Spouses' Club. As you and your classmates are all peers coming from diverse backgrounds, the NWC spouse program is special and can add a great deal to what should be a banner year for your entire family. Your spouse should also be aware that several of our academic elective courses are open to them, on a space available basis. And there is a specific course called the National Security Strategy Elective, designed especially for all spouses. This course enjoys great reviews, and I encourage your spouse to consider joining it.

Finally, please mark your calendars for the National War College Class of 2025 Social for you and your spouse on the evening of Friday, August 9, 2024. This will be the first of several social events held during the academic year. My spouse and I, and the entire National War College family, look forward to welcoming you to the College and what will be a very special and enriching year.

Very Respectfully,



Paul J. Rock, Jr.  
Major General, USMC  
Commandant, National War College