

President's Update: Learning, Leaning-In and Leading Together

Thursday, March 19, 2020

To the NPS Community,

What pride we should have in who we are: Team NPS. We have met many challenges before on behalf of our country. We do so now.

The Coronavirus fight is ours to help win. The presence of this pandemic has brought changes to our campus, our practices and our professional and personal lives. At the same time, it has brought to the front our better selves. We are reflecting what Admiral Ernest J. King (a former President of NPS long before he became a four-star Admiral) observed: " 'Difficulties' is the name given to things which it is our business to overcome." As Admiral King would be so am I now: proud of how everyone is responding to these challenges.

The current time is difficult. Yet I am confident that we will emerge stronger and that we will have discovered new and good things about ourselves. Indeed, I am already so proud of how we have adapted and adjusted to accommodate our mission, came together to support our NPS students and our people, and your cooperative spirit as helpful neighbors in the surrounding communities of Monterey county where we live.

I want to take this opportunity to share my appreciation for all of your extra efforts to support each other and our community.

We are learning together. The challenges are many and they are big – the recent shelter-in-place order from Monterey county, implementing telework and distance learning for spring quarter, adjusting to the DOD-wide stop movement order, and canceling graduation – this has stressed us professionally and personally on many levels.

Together Faculty, Staff and students responded calmly and in creative and flexible ways as experts, experienced professionals and military leaders. You have adjusted and are adapting to assure each other's safety, resolved travel issues and changes to virtually everything we do, figuring how to telework and communicate with new apps, reworking courses, adjusting grading and research policies and shifting to distance learning – all in about two weeks!

We are leaning-in together. I know many of you were striving around the clock to make wise decisions personally and professionally while responding to pressure and demands from external sources of various kinds and importance. You did this with clear focus on the mission of NPS, and with a caring heart for individual needs and our NPS community.

Together Faculty, Staff and students provided for each other's needs – you listened with empathy, answered new and tough questions, coached each other on how best to teach and learn using distance methods, reached out to individual students and families stuck in the middle of transferring, helped address child care needs for each other when local schools closed, and generally just filled-in where ever help was needed.

We are leading together. Your work in these trying times absolutely radiates the best of what makes NPS special. Fueled by your passion for learning through education, research and collaboration and the drive to make a difference, you are demonstrating to each other, our community and leadership why our cherished institution is so valuable – today and for the future.

Together Faculty, Staff and students established new ways to share rapidly evolving information and coordinate actions on our intranet, provided teaching and learning through new digital and telework technologies, expanded IT services and support, collaboratively developed a comprehensive ongoing FAQ to share answers and resources, and worked with community leaders to ensure coordination and support their efforts.

NPS is known for graduating outstanding, sought-after, decisive military leaders and producing transformative research that resolves naval and national security challenges. What makes that possible is being brought to bear on the Coronavirus threat with the same intellectual foundry that is NPS, forging new approaches to learning, agile leadership and innovative solutions. I can guarantee this: nearly everything we are learning, doing, creating and discovering is important to our national security capabilities and capacities. Approached constructively, we are duty-bound as leaders to grow personally and create opportunities for all in difficult circumstances.

Our NPS warrior ethos compels us to fight this viral enemy with equal vigor and lethality, optimism and persistence, intelligence and effectiveness. The same forthright compassion as moral, ethical leaders that differentiates us as professionals in times of war, is what drives us to make a difference in times in crisis. Well done!

This is not over yet. We still have our mission to perform here at NPS and in support of Naval and joint forces operating around the globe. Your hard work, dedication and care for each other are exemplary. Keep learning, leaning-in and leading – together!

Mark your calendars, our next (third) Virtual Town Hall will be Tuesday, 24 March at 1400.

With great respect,

Ann E. Rondeau, Ed.D.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
President, Naval Postgraduate School

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