MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Focus Group Meeting with Senior Faculty and Leaders at the US Army War College (USAWC), Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 20 January 2017.

1. PURPOSE: To summarize the discussions during the SUBJECT meeting, facilitated by the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic in support of the Army Character Development Project.

2. REFERENCES: Read Ahead (Discussion Slides, 20 January 2017, Encl).

3. BACKGROUND: As the Office of Primary Responsibility for the Army Profession as a cross-cutting concept within the Human Dimension, CAPE is leading the Army Character Development Project. The Character Development Project Team mission is "to design and articulate a concept for character development that is applicable for all Soldiers and Army Civilians; the Army Profession; and the institutional and operational Army."

3. ATTENDEES:

   USAWC
   - COL(R) Chuck Allen
   - COL Pete Haas
   - CH (COL) John Kallerson
   - Dr George Woods
   - Dr William Johnsen
   - Dr Sylvester Brown

   CAPE
   - COL John Vermeesch
   - SGM Boris Bolanos
   - Mr Bryan DeCoste
   - Dr Tony Pfaff
   - Dr Don Snider
   - Mr Patrick Toffler

4. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS:

   a. The Focus Group session began with introductions. The Director, CAPE served as the lead facilitator. He presented a brief overview of the Character Development Project, providing context for the mission, assumptions, and path forward. Publication
of the Army’s Framework for Character Development is anticipated in June 2017, to be followed by sequential and progressive implementation of approved recommendations.

b. Representatives from the USAWC agreed that the USAWC should and does contribute to character development for their students. However they noted that students arrive as proven, senior field grade leaders whose prior education, training, and experience have already affected the formation of their character. Accordingly, the USAWC curriculum and extracurricular activities (whether in-residence or non-residence) will only make an incremental contribution, proceeding from a well-advanced foundation. Some faculty indicated that the USAWC can uniquely provide strategic context to the character foundation of their students, preparing them for the potential pitfalls and traps that strategic leaders and advisors encounter. This perspective is consistent with the literature review of research on “how people develop in character” suggesting that one’s character continues to develop throughout life and is strongly influenced by culture and the organizational and social environment (climate).

c. With this foundation and consensus, attention turned to the definitions of character as one’s intrinsic “true nature” and one’s observable “decisions and actions” (slides 4, 5). The intrinsic (dictionary) explanation of character is complex and multi-dimensional. Therefore, it is the Army’s intent, within leader development, to inspire and support trusted Army professionals to make decisions and take actions that are consistent with the moral principles of the Army Ethic (operational definition of character). The question for the group is how to do this in a manner that is deliberate, sequential, progressive, and adaptable to each component and the Army Civilian Corps.

d. Most agreed that efforts to develop character should be integrated within and throughout the USAWC curriculum, although there was some concern that complete integration could result a loss of focus. All agreed there is no need to add new content to the POI. The resident Strategic Leadership core course already dedicates 11 hours (15% of the course) to ethics and the Army Profession; and students have traditionally been ambivalent regarding courses that specifically, separately attempt to address ethics. However, successful, deliberate integration of character development through ethical reasoning in current courses requires that faculty be both informed and prepared to include ethical considerations within decision making.

e. This observation bears on the issue of “certification.” By doctrine, the Army Profession verifies and validates the character, competence, and commitment of trusted Army professionals to fulfill responsibilities and successfully perform assigned duty with discipline and to standard (ADRP 1, para 5-11). However, several faculty members expressed concern that explicit efforts to develop and certify character may generate bureaucratic procedures. All agreed that there should be no requirement to certify character as a separate activity. Rather, certification should include character as an imbedded criteria within the normal determination that a student has successfully completed the POI.
f. Several faculty members suggested that ethical reasoning and ethical considerations could be assessed in student papers. Additionally, ethical challenges could be prompted in oral comprehensives and class exercises. This is not the case at present. In addition, an ethical component could be considered as an addition to the assessments conducted in the USAWC Leadership Feedback program. Faculty advisors can also discuss ethical factors in their role as coaches and counselors. Campaign planning can include ethical challenges. Case studies can also focus on ethical lessons-learned. Just War Theory and its application and Civil-Military Relations are great topics where ethical considerations can be addressed. None of these requires extra time in the curriculum and each contributes to character development.

5. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

a. Character Development should be sequential and progressive throughout a career. It is analogous to human development: beginning as a child, progressing through adolescence, and becoming an adult. Think of new Soldiers as the “children”, mid-grade Soldiers as “adolescents”, and senior leaders as “adult” Soldiers. Continuous efforts to develop character in the Army must be tailored to the maturity of the Soldier based on prior education, training, and experience.

b. While circumstances supporting character development through education, training, and experience differ significantly among the components and in the Army Civilian Corps, there is no intent to develop separate ethical standards for decisions and actions. All trusted Army professionals are expected to live by and uphold the moral principles of the Army Ethic. In this light, the Army Profession should identify and either rehabilitate or separate “toxic leaders.” Individuals who fail to develop appropriate leadership skills should not be retained merely because they get short-term results while demonstrating a lack of character and creating unethical command climates.

c. As a profession, we must address the issues raised in “Lying to Ourselves” (article by USAWC faculty members Dr Wong and Dr Gerras). Senior leaders are responsible for the directives, policies, regulations, programs, and systems that enable, encourage, or foster misreporting of information or deliberate violations of requirements.

6. SUMMARY:

d. It is the consensus of representatives of the USAWC faculty participating in this focus group that the War College experience helps develop character in students. Specifically, the USAWC builds on the character foundation of its students by providing context for the ethical challenges encountered in the strategic environment.

e. This contribution can be strengthened by more explicitly including ethical reasoning and the ethical perspective in what is currently taught and evaluated. This
requires preparing instructors to integrate ethical considerations within their course work and counseling with students.

f. All concur that the Army's framework for Character Development must reflect the philosophy of Mission Command by identifying what must be done within the ALDS to achieve the intent, not how to do it.

JOHN A. VERMEESCH
COL, USA
Director, Center for the Army Profession and Ethic
Character Development in USAWC

We want leaders that are tough, resilient, that can think, and out-fight and out-smart the enemy. We want them to be adaptive and agile and flexible. And, we want them not only competent, but we want leaders of character.”

General Mark A. Milley, Chief of Staff of the Army
Remarks to the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS, 11 Sep 2015)

CAPE Team
20 JAN 2017
Purpose

To meet with USAWC S&F to discuss
Character Development
within the
USAWC Curriculum

Character Development

The continuous process - within the institutional, operational, and self-development domains - that strengthens the resolve of Army professionals to live by and uphold the Army Ethic, including Army Values, as consistently and faithfully demonstrated in decisions and actions.
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Intrinsically, character is “one’s true nature, including identity, sense of purpose, values, virtues, morals and conscience.”

Operationally, doctrine defines character as “Dedication and adherence to the Army Ethic, including Army Values, as consistently and faithfully demonstrated in decisions and actions.”

The Army Profession certifies the character, competence, and commitment of Soldiers and Army Civilians. (ADRP 1)

Character is central to developing mutual trust and cohesive teams within Mission Command (ADRP 6-0), which in turn strengthens resilience and personal readiness while contributing to unit readiness. Character Development is a unifying theme within The Army Human Dimension Concept, the Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond, is an essential requirement for Leader Development (ALDS, ADRP 6-22), and integral to the Army meeting Army Warfighting Challenges 4, 8, 9, 10 and 19.

PROBLEM
The Army Profession lacks a concept for Character Development of Soldiers and Army Civilians

CNA GAP #501028
FY16 ALDP
Priority List 3P

SOLUTION
Under authority of HQDA EXORD 086-16 HUMAN DIMENSION, the Character Development Project Team articulates, gains approval for, and publishes the Army Concept for Character Development – applicable within the process of leader and professional development – NLT June 2017, in order to strengthen shared identity and inform the development and certification of trusted Army professionals through education, training, and experience

An ethical culture and organizational climate are prerequisites for character development to occur and for right conduct to flourish.

OUTCOME
Publish a concept for developing, assessing, and certifying the character of Army professionals within the existing Leader and Professional Development process of education, training, and experience

Character must be developed within the context of Leader Development.
Intrinsically, character is “one’s true nature, including identity, sense of purpose, values, virtues, morals and conscience.” - ADRP1

Success of this mission requires insightful, informed contributions from across the force.

An ethical culture and climate are Prerequisites for character development to occur and for right conduct to flourish.

Character development concept must be tailored to the specific operating environment based on component, community of practice, etc.

Character must be developed within the context of Leader Development!

Our concept must be based on a multi-disciplinary approach, informed by relevant disciplines.*

* e.g., philosophy, ethics, law, medicine, psychology, sociology, anthropology, pedagogy.

Character Development

Guiding Assumptions

Operationally, character is “Dedication and adherence to the Army Ethic, including Army Values, as consistently and faithfully demonstrated in decisions and actions.” - ADRP1

Our concept must be based on a multi-disciplinary approach, informed by relevant disciplines.*
Mission Command & Leader Development depend on the Character, Competence, Commitment of Army Professionals in the performance of Duty and all aspects of life.
• NLT Mid JAN 17: Complete Draft CD Framework

• 2nd – 3rd Quarter FY17: Staff Draft CD Framework

• NLT JUN 17: Publish Framework for CD, including “Recommendations for Implementation”

• 4th Quarter FY 17 – 1st Quarter FY 18 – Publish Implementation Plan/Order

• FY 18 and Beyond – Implementation and Assessment
• Should USAWC Curriculum contribute to character development? If so, why? If not, why not?

• Is the curriculum designed to contribute to character development? If so, in what way? If not, what should be included in the design?

• Do USAWC Faculty believe their mission to educate and develop strategic leaders includes developing the character of their students? How do you know?

• In the process of preparing and certifying faculty, are new faculty members told there is an expectation that they develop their students’ character along with competence and commitment?

• How are faculty prepared and certified to develop character within the curriculum?
Where within the curriculum are ethical reasoning and ethical challenges addressed?

How is ethical reasoning included within efforts to teach strategic thinking?

How is ethical reasoning included within instruction on operational design and in the decision-making processes?

How else does USAWC curriculum strengthen commitment to our shared identity as “Trusted Army Professionals”? 
Final thoughts?

Recommendations?