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NPS leans into SECNAV strategic guidance on education, innovation

Naval Postgraduate School Foundation

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by Alyssa Olson, Director of Communications, Naval Postgraduate School Foundation

MONTEREY, Calif. (Mar. 8, 2022) — Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro met with his recently established Naval Education Task Force at the Pentagon Feb. 24 to kick off the group's efforts in reviewing the Department's Naval University System.

In alignment with SECNAV's Strategic Guidance, Commandant of the Marine Corps' Force Design 2030, and the CNO's Navigation Plan, the Naval Education Task Force will inform how we can make the US Navy a more adaptive learning organization that prepares our people to prevail over our adversaries in the operating environments of the present and future. The task force is comprised of senior-level subject matter experts in education, leadership, talent management and development, and transformational change including individuals with enlisted, officer, and non-military backgrounds.

"Our Nation is confronting increasing and more varied threats to national security. To remain the preeminent naval force in the world, the DON must make strategic investments in our naval education that develop our sailors and marines throughout their careers," said Del Toro in a press release about the Naval Education Task Force.

A recent panel, Should the Navy Explore new Approaches with Respect to Its Strategy, at WEST 2022, shared this sentiment on the importance of adaptive learning. Panel members consistently highlighted the need for young, agile leaders that are prepared to outthink our enemies on the modern and future battlefield. NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau, USN, moderated the discussion. She was joined by retired Adm. James Winnefeld Jr., USN, former vice chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and NPS Foundation Advisory Council Member; Bran Ferren, co-founder and chief creative officer at Applied Minds LLC; and Steve Blank, adjunct professor at Stanford University and senior fellow for innovation at Columbia University.

Winnefeld repeatedly emphasized the need to rely on the ideas of young officers at the Naval War College and the Naval Postgraduate School before quoting President John Adams “Let us dare to read, think, speak and write,” and stressed the importance of defense-focused educational environments where service members are encouraged to think out of the box and explore new, sometimes controversial, ideas without the traditional constraints of the DOD.

With increased prioritization of naval and defense education, the Naval Postgraduate School’s students, faculty, and accomplishments are central to the success of the Naval and Joint Forces. NPS specializes in technical degrees in fields critical to helping military leaders tackle national security challenges that reflect the globally integrated, data-driven nature of current and future operational environments and play a crucial role in our military leaders' continued education and development. NPS is ready to be the hub of a global network prepared to face the increasingly integrated, autonomous and agile conflicts of tomorrow.

In support of NPS’ vision for the future, the Naval Postgraduate School Foundation has engaged Bran Ferren and Applied Minds LLC to develop a strategic plan that expands NPS’ ability to attract and retain the best talent, facilitate collaboration between the DOD, academia and industry, and develop ethical and technical leaders who apply advanced problem-solving capabilities in the face of rapid global change.

[Watch the full panel.](#)