

STRATEGIC PLAN FY2027 - FY2032



UNITED STATES
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND



The motto of the Naval War College is

“Victory through Sea Power.”

The trident rising from the water symbolizes mastery of naval activities—its three tines are evocative of naval warfare on sea, air, and land. The pilot wheel atop the shield alludes to the mission of the college—education in naval warfare. The wheel’s eight spokes symbolize honor, duty, leadership, command, strategy, tactics, logistics, and weapons. The laurel wreath represents achievement of the mission.

Preface



President Naval War College (PNWC) Rear Admiral Darryl Walker departs Spruance Auditorium following the institution's annual Convocation event, welcoming 447 students from all branches of the U.S. armed forces, U.S. federal government agencies, and 42 partner and allied nations.

August 2025

The United States Naval War College (NWC) is the Navy's premier institution for professional military education, research, and strategic thought. Since its founding in 1884, the College has remained true to the enduring vision of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, who envisioned the War College as a center for original research that addresses the character of war, statesmanship, and the prevention of conflict. Building on this legacy, the NWC today educates tomorrow's leaders, informs today's decision-makers, and engages with allies and partners on all matters of naval power in order to preserve peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in war.

Aligned with the Chief of Naval Operations' vision of the Navy's foundry as the source of warfighting advantage, the NWC is integral to preparing warfighters who can think ahead of adversaries. The NWC is the bedrock where the strategic concepts, cognitive readiness, and decision-making superiority of our fleet is forged. The NWC strengthens the Navy's contributions to joint warfighting by educating leaders who serve in fleet and joint headquarters, lead operational planning teams, and advise senior leaders across the spectrum of conflict. Through our dynamic curricula, enhanced research initiatives, and deep commitment to joint, interagency, and multinational partnerships, the College cultivates leaders capable of thriving in today's complex environment.

The Navy's evolving role in today's security environment is reflected in the NWC's renewed emphasis on interagency, joint, multinational

operations, and flexible modalities of instruction and content delivery. Providing professional military education across the full continuum of needs is critical to the Navy's ability to support our joint and allied warfighting partners, whether students study in Newport, through distance learning, at Monterey, or in fleet concentration areas.

Through this comprehensive strategic planning process, the NWC reaffirms its central role in shaping the future of naval strategy and national security. By emphasizing innovation, strategic thinking, and collaboration with joint, interagency, and multinational partners, the College will continue to serve as the Navy's foundry—ensuring the nation's leaders are prepared to meet tomorrow's security challenges with foresight, adaptability, and decisive leadership.

This Strategic Plan embodies the NWC's commitment to remain the premier institution for developing military and civilian leaders who will drive the future of maritime power through education, research, and engagement. With a clear focus on the challenges facing our nation, the NWC will guide the Navy and the joint warfighting community in developing the leaders needed to prevail in an era of strategic competition and conflict.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Darryl L. Walker".

Darryl L. Walker
Rear Admiral, United States Navy
President, U.S. Naval War College

Strategic Environment



Admiral Daryl L. Caudle, the 34th Chief of Naval Operations, spoke to NWC students, faculty, staff, and tenant command representatives at Naval Station Newport. During his address at the Rhode Island campus, Admiral Caudle unveiled the U.S. Navy's Fighting Instructions, a framework for how the Navy organizes, trains, equips, and fights in a contested global security environment.

February 2026

Strategic Guidance and the Security Environment

The NWC Strategic Plan aligns with national-level strategic guidance, including the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and National Military Strategy (NMS). These documents emphasize the need for an integrated Joint Force that can work seamlessly with allies and partners to deter aggression, compete effectively, and prevail in conflict. Our plan builds on this direction, advancing education, research, and war gaming in support of enduring national objectives and maritime superiority.

The NWC ensures that its education, research, and engagement programs remain aligned with Department of War priorities and evolving security challenges. Through rigorous scholarship and operational analysis, the College supports the Navy, the Joint Force, and our partners in maintaining the intellectual edge necessary to respond to global uncertainty and sustained strategic competition.

Today's security environment is characterized by persistent competition for influence across maritime, air, land, space, cyber, and information domains. It demands agile, forward-thinking leadership capable of integrating capabilities across the whole spectrum of national power. The NWC helps develop this leadership by providing education and war gaming that enable critical analysis, operational innovation, and joint and allied collaboration in support of deterrence and warfighting readiness.

Several strategic trends define this environment:

Maritime Competition and Global Access: Oceans, seas, and strategic waterways remain central to economic prosperity and international stability. The Navy, working with allies and partners, must secure sea lines of communication and defend freedom of navigation across the global commons.

Technological Acceleration: Rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, and weapons technology reshape how forces operate and fight. The College's research agenda informs strategies for technological adaptation to preserve decision advantage.

Threat of Conflict and Deterrence: The fleet must remain ready to deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries decisively. Through education and operational engagement, NWC supports leaders who integrate joint and combined capabilities and sustain deterrence across all domains.

The strength of the United States Navy rests on its people—their intellect, adaptability, and strategic acumen. The NWC develops leaders who can anticipate change, operate effectively with joint, allied, and partner forces, and sustain U.S. leadership in a contested global environment. In doing so, the College contributes directly to national security by preparing maritime and joint professionals who uphold a free and open international order.

Mission

The mission of the NWC is to educate tomorrow's leaders, inform today's decision makers, and engage with allies and partners on all matters of naval power in order to preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in war.



NWC Value Proposition

As the Navy's only graduate education institution providing resident and non-resident Joint Professional Military Education, operationally-focused short courses, fleet assistance, and fully informed Title 10 war gaming, the NWC serves as the foundry for developing leaders, staffs, and commanders. Through rigorous education, cutting-edge research, and purposeful outreach, the College ensures the Navy and the Joint Force prevail in competition and, most importantly, in war. The NWC connects theory to practice, sharpens operational and strategic decision-making, and prepares leaders and staffs to plan, fight, and win alongside joint, interagency, allied, and partner forces.

Lines of Effort Overview

Strategic Intent

The NWC's mission is operationalized through three integrated Lines of Effort (LOEs). These LOEs provide the principal mechanisms by which the College connects theory to practice, sharpens decision-making at the operational and strategic levels, and prepares leaders to prevail in a complex, contested security environment.

Strategic intent for these LOEs is grounded in a combination of national guidance, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) direction, and statutory and Joint Staff requirements for professional military education. National defense guidance emphasizes the need to maintain U.S. strategic and economic power, prevent protracted conflict through credible deterrence, and sustain decisive advantage over peer competitors.

At the same time, law and policy governing Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) define essential outcomes the NWC must deliver. JPME provisions require the Services to educate officers and enlisted personnel to think jointly, operate effectively across domains, and integrate military power with other instruments of national power. Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) and associated joint education directives specify learning areas, competencies, and standards for JPME at all levels, mandating rigorous curricula, outcomes-based assessment, and alignment with joint doctrine and planning processes.

This plan assumes NWC will continue to function in a budget-constrained environment during this five-year period. Therefore, NWC leadership will assess ongoing commitments and identify highest priority activities and adjust accordingly. In some cases, tasks may be deferred or modified to yield cost and labor savings.

The Three Lines of Effort and Organizational Excellence

LOE #1: Educate Tomorrow's Leaders

This LOE focuses on developing strategically-minded, operationally-competent, ethically-grounded leaders who can operate across the spectrum of competition, crisis, and conflict and will be led by the Associate Provost for Education and Faculty. NWC will refine and

deliver resident and distance education that integrates joint, interagency, and multinational perspectives; emphasizes decision-making under uncertainty; and aligns with Joint Professional Military Education and Navy outcomes.

LOE #2: Inform Today's Decision Makers

This LOE orients the College's research, analysis, and war gaming toward the most pressing strategic and operational problems facing the Navy, Joint Force, and national leadership and will be led by the Associate Provost for Research. NWC will provide timely, rigorous, and operationally relevant insights that shape concepts, force development, modernization priorities, and campaign designs in an era of rapid technological change and multidomain competition.

LOE #3: Engage with Allies and Partners

This LOE strengthens the Navy's global network of maritime partners by expanding collaborative research, multilateral war gaming, and international education, to deepen interoperability and will be led by the NWC Public Affairs Officer. NWC will build shared strategic understanding, foster enduring relationships that support regional security architectures, uphold a free and open maritime order, and enhance combined warfighting effectiveness.

Organizational Excellence

The success of the NWC's three Lines of Effort depends on sustained organizational excellence that underpins education, research, and engagement and will be led by the Associate Provost for Academic Services. This requires disciplined institutional practices, transparent stewardship of resources, and a culture of assessment and continuous improvement. By sustaining a world-class faculty and staff, investing in facility upgrades, information technology, and strengthening business processes, the College establishes the foundation for effective strategy execution. Ongoing attention to crosscutting priorities – including professional development, work-life integration, innovation, and institutional resilience – ensures a secure, adaptable, and mission-ready enterprise.



U.S. Air Force General Randall Reed, Commander, U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), delivers remarks to NWC students, staff and faculty.
April 2026

Innovate, Refine, Enable

The NWC will pursue these three LOEs through a deliberate approach built on Innovate, Refine, Enable.

Innovate: NWC will experiment with new concepts, methods, and tools that enhance how the Navy learns, thinks, and fights. This includes integrating emerging technologies, exploring innovative teaching approaches and war gaming methodologies, and advancing new operational and strategic ideas. Innovation within NWC is focused, evidence-based, and tied directly to improving warfighting advantage and decision quality.

Refine: NWC will continuously improve existing programs, processes, and curricula to ensure they remain aligned with CNO priorities, joint education standards, and evolving fleet requirements. This includes tightening learning outcomes to OPMEP expectations, sharpening linkages between education and operational needs, lowering barriers, and improving internal coordination across the college so that education, research, and engagement reinforce one another.

Enable: NWC will build and sustain the institutional conditions required for the LOEs to succeed. This means developing faculty and staff, modernizing facilities and digital infrastructure, and establishing processes, partnerships, and data systems that allow education, research, and engagement to scale and adapt. Through “enable” actions, the College underwrites the capacity and resilience needed to execute its LOEs and support the broader Naval Education Enterprise.

Integration and Sequencing

The three LOEs are mutually-reinforcing and proceed in parallel across the 2027 – 2032 planning period. Education informs research and engagement; research provides insights that enhance educational relevance; engagement enriches both education and research through allied and partner perspectives.

Sequencing and Phasing:

2027 (Phase 1). Establish baseline assessments of current capabilities in education, research, and engagement. Initiate curriculum development and research prioritization processes. Begin planning for transformed international engagement activities. Formalize cross-LOE working groups to ensure integration and mutual support.

2028 – 2029 (Phase 2). Implement curriculum enhancements and expand educational offerings. Launch major research initiatives on priority strategic questions. Expand international fellow programs and conduct multinational war gaming. Build momentum through early successes and demonstrate value to stakeholders.

2030 – 2032 (Phase 3). Consolidate gains from earlier phases. Achieve full operational capability in expanded educational programs, research initiatives, and engagement activities. Establish sustainable processes and funding mechanisms. Position the NWC for continued excellence and relevance beyond the planning period.

LOE #1: Educate Tomorrow's Leaders



NWC students conduct their final comprehensive exercise in the college's National Security and Decision Making (NSDM) course.

June 2025

Overview

This LOE focuses on developing strategically-minded, ethically-grounded leaders who can operate across the spectrum of competition, crisis, and conflict. Since its founding, the College rests on the enduring premise that graduates must be able to exercise sound judgment in peace and war and meet the unforeseen challenges of the future when leading combat forces in command, assigned to Maritime Operations Centers (MOC), and staffs. Building on warfighting skills, the NWC educates and develops leaders capable of critical thinking and adaptation as codified in Title 10.

Graduates apply maritime theory, operational concepts, leadership principles, and enduring lessons to integrate military power with policy, operate effectively across the joint and interagency enterprise, and exercise sound judgment when no playbook exists. The NWC leadership ensures the curriculum aligns with national defense objectives and creates an environment in which the college's practitioner-scholar faculty anticipates changes in strategy, the security environment, and doctrine to shape the curriculum to provide naval leaders of all levels of seniority the intellectual tools that endure after graduation. The College delivers an evolving curriculum across an array of modalities to educate students wherever they are to develop cognitive skills as planners, directors, and commanders equipped for modern warfare.

Innovate

- Develop certificate criteria for short courses documenting academic and joint credit accomplishments (FY28).
- Develop, pilot, and refine a fleet Seminar Program-Full-Time program allowing officers to complete JPME-I and a master's degree in defense and strategic studies at home station (FY28).
- Develop rigorous and scalable short-course options that confer JPME I or JPME II credit, which meet statutory requirements, Joint Staff learning outcomes, and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff special areas of emphasis. Propose milestones progressively throughout careers tracked with Navy qualifications. Programs are aligned with MOC certification requirements, and graduates demonstrate an understanding of MOC processes, procedures, relationships, coordination, and products (FY27).
- Integrate advanced leader-development concepts as directed by the Navy leadership development framework in conjunction with surveys to advance flag officer education for leadership in Service, Joint or combined roles (FY27).
- Increase capability and capacity to deliver classified instruction as appropriate. Promote connections to U.S. and coalition warfighting commands to



Faculty and students from the NWC's Cyber & Innovation Policy Institute (CIPI) with the Japan Self-Defense Forces and Australian science and technology community after a wargame focused on critical undersea communications infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region.

March 2026

leverage lessons from contemporary military operations (FY28).

- Investigate demand for experiential learning programs, including war games and simulations, for forward and deployed units to reinforce senior leader development in concert with their staffs (FY28).
- Modernize required online Primary Officer Professional Military Education (PPME) program that provides the fleet with an operationally relevant foundation to succeed at NWC (FY28).
- Design and deliver synchronous and asynchronous elective courses for students in a shared learning environment, expanding access, preserving rigor, and maintaining seminar-based learning (FY28).

Refine

- Execute an Outcomes Based Military Education (OBME) methodology focused on CJCS-directed Joint Learning Areas to provide evidence of graduates' ability to frame, diagnose, and resolve problems in practice, achieving full certification at Milestone Five (FY29).
- Work with Navy Type Commanders and Naval Personnel Command to promote intellectual overmatch by enrolling superior performers in

the resident programs, including the Maritime Advanced Warfighting School, Advanced Strategist Program, advanced research programs, and specialized graduate certificate programs (FY27).

- Continue to adapt courses to include topics and requirements outlined in Navy, Joint, interagency, and national guidance by ensuring the curricula address emerging security challenges, with a particular emphasis on strategic competition, deterrence, artificial intelligence, joint warfighting, technological disruption, information warfare, and maritime domain operations (FY27).
- Assist Naval Personnel Command to identify appropriate additional qualification designators (AQD) NWC should award (FY27).
- Deepen international officer engagement in courses and support education initiatives to increase partners' capacity for regional maritime security and the operational level of command and control (FY27).
- Enhance student learning and faculty development with instruction on AI literacy that covers foundational concepts, practical applications, and ethical considerations (FY27).



Associate Professor Lisa Kerr, Ed.D., and Operations Specialist 1st Class Harold Gomez, facilitate a war game during the college's 13th "War Gaming 101" introductory course onboard Naval Station Newport.

January 2025

- Implement a Curriculum Coordination Council comprised of Deans and Department Chairs who are responsible for academic courses to streamline and coordinate curriculum review processes (FY27).

Enable

- Maintain qualifications to deliver graduate programs accredited for the Congressionally-chartered master's degree in Defense and Strategic Studies and master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies, and Joint Staff certifications for JPME-I and JPME-II (enduring).
- Implement long onboarding and ensure a sustainable balance of military, civilian, and adjunct faculty structure that enables mission execution across all NWC programs (enduring).
- Sustain the Navy's intellectual edge by recruiting and retaining highly qualified faculty who create a learning environment in which ideas are debated, tested, and applied through experiential learning to advance naval warfare.
- Improve professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to maintain subject-matter expertise, strengthen teaching and scholarship, leverage international partnerships, and ensure the College remains responsive to emerging operational, strategic, and institutional requirements (FY27).
- Develop JPME prerequisite courses on the Navy, order of battle, and communication skills to succeed across JPME I and II programs (FY29).
- Improve the overall assessment and institutional effectiveness processes at NWC. Streamline the use of surveys and survey data across all programs. Capture program data in a dashboard for monitoring key aspects of educational effectiveness to meet Navy, Joint Staff, and graduate degree qualifications (FY28).
- Improve access to the NWC Archives and Naval Historical Collection to support education, research, and institutional memory. Identify and digitize a curated set of high-value, unclassified archival collections prioritized for instructional and research use; and expand controlled digital access consistent with security and rights constraints (FY28).
- Convene a study group to develop a five-year review in support of the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) in 2029 (FY30).

LOE #2: Inform Today's Decision-Makers



CNO Admiral Daryl Caudle discusses operational concepts with his senior commanders during the CNO's Futures Game facilitated by NWC's War Gaming Department aboard Naval Station Newport.

July 2026

Overview

This LOE orients the College's research, analysis, and war gaming toward the most pressing strategic and operational problems facing the Navy, Joint Force, and national leadership. The NWC informs today's decision-makers by producing rigorous, relevant, and timely research that informs the choices and tradeoffs faced by the Navy, the Joint Force, and the nation across strategic and operational challenges. From 2027 to 2032, the College will strengthen its role as a trusted source of insight and advice for senior leaders by advancing an integrated research strategy that combines classified analysis, academic scholarship, CNO-Directed war gaming, modeling and simulation, and historical inquiry to support decision advantage across competition, crisis, and conflict.

NWC conducts research as an operationally relevant portfolio: individual and team-based efforts, performed by faculty and students, pursued through directed requirements as well as independent inquiry. This work is planned and executed across classified and unclassified environments, enabling the College to provide decision-makers timely, protected insight when required, while also translating appropriate findings into unclassified products that strengthen professional education and allied and partner engagement.

Over FY27-32, the College will innovate through investments in secure war gaming, modeling and simulation, advanced computing, AI-enabled analysis, facilities, and talent; refine its research priorities and synthesis of insights across scholarship, war gaming, operational analysis, historical inquiry, and professional military education; and enable high-quality research by sustaining faculty excellence, strengthening faculty-student collaboration, expanding secure infrastructure and extramural support, improving dissemination, and deepening engagement with allies and partners.

Consistent with its mission to educate tomorrow's leaders, inform today's decision makers, and engage with allies and partners on all matters of naval power, NWC research will emphasize relevance to Joint Force lethality while preserving the intellectual independence and scholarly rigor that underpin the College's credibility. Research will help define the future Navy and its associated roles and missions, strengthen maritime partnerships, advance ethical leadership across the force, and refine the world-class professional military curriculum.

Innovate

- Develop, evolve, and increase war gaming, modeling and simulation capabilities, and AI-enabled analytic methods to enable Joint and all-domain exploration at appropriate scales and classification levels (FY30 Q4).



Max Brooks, author of “World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War,” answers questions during the NWC Future Warfighting Symposium.

August 2025

- Gain Office of Research and Technology Applications (ORTA) certification, allowing the NWC to enter into Cooperative Research and Develop Agreements (CRADA) that expand our ability to collaborate with non-federal entities such as private industry on Research and Development (FY28 Q2).
- Restore Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA) with non-federal entities: This will enable building commercial relationships and accelerate the development of capabilities and methodologies with regard to the NWC’s applied research needs (FY29 Q2).
- Conduct an annual presentation review of NWC research efforts to students and Navy leadership to inform decision-makers and highlight contributions to planning and operations (FY27 Q3).
- Establish a Doctrine Review, Update, Implementation, & Decision Board to get and assign Joint, Naval, and Allied doctrine leads across NWC in order to provide best NWC input and treat such military operational doctrine work as research (FY27 Q4).
- operational analysis, historical study, and professional military education to provide senior leaders a more complete understanding of risk, opportunity, and tradeoffs (FY28 Q4).
- Refine NWC Research Priorities. This will allow leadership, faculty and students to better align research efforts to enduring national and naval research priorities and ensure that NWC work directly supports the Navy’s and Joint Force’s operational and institutional needs (FY27 Q2).
- Evaluate and maintain the NWC Pre-Publication Security Review process and training system. This will help ensure protected information is not inadvertently divulged and provide NWC employees the confidence to disseminate important research that needs to be propagated in open-source publications (FY27 Q2).
- Convene annual workshops with senior fleet representatives and key stakeholders to conduct operationally informed qualitative research, identifying common information gaps and seams across the fleets (FY27 Q4).

Refine

- Refine the institutional approach to synthesis by bringing together insights from war gaming,

Enable

- Develop solutions that preserve operational access to appropriately classified environments in order to sustain mission relevance and support CNO-directed research and war gaming (FY27 Q2).



U.S. Navy Admiral Steve Koehler, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, answers a question from a NWC student.

May 2026

- Develop an Institutional Research Repository with tiered access appropriate to classification and distribution controls: This will allow NWC faculty, staff and students better awareness of independent and directed research that is undertaken by individuals and groups, including both faculty and students, at all levels of classification across the NWC in order to support synthesis across the institution (FY28 Q2).
- Develop new and further support existing methods for collaboration between faculty and student research on issues directly relevant to the Navy and Joint Force (FY28 Q3).
- Develop a grants program that provides external funding for both applied and independent NWC research programs (FY28 Q2).
- Empower the NWC Research council to recommend resourcing for new initiatives to achieve research goals as defined in the NWC Strategic Plan (FY27 Q2).
- Streamline Faculty Development Programs: This will better allow for use of external gift funds for research purposes that develop faculty for classroom teaching and applied research responsibilities (FY28 Q1).
- Further develop and expand peer-reviewed publishing and dissemination mechanisms that extend the reach of NWC research and reinforce intellectual rigor (including journals, monographs, and studies) to support immediate policy discourse and long-term professional understanding (FY28 Q4).
- Expand secure infrastructure and access. To increase the relevance of research and war gaming, the College will invest in high-performance computing, accredited networks, and facilities capable of supporting joint and all-domain analysis across multiple classification levels, including expanded access to TS/SCI and Special Access Program environments (FY30 Q4).
- Expand opportunities for collaborative research, war gaming, and professional exchange with allies and partners to deepen shared understanding of naval power and improve combined decision-making (FY28 Q4).
- Leverage the Naval War College Archives and Naval Historical Collection to strengthen the rigor, continuity, and historical grounding of faculty, student, and institutional research. Support primary source research, long term analytic continuity, and the integration of historical context into naval, joint, and maritime studies through archival reference expertise and curated access to relevant collections (FY27 Q4).

LOE #3: Engage with Allies and Partners



Students attending the Maritime Security and Governance Staff Course (MSGSC) at NWC celebrate their graduation.

February 2026

Overview:

While education develops leaders and research advances new knowledge and innovation, outreach ensures key audiences understand the value of both.

Effective outreach and engagement are essential to securing resources, attracting top students and faculty, strengthening relationships with stakeholders and advocates, sustaining the war college's reputation as a critical element of the nation's warfighting enterprise, and expanding institutional knowledge through interagency, intercollegiate, and operational engagement.

Key audiences include federal and interagency officials; Department of War leadership; the Joint Force, prospective students and faculty, peers in professional military education, partners in academia, industry, and research; non-federal entities; accreditation bodies; international allies and partners; and local, regional, national, international leaders, and our NWC alumni.

Alumni engagement serves as a strategic enabler, leveraging U.S. and international graduates as enduring partners to extend outreach, strengthen global relationships, and reinforce the College's role in advancing maritime security cooperation and professional military education worldwide.

Innovate:

- Alumni Director and Public Affairs Officer, with appropriate deanery/directorate support, develop a scalable, sustainable "away game" capability to professionally represent NWC at key forums such as trade shows and conferences (FY28 Q1).
- Associate Provost for Research, College of Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS), and Public Affairs Officer develop a direct outreach product to deliver timely NWC faculty research to key military leaders and stakeholders (FY27 Q2).
- Reestablish the NWC's Secretariat of the Inter-American Naval Conference (SIANC) to promote academic interoperability, curriculum and faculty exchanges in keeping with national directives and focus areas (FY27 Q3).
- Coordinate with Type Commanders, Combatant Commands, and Numbered fleets to expand and replicate opportunities to embed NWC faculty with operational forces (e.g., embarkations), enhancing exposure to current practices while promoting NWC research and education (FY27 Q4).
- Leverage alumni outreach and hybrid learning to sustain engagement with partners beyond resident programs (FY30 Q1).



International Maritime Staff Operators Course (IMSOC) 25-02 group photo on the steps of the historic Luce Hall.

May 2025

- Establish formal partnerships with allied war colleges to support professional exchanges and interoperability (FY29 Q1).
- Develop cross-platform, multi-classification distance support capabilities to provide timely assistance to U.S. and partner operational staffs (FY30 Q1).
- Continue annual surveys of U.S. in-residence alumni 2–5 years post-graduation to assess curriculum impact and inform improvements aligned with evolving operational requirements (FY27 Q1).
- Establish U.S. regional and international alumni chapters in key port locations and high-density alumni countries (FY30 Q1).
- Implement a centralized communication platform to deliver timely, targeted updates and engagement opportunities to alumni (FY27 Q4).
- Expand alumni engagement with current U.S. and international students through mentoring and related initiatives (FY29 Q1).
- Establish an International Distinguished Graduate Leadership Award (I-DGLA) (FY27 Q4).

Refine:

- Expand and replicate leadership visits and alumni events in fleet concentration areas to inform key military leaders on NWC contributions and gather feedback on programs (FY27 Q4).
- Review and reinvest in international war gaming to include education and regionally focused games in order to increase partner capacity and interoperability (FY27 Q4).
- Sustain a robust schedule of NWC-hosted and co-hosted events, aligning content with Department of the Navy, Department of War, and U.S. government priorities to attract senior audiences (FY27 Q1).
- Leverage existing off-site programs (e.g., exportable courses, wargames, fleet support visits, FSP trips) to enhance outreach and highlight NWC value to military and international leaders (FY27 Q4).
- Support U.S. Navy acquisition and shipbuilding priorities by prioritizing engagement with industry and business partners whenever possible (FY27 Q4).
- Emphasize U.S. values—civilian control, rule of law, human rights, and democratic norms—in international engagements (FY27 Q4).



Vice Admiral J. T. Anderson, Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, left, speaks during a panel discussion on gray zone and hybrid threats to critical maritime infrastructure during the NWC's 22nd Regional Alumni Symposium in Gdynia, Poland.

March 2026

- Strengthen alumni relationships and sustain fleet engagement to support future operational collaboration (FY27 Q1).

Enable:

- Institutionalize assessment and feedback mechanisms to incorporate input from students and U.S. and partner stakeholders into NWC curricula, research, and outreach (FY30 Q1).
- Resource and produce timely, high-quality print and digital outreach products for key audiences across in-person and digital channels (FY29 Q1).
- Establish and maintain a Strategic Outreach and Engagement Council to coordinate efforts, track progress, and share guidance across deaneries and directorates (FY27 Q4).
- Sustain and expand a global alumni network to reinforce professional norms, interoperability, and long-term relationships (FY27 Q1).
- Support alumni participation in exchanges, fellowships, forums, and PME initiatives that build partner capacity and self-sufficiency (FY27 Q1).
- Develop tailored engagement plans for Combatant Commands and partner nations to ensure continuity and measure effectiveness (FY30 Q1).
- Provide faculty expertise, guest instruction, and advisory support to partner military education institutions (FY28 Q1).
- Engage Combatant Commands to align NWC security cooperation efforts with their strategic priorities (FY28 Q1).
- Continue to refine NWC publications, to include the Naval War College Review and Newport Papers, to focus on operationally relevant analysis and leverage these resources to engage with U.S. decision-makers, military commands, partners and allies, and fellow professional military education institutions (enduring).
- Leverage the Naval War College Archives and Naval Historical Collection to enhance engagement with stakeholders, alumni, partners, and host-nation audiences by showcasing NWC's legacy, scholarship, and contributions to naval thought and warfighting. Support outreach, events, and strategic communications through curated exhibits, archival materials, and expertise that reinforce NWC's narrative and enduring relevance (FY28 Q3).

Organizational Excellence



Students, staff, and faculty from the NWC pose for a command photo in front of the college's historic Luce and Pringle Halls onboard Naval Station Newport celebrating a 140 years of our institution.

October 2024

Overview

The success of the Naval War College's three Lines of Effort depends on sustained organizational excellence that enables education, research, and engagement. Organizational Excellence establishes the institutional conditions required to execute the mission through disciplined practices, transparent stewardship of resources, and a culture of continuous improvement.

The College will sustain a world-class faculty and staff, modernize facilities and digital infrastructure, and strengthen repeatable business processes that ensure effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability across the enterprise. Workforce development, inspection readiness, institutional resilience, and enterprise integration will be managed as enduring requirements aligned to mission execution.

Organizational Excellence will be achieved through a deliberate approach to innovate new capabilities, refine existing processes, and enable the secure, resilient environment required for mission success. Performance will be measured through enterprise outcomes, inspection readiness, and the College's ability to deliver enabling capabilities across all Lines of Effort.

Innovate

- Deploy Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and software bots (automated task agents) to eliminate

manual processing in high-volume administrative tasks; automate five operational workflows (e.g., travel claims, invoicing, recurring reports) and demonstrate measurable reduction in staff-hours per transaction against an FY26 baseline (FY27).

- Implement an enterprise dashboard that integrates cross-functional data (finance, travel, contracts) to provide real-time visibility and reduce reliance on manual reporting processes (FY27).
- Develop an interactive dashboard that allows hiring managers to see what phase a recruitment action is within the hiring process (w/management, w/HRO, w/OCHR, w/Candidate, w/Security, etc.) (FY28).
- Optimize supply functions through the integration of advanced technologies and digitization to streamline inventory and distribution (FY31).
- Advance access capabilities for classified and unclassified collections through selective digitization, improved user discovery tools, and service design enhancements that improve research efficiency and academic outcomes (FY27–29).

Refine

- Update the NWC 15-Year Infrastructure, Modernization, and Maintenance Plan to align with infrastructure conditions, mission requirements,



NWC Warehouse forklift operator Lesley Goddard does the heavy lifting of course materials for NWC.

May 2026

and long-term operational needs. Publish the revised Plan NLT Q4 FY27 with funded and unfunded requirements identified for OPNAV, CNIC, and NAVFAC advocacy.

- Execute Flag Mess modernization to enhance senior leader engagement and institutional event capability; initiate construction (FY27), and achieve operational capacity (FY28).
- Deliver a dedicated war gaming facility to enhance NWC's role as the Navy's center of excellence for war gaming (FY32).
- Develop and deploy a Professional Development series on Procurement and Contract Administration that equips end-users with functional terminology and process knowledge needed to effectively participate in procurement strategy (FY27 Q4).
- Increase utilization of existing contract vehicles through improved enterprise visibility via a quarterly Active Contracts Summary and centralized contract portal; reduce redundant acquisition actions and procurement lead times, measured year-over-year (FY27-28).
- Assess workforce requirements and implement succession planning aligned to NAVMAC manpower study and Activity Manpower Document (AMD) data; formalize succession plans for critical positions and publish an updated

NWC Workforce Plan aligned to FY27–FY31 hiring priorities (FY27 Q2).

- Standardize client, server, and network configurations to create efficiencies, minimize costs, and increase system reliability. Transition to "Enterprise Solutions." Migrate cloud services for Continuity of Operations (COOP) availability and service expansion to the Naval University System (NUS) and distance services (FY27-28).
- Define and establish a baseline for a secure, reliable digital academic environment supporting resident, distance, and classified programs; integrate learning management systems, classroom and lecture capture, secure distance delivery, and academic data and student information systems, and execute phased modernization to ensure uninterrupted instructional continuity, hybrid equivalency, and classified delivery (FY27-32).
- Strengthen management of official academic records to ensure measurable accuracy, confidentiality, and regulatory compliance; complete migration to the NUS Student Information System and achieve operational cutover (FY27 Q4), aligned to enterprise integration milestones (FY27-28).
- Establish and administer NWC-specific archival and institutional records management processes aligned to statutory and regulatory requirements; define



Laura Sanin and Stephanie Stabile keep things moving in the NWC Mail Room.

May 2026

and publish processes (FY27 Q3) and conduct annual self-inspections to assess compliance, risk, and effectiveness beginning in (FY28).

- Apply a common Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups (B2C2WG) governance framework to align institutional coordination and decision making. Document purpose, membership, cadence, decision authority, and reporting paths for existing boards, councils, committees, working groups, and cross functional teams. Establish the initial framework by FY27 Q2 and conduct an annual governance review to retire low value bodies and recharter groups as priorities evolve (FY27).
- Establish a self-assessment framework and process to evaluate compliance, effectiveness, and risk (FY27), as an enduring, commandwide self-assessment approach that strengthens accountability and institutional performance and ensures the NWC remains inspection ready. Use self-assessment findings to directly inform the Program Performance Review and annual institutional performance review described below (FY27-28).
- Synchronize the Program Performance Review (PPR), the semiannual dean and director briefings described in the Measurement section, the Self-Assessment Framework outputs, and an annual institutional performance review into a single performance cadence to assess progress, inform

decisions, and drive continuous improvement.

Coordinate this effort through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Publish the results as the NWC Annual Report, with LOE leads responsible for their respective sections (FY27).

Enable

- Advance a comprehensive security modernization and readiness agenda focused on HSPD-12 implementation, COOP maturation, and the sustainment of other critical security programs to strengthen institutional resilience; strategically manage over 40 integrated security programs from unclassified through Top Secret to ensure unified governance, risk mitigation, and mission assurance in support of Naval War College priorities (enduring).
- Administer special security programs to ensure SCIF and SAP-F spaces maintain accreditation for highly classified information. Address Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 705 compliance issues by 2029 in accordance with DONSAPCO Instruction 5530 released in February 2029 (FY29).
- Ensure all appropriately cleared students are transferred in status to NWC courses in classified systems to enable timely and effective classified instruction across resident and distance programs. Align student clearance, enrollment, and system



Despina Piperaki and Heidi Garcia are ready to assist students and faculty at the circulation desk.

May 2026

access processes to support instructional execution no later than (FY27).

- Sustain an integrated digital learning ecosystem that operationalizes and maintains the Digital Academic Environment following modernization, ensuring ongoing instructional continuity, collaboration, assessment, and system coherence across hybrid and distributed programs (FY28 and beyond).
- Increase capacity of classified instructional systems on SIPR and JWICS to enable relevant warfighting education across resident and online programs. Improve system availability, accreditation coverage, and instructional reach to support classified teaching and learning requirements (FY28).
- Integrate classified intelligence into war games to provide fleet commanders with critical insights (enduring).
- Engage OPNAV, CNIC, and NAVFAC to validate project priority, secure funding, and align with the next infrastructure investment cycle (enduring).
- Institutionalize a Risk Control System that integrates safety, health, and mission assurance into a “Safe-to-Operate” environment (FY27).
- Ensure events reflect institutional standards of excellence through professional protocol and logistics support IAW OPNAVINST 1710.12, Social

Usage and Protocol Handbook (enduring).

- Operate secure, compliant library services (classified and unclassified) that enable trusted access to sensitive and open-source materials in support of education, war gaming, and warfare research (enduring).
- Manage copyright permissions and intellectual property compliance to protect institutional interests while enabling lawful academic and research use (enduring).
- Identify emerging workforce requirements and redesign roles to meet evolving mission demands; align faculty hiring by identifying and resourcing billets in priority areas in accordance with national and departmental strategic guidance documents (enduring).
- Sustain workforce learning capabilities that support continuous development of high-impact skills aligned to mission requirements and professional development priorities (enduring).
- Maintain safe, reliable, and fully operational facilities through proactive evaluation, maintenance, and repair of building systems and assets (enduring).

Measurement



The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mahan (DDG-72) sails by Naval Station Newport, with NWC on the horizon.

June 2011

Effective implementation of this Strategic Plan requires disciplined, transparent measurement that links strategic intent to observable outcomes across all Lines of Effort and Organizational Excellence. The NWC will employ a multi-tiered approach that combines quantitative metrics, qualitative assessment, and periodic senior-leader review to ensure relevance, results, and direct contribution to Navy and Joint Force readiness through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Measurement will center on three domains:

Education: student learning outcomes, curriculum relevance to strategic competition and emerging technologies, throughput and access across resident and distance programs, and fleet/joint demand signals for NWC graduates.

Research: relevance, timeliness, and operational impact of studies and war games informing Navy, Joint, OSW, and interagency decisions, including explicit linkage to prioritized strategic questions and major guidance documents.

Engagement: depth and breadth of allied and partner participation, follow-on operational or policy initiatives, and demonstrated improvements in interoperability and shared maritime understanding.

Each Line of Effort Leader will brief the PNWC semiannually, synchronized to the academic and fiscal cycles. These briefs will: report progress against LOE-specific objectives and key milestones for the 2027–2032 timeframe, and highlight risks, constraints, and provide recommendations for required decisions and resourcing adjustments.

In coordination with the Line of Effort Leaders, each dean and director will maintain a balanced set of Measures of Performance (MOPs) and Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) aligned to LOE objectives, updated annually and reviewed for alignment with evolving CNO and national-level guidance. Deans will ensure that data collection processes are streamlined, auditable, and supported by institutional analysis to minimize reporting burden while maximizing decision utility.

Identify lessons, best practices, and required course corrections to keep the College aligned with fleet and joint priorities.

Annually, Line of Effort Leaders will prepare a report for the PNWC. They will convene an integrated performance review synthesizing dean inputs, fleet feedback, and external guidance, using results to refine implementation plans and inform subsequent strategic updates.

Conclusion



NWC students form ranks during a welcome reception for international students onboard Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island.

August 2025

This strategic plan charts a purposeful and urgent course for the NWC as a vital contributor to the Navy's warfighting enterprise. Aligned with the Chief of Naval Operations' priorities, the College's efforts across education, research, engagement, and Organizational Excellence will directly contribute to the Navy's overarching imperative to be ready for the possibility of high-end conflict and to sustain long-term warfighting advantage.

Through education, we will develop leaders who think strategically and act decisively in complex, contested security environments. Through research, we will advance insights and concepts that shape maritime strategy, inform decision-making, and influence fleet readiness. Through engagement, we will strengthen ties across the Joint Force, interagency partners, and maritime allies to enhance interoperability and collective deterrence. And through mission support, we will ensure the resources, systems, and structures are in place to enable excellence across every line of effort.

As articulated in our value proposition, the NWC connects theory to practice integrating professional military education, rigorous research, and war gaming to prepare leaders to plan, fight, and win alongside joint and allied partners. The success of this plan will be measured not by intent alone, but by relevance, results, and the College's contribution to the Navy's readiness and warfighting advantage. In a security environment defined by rapid change and persistent risk, this plan is a living and breathing document that can adapt to potential changes in the global security environment and higher-level guidance and priorities. We will assess progress, adapt where necessary, and maintain accountability to the mission we serve. Through disciplined execution and collective commitment, the NWC will realize this strategy in service to the fleet, the Joint Force, and the nation.



New NWC mascot 'The Kracken'



U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
— *Est. 1884* —
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

*686 Cushing Road
Newport, Rhode Island 02841*

www.usnwc.edu

*Also search for us on Facebook, X,
YouTube and Flickr*