

NOTES FROM THE:

DoD Professional Military Comptroller School

Colonel Donna Taylor

It's great to be back at PMCS! In 1989 I left an outstanding organization that provided the FM career field exceptional education. Now, 13 years later, I've returned to assume duties as the school Director. As I finish my first class as Director I would like to share my thoughts on the comparison of the "new" PMCS to the "old". **Overall, I'm proud to report we're still providing world-class education, even more focused on the commander and warfighter.** Although some aspects of PMCS have changed over the last 13 years, the penchant for excellence remains. The differences are most evident in three primary areas: curriculum, faculty, and students. While our people (faculty and students) make or break the organization, a solid curriculum is our bedrock.

PMCS curriculum remains both strategic and flexible. Although individual blocks of instruction change over time, we remain strategically focused. For example, we ask an Assistant Secretary for Financial Management from one of the services to speak to each class. Additionally, we don't teach "how" to perform triennial reviews but we will likely discuss why we need such reviews. What's the public perception of DoD financial management? How are we transforming our business? How do we "peddle faster"? What should the FM community aspire to for 2010? 2025? We must envision our future in order to stay relevant; however, we must also operate today.

Our curriculum, while focused on the future, is also flexible enough to meet today's needs. Our flexibility has been key to some substantive course changes. PMCS led the way in the Certified Defense Financial Manager journey. Our curriculum, already well versed in "CDFMese", now exposes our students to about 80 percent of the EDFM instructional topics. We've also made other real time changes in order to meet DoD FM needs. For example, we've doubled the time we spend on fiscal law to 6 hours. Three instructional hours focus on deployment fiscal law and are taught by AFJAG School experts. We've added programming and DFAS to our popular "days" program, where key personnel highlight a variety of approaches to a number of current service and DoD issues. Finally, we recently added a seminar on change. Using the book *Who Moved my Cheese*, by Spencer Johnson, M.D., we show students they are most successful if they embrace change and use the opportunities of a changing environment to

improve their personal lives, their individual performance, and/or their organization and department. The ability to adapt to a changing environment is important for both current and future DoD leaders; however, it is essential for the PMCS faculty.

Our faculty, resident and adjunct, is vital to student learning. As with curriculum, many faculty attributes remain the same, but many have changed. Faculty strengths include background diversity, variety of assignments, and extremely strong dedication. Adjunct faculty for each full-length course remains about 70 and approximately 25 percent are members of the SES or general officer corps. Adjunct faculty, such as Dr Gropman from The Department of Grand Strategy, ICAF, and Dr Pickering from the Joint Military Intelligence College, DIA, continue to provide thought-provoking ideas on everything from National Security Strategy to Russia's Triple Transition and U.S. Interests. FM leadership from the services and DoD agencies add the "current issues" flavor to the soup. Willingness to discuss issues, ideas, and options has not changed but specific issues continue to change. Changing issues also means changing adjunct faculty members.

Our need for defense agency, OSD, and warfighting command speakers grows as our department continues to change. For example, Dr Schroeder, the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense (Resource Planning/Management) provides students new insight into resource allocation "from the top". Ms. Debbie Moeller, Deputy Director for Programs, Budget and Mission Support, Defense Security Service (DSS), provides the DSS perspective, and a number of speakers, including Ms Susan Grant, Director Corporate Resources, DFAS, address DFAS issues. Additionally, students learn a lot about our warfighting commands during USSOCOM and USTRANSCOM presentations. As an added bonus, many of our adjunct faculty are PMCS alumni who understand why we value their participation and openness. Our adjunct faculty remains an integral part of our operation; however the makeup of that faculty has changed over time, as has our resident faculty.

Just as the "flavor" of adjunct faculty has changed, so has our resident faculty. Although we've added

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additional faculty requirements, many aspects of PMCS duty remain unchanged. Just as always, resident faculty members prepare seminar rooms, run seminars, host adjunct faculty, revise/update curriculum and teach from the speaker's platform. Today, we require more. They are no longer merely experts in one block of instruction. During their tour, we expect each to rotate among curriculum areas in order to broaden the scope of their experience and horizons. Along this line, we also expect PMCS faculty to complete CDFM qualification within one year of assignment. In addition to added faculty requirements, we approach hiring differently. We're actively recruiting military members with squadron commander and/or deployment experience. We want them to share those "been there, done that, got the t-shirt" experiences. We also expect our civilian faculty to share their experiences.

Recognition of the unique and essential role DFAS plays in our department led to a DFAS career-broadening position on the staff. This individual not only schedules and hosts our DFAS speakers, he also single-handedly dispels many myths and misperceptions about DFAS each class. As the DFAS employee aptly demonstrates, our resident faculty members are the pointy end of the spear for student learning.

Many aspects of the PMCS student remain unchanged. Our target student is still GS-12 through GS15 and Major through Colonel. Most students are in our "target" audience; however, we select a few superior GS-11s and Captains to attend. Students today are energetic, inquisitive, and eager to expand their knowledge then return to their unit/organization to share what they've learned. They are no different than their predecessors in this area; however current student demographics are dramatically different.

Although the desire to learn and grow over the last several years has not changed, population demographics and student mix have changed. PMCS began in 1968 with virtually all military and all male students. By 1989 we were approximately 50 percent military and 70 percent male. Today, the class is approximately 80 percent civilian and 50 percent female. You'll notice our adjunct faculty also reflects this change. In 1989, we usually had less than five female adjunct faculty speakers each class. We had very few minority speakers. Just as in 1989, our adjunct faculty reflects our student population in terms of gender and ethnic diversity. Changed class (and faculty) demographics don't tell the entire story.

Prospective PMCS students are busier than ever. They're deploying more often. They work in organizations with fewer people assigned due to manpower cuts. They are increasingly single-parents or two income families. These differences place an added burden on students. Many must make long-term child care decisions before they attend PMCS and increasingly they attempt to "work their in-box" while attending the course. These changes are one reason we reduced the length of the course in 1992.

Another change is that we occasionally have an international student such as Bangladeshi Group Captain Mashiul Azam in class 02E. The Group Captain (Colonel to us Yanks) was a pilot with no financial background but his country selected him for a position of responsibility in their financial management arena. Now that's career broadening! We believe Group Captain Azam returned to Bangladesh better prepared to achieve his country's goals. We also learned a great deal from him. Like Group Captain Azam, our students take advantage of the PMCS experience by networking, exchanging views and ideas, and learning from peers. They are eager to put their education to use improving their organization and service or agency.

Many aspects of PMCS have changed since my initial PMCS tour ended in 1989. We've shortened the course to six weeks, enhanced the curriculum and added new faculty member requirements. We'll continue to change to meet the needs of the FM community. However, we have not, nor will we, change our most important concept...our mission to educate FM personnel to effectively and efficiently push resources to the commander and warfighter! We must do so in an ever-changing environment. At PMCS we use the tools of a robust curriculum, wonderful faculty and eager-to-learn students to produce DoDs financial leaders.