



SECRETARY OF WAR
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

FEB 27 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Aligning Senior Service College Opportunities with American Values

Our Professional Military Education (PME) institutions are among our most sacred and essential means to restore and maintain the warrior ethos within the DoW. It is imperative that our warfighter education system forges strategic senior leaders who are trained to think critically, free of bias and influence.

PME is a bedrock upon which we build lethal warfighters grounded in the founding principles that underpin American exceptionalism. To that end, our PME institutions must return to the fundamental mission of focusing our military leaders on core national security strategy issues. We must develop strategic thinkers through education grounded in the founding principles and documents of the republic, embracing peace through strength and American ideals, and focused on our national strategies and grounded in realism. We will no longer invest in institutions that fail to sharpen our leaders' warfighting capabilities or that undermine the very values they are sworn to defend.

The Department is strategically refocusing the education of its senior officers. Therefore, per my February 6, 2026 memorandum, "Rebuilding the Warrior Ethos in Professional Military Education," we are eliminating certain Senior Service College (SSC) Fellowship programs for the 2026-2027 academic year and beyond. I am also directing the compilation of a revised list of elite institutions offering equivalent programs to replace those eliminated.

This decisive change will ensure our leaders receive a more rigorous and relevant education to better prepare them for the complexities of modern warfare and return our Force to the original purpose of SSCs: the preparation of senior officers to be critical thinkers that can plan and integrate multi-domain, Joint operations at echelon and serve (and think) at the strategic level. SSC Fellowship candidates must demonstrate across their career the core competencies that define an SSC graduate, thereby affording them the further opportunity to contribute to the lethality of the Force through outside strategic-level engagement at educational and research institutions.

This policy applies to all DoW personnel starting with the 2026-2027 academic year. Any currently enrolled DoW personnel in the 2025-2026 academic cycle may complete their courses of study.

The Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness will lead execution of this directive and ensure full compliance across the Force. We must act with urgency and purpose to develop the leaders required to win our Nation's wars.

Attachments:
TAB A – Cancelled SSC Fellowships
TAB B – Potential New Partner Institutions



OSD001419-26/CMD002691-26

TAB

A

Cancelled Senior Service College (SSC) Fellowships

Institution Name	Military Students
Education Institutions	
1. Harvard University (MA)	21
2. Saint Louis University (MS)	8
3. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MA)	7
4. Tufts University (MA)	6
5. Georgetown University (DC)	6
6. Carnegie Mellon University (PA)	5
7. Brown University (RI)	4
8. Columbia University (NY)	3
9. Yale University (CT)	2
10. Middlebury College (VT)	1
11. Princeton University (NJ)	1
12. The George Washington University (DC)	1
13. College of William and Mary (VA)	1
International Institution	
14. Queen's University (Canada)	1
Non-Profit Institutions (Washington, DC)	
15. Center for Strategic and International Studies	4
16. New America Foundation	2
17. The Brookings Institution	2
18. Atlantic Council	2
19. Center for a New American Security	2
20. Council on Foreign Relations	2
21. The Henry L. Stimson Center	1
Senior Service College	
22. The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies West Space Scholars Program	11

93 SSC fellowships cancelled at 22 institutions

TAB
B

Realigning Senior Service College Fellowships: Potential New Partner Institutions

Institution Name
Senior Military Colleges
1. The Citadel Military College of South Carolina
2. University of North Georgia
3. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
DoW/USG Programs
4. Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies
5. William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies
6. Africa Center for Strategic Studies
Civilian Education Institutions
7. Liberty University
8. George Mason University
9. Pepperdine University
10. The University of Tennessee
11. University of Michigan
12. University of Nebraska
13. Iowa State University
14. University of North Carolina
15. Clemson University
16. Arizona State University
17. Baylor University
18. University of Florida
19. Regent University
20. Auburn University
21. Hillsdale College

These institutions meet the following criteria: intellectual freedom, minimal relationships with adversaries, minimal public expressions in opposition of the Department, and Graduate-level National Security, International Affairs, and/or Public Policy Programs.