

ELD

United States Naval Academy

The Center for
Experiential
Leadership
Development





The Center for ELD serves as the bridge between the Leadership, Education, & Development (LEAD) Division's curriculum and leadership experiences outside the classroom. ELD draws connections between behavioral science theory and experiential leadership practice.

2019-2020

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Class of 1977 Gettysburg Leadership Encounter

Two trips to the Gettysburg battlefield occur each year in June and December. This past summer, the Class of 2019 spent two days at Gettysburg College and on the battlefield, studying leadership principles and lessons from July 1863. Midshipmen leaders attended classes and break-out discussion sessions covering the leadership tenets of loyalty, standards, and action. The two-day retreat



enables networking and team-building through a cohesive network of peer support that fosters critical professional relationships within the Brigade of Midshipmen during the academic year.

All varsity team captains and commanders from the Brigade (company, battalion, regiment, and brigade) participate in this meaningful leadership encounter. Throughout each semester, the 1/C leaders attend follow-on monthly group meetings over a meal, facilitated by the GLE staff.

The discussions serve to keep the leaders energized on Gettysburg lessons learned, assisting them with solving leadership issues in Bancroft Hall and on varsity teams, and providing them with a regular opportunity to network with each other, solve problems, and build esprit-de-corps within the Brigade of Midshipmen.



“Gettysburg was an invaluable experience. As a team captain, I was exposed to the brilliant minds of some of my classmates and the facilitators, which allowed me to pick their brains for ideas and better ways for leading groups of people. It also allowed for bridging the gap between the leadership in Bancroft Hall and the leadership on varsity teams.”

-MIDN Natalie Irwin, Class of 2020

Outward Bound

Spring Break Expedition

Spring Break occurred in mid-March, with 18 midshipmen joining 18 military veterans once again for the fourth iteration of this annual expedition with the Baltimore-Chesapeake Bay Outward Bound School. Spending five days hiking the Appalachian Trail (Harpers Ferry area), the midshipmen, veterans, and their expert guides traversed roughly 30 miles, hitting cold weather, some snow, and lots of time to bond and discuss leadership and life lessons. Over the course of the week, the midshipmen and veterans bonded as a team to overcome the challenges of elevation, weather, and the need to work together to find the correct route, build nightly campsites, and keep themselves warm and well-fed.



ELD programs such as this give midshipmen a small-scale yet meaningful opportunity to put leadership into practice in a real-world stressful situation, applying leadership theories and concepts taught in the academic curriculum and Bancroft Hall.

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the USNA Outward Bound Spring Break Expedition. I very happily report that the Brigade is in better shape now than when I attended, and the quality of junior officers produced by our Alma Mater has improved. I very much enjoyed my discussions with the midshipmen on such things as Sea Trials, Capstone Projects, their summer training programs, and of course, these Experiential Leadership Development programs."

-Tim Kraft, Class of 1983



"Keep an open mind throughout the whole thing and try to live in the moment. Although you may get wet, tired and dirty, you'll be glad you made the most of your experience."

-MIDN Tanner Clemons, Class of 2020

Summer Block Expedition

A group of eight midshipmen participated in our second field-based Outward Bound leadership experience, complementing classroom leadership theory by allowing students to practice real-world decision making in austere, unpredictable, and dynamic wilderness environments. The two-week small-unit leadership expedition tested midshipmen's resolve in fostering effective teamwork in the wilderness, emphasizing character, leadership, and service. This transformative learning experience taught the midshipmen new technical skills, self-confidence, and a desire to make a difference in the community and back at USNA.

Vietnam LREC

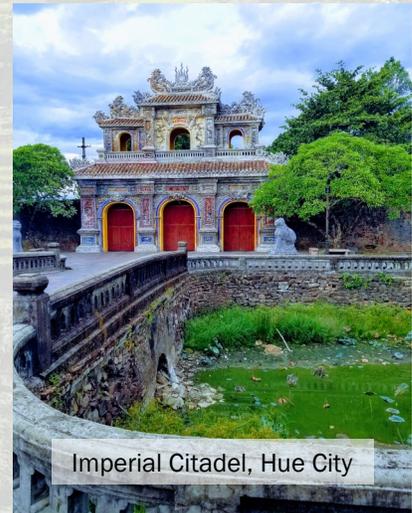
First Combined International Programs Office (IPO)-ELD Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture (LREC) Trip to Vietnam

In July and August, Col Maria “MJ” Pallotta and Capt Marko Stawnyczyk took eight midshipmen to Vietnam for 16 days of cultural immersion and battlefield study. Two days of culture and history classes at USNA preceded the trip, and everyone was required to read three books and watch the 2017 Burns-Novick ten-part documentary, *Vietnam*. As the first combined IPO-ELD LREC trip, the immersive experience provided select midshipmen an opportunity to interact with Vietnamese culture and the history of U.S. diplomatic and military involvement before, during, and after the Vietnam War. The experience helped to broaden understanding of cross-cultural dynamics within a conflict setting.

The group visited multiple important historical sites from the war, from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) in the south, through the central DMZ area, to Hanoi in the north. Battle sites included Hue City, Khe Sanh, the Cu Chi tunnels, a portion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, Hamburger Hill, Da Nang, and the Hoa Lo Prison (the “Hanoi Hilton”). Discussions included the cultural leadership aspects of hybrid and irregular combat environments and placing them in a proper historical context. Cultural immersion in the daily life of the Vietnamese at each location further exposed the mids to cross-cultural experiences within Asian sub-cultures, emphasizing the importance of honing and using these skills during their military careers. Check out their blog: vietnamlrec.com



The famous Dong Ha Bridge



Imperial Citadel, Hue City



In front of the former N. Vietnam Politburo



The Rockpile, Quang Tri Province

“So many unforgettable experiences in Vietnam! We enjoyed activities such as driving a boat on the Mekong River, crawling through the tunnels of Cu Chi, and making rice paper in the countryside on the outskirts of Hoi An.”

- MIDN Jake Rotzler, Class of 2021

The Network (NAWN)

The Network is an all-volunteer mentorship program designed to promote the retention of women in service. Through a variety of diverse experiences, the Network cultivates mentors, sponsors, and allies across gender with officers and alumni to equip midshipmen to navigate their careers as leaders. The Network garners participation from 400-500 midshipmen annually.

In February, the Network hosted its annual Military Life Symposium. The symposium offers diverse sessions on topics relevant to leading a life in uniform. Highlights from the 2019 symposium included the keynote speakers and Naval Academy alumni, Rear Admirals Yvette and



Keith Davids. Rear Admiral Yvette Davids is currently the Commander of Carrier Strike Group 11. Her husband, Rear Admiral Keith Davids, is the Director, White House Military Office. Together, they highlighted key insights into balancing personal and professional decisions to successfully navigate a career in service. In April, the Network also sent 50 Midshipmen to the Officer Women Leadership Symposium in Arlington, VA where they were joined by other midshipmen, cadets, officers, and senior enlisted from all services.



Offshore Sailing Training Squadron

Midshipmen participated in OSTs during all three summer training blocks in 2019. OSTs provides an experiential leadership opportunity for over 250 midshipmen through seamanship, navigation, and small unit leadership in the maritime environment. Upperclassmen serve as watch captains and navigators. 3/C midshipmen are assigned specific billets (e.g., Engineer, Supply Officer, and 1st LT). Skippers and executive officers (XOs) are required to complete the Offshore Personal Qualification Standard, which includes a series of leadership modules taught by the Leadership, Ethics & Law (LEL) Department faculty. Midshipmen undergo a crawl-walk-run phased approach to training, culminating in the return passage, during which the midshipmen run the boat, with the Skipper and XO serving in safety observer roles. This opportunity reinforces classroom professional courses

and applies them at sea in a dynamic environment. Ports of call during 2019 included Boston, MA, Bristol RI, Mystic, CT, Stamford, CT, Port Jefferson, NY, and Freeport, NY.



"I developed my leadership and was pushed out of my comfort zone. My decisions directly impacted the rest of the boat and the trip. I feel like I now have a better grasp on my own leadership and what I can improve on."

-MIDN Robert Leam, Class of 2020

Sisters Academy of New Jersey

With an 11-month extended day school year model, Sisters Academy (Asbury Park, NJ) centers on a way of life that provides support for at-risk pre-adolescent girls (grades 5-8) while enabling students to reach for bright futures using education and mentorship as their tools for success. The program offers two participating midshipmen professional training and education in experiential leadership via a combination of practical experience and guided reflection.



Midshipmen experience unique intellectual and leadership challenges in order to lead in the classroom, learn and reinforce current leadership and STEM theory and application, strengthen their creative problem solving skills, enhance their innovative thinking, chal-

lenge their communication skills, and hone their ability to adapt to dynamic situations. Midshipmen practice and reflect on the leadership lessons, concepts, and techniques of the leadership curriculum through their roles as mentors and role models.



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“Sisters Academy was one of the best experiences I could have had because of the increased understanding of young students and the opportunity to grow as a public speaker and leader.”

-MIDN Karolyn Batista, Class of 2022

St. Benedict's Prep

St. Benedict's Preparatory School is an all-male Benedictine Catholic secondary school in Newark, New Jersey serving approximately 600 students in grades 9-12. St. Benedict's provides two experiential leadership and mentoring opportunities for midshipmen each spring and summer.

In May, midshipmen mentor student leaders at St. Ben's as they take their teams of ninth graders on a five-day 55-mile journey on the Appalachian Trail. The hike is a rite of passage for all St. Ben's students, who are more used to the troubles of modern urban life than the trials offered by the AT. The mids play a critical role in executing this project. The hike is an experience which helps these young men assume increased responsibility within the school community.

During late summer, midshipmen work with the new cohort of the incoming freshmen class as they join the St. Benedict's community. The mids mentor the school's senior class as they welcome new students into the brotherhood of St. Benedict's. The training is similar in some respects to the experience of Plebe

Summer, occurring right before the academic year begins. Midshipmen spend the first week helping the staff and upper class leadership team prepare to run an indoctrination period for the incoming freshmen. The following weeks are spent assisting in the classrooms, mentoring the students, and executing a leadership development course.

Approximately 30 midshipmen per year participate in this program, with many returning to Newark year after year to continue their mentorship.





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