Hensler Named New NPS Provost

By Kenneth A. Stewart

The Naval Postgraduate School announced April 11, Dr. Douglas A. Hensler has been selected to serve as the university’s 14th provost.

“Serving as chief academic officer at NPS is a true honor and Janie and I are looking forward to our move and the challenges to come,” said Hensler. “NPS is a very unique graduate institution and the opportunity to serve in a role supporting our national security is one that we cherish.”

Hensler is an accomplished academic and industry leader with deep ties to both education and the global business community. He served on the Board of Directors of the Wichita Business Coalition for Health Care, the UK-based GSE Research advisory board, and several editorial boards. He also has a lengthy background with the Navy, and notes the experience should prove valuable in joining NPS.

“While in industry, I was involved with Navy nuclear programs supporting aircraft carriers, destroyers and submarines as well as a defense satellite launch vehicle,” said Hensler. “This preparation provides not only a familiarity with the Navy, but a deep-seated understanding of the importance of excellence in what we do at NPS.”

“The NPS family includes some of the greatest minds in the world that are being applied to keeping our nation safe and secure. The opportunity to work with these colleagues is not just an honor, it is also one that brings to bear the totality of my career.” – Dr. Douglas A. Hensler

Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus welcomed Hensler to the prestigious institution, and added that he looked forward to his leadership for NPS. “For more than a century, the Naval Postgraduate School has provided high-quality, relevant and unique advanced education and research opportunities that increase the combat effectiveness of the Naval Services, other Armed Forces of the U.S. and our partners, and enhance our national security,” said Mabus. “I appreciate Admiral Tighe’s leadership during this time of transition and welcome Dr. Hensler as we begin the next chapter in this storied institution’s history.”

Hensler comes to NPS from Wichita State University where he has served for the past five years as dean of the W. Frank Barton School of Business. “The NPS family includes some of the greatest minds in the world that are being applied to keeping our nation safe and secure. The opportunity to work with these colleagues is not just an honor, it is also one that brings to bear the totality of my career,” said Hensler.
Research is an important component of the NPS effort to provide relevant graduate education and support to increase the combat effectiveness of the United States Navy, the other services, and our allies and international partners.

Research is key because it provides faculty with the opportunity to integrate ongoing developments in a variety of areas that are crucial to understanding changes in the realm of national security writ large. Technological change, developments in the political and strategic setting, and scientific advances must be integrated into existing curricula to guarantee our students are prepared to capitalize on emerging opportunities and to meet future challenges.

Our research and education effort in the realm of homeland security and defense is a case in point. Created in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, and currently sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) first addressed the issue of intra-governmental relations that served as an impediment to an effective government response to the issue of transnational terrorism. The center’s in-resident graduate program and short courses that reached out to state and local government leaders explored best practices for developing a “national” response to transnational terrorism and improved incident response across various levels of government and across all types of organizations (police, fire, EMS, public health, transportation, Coast Guard) that played a part in securing the homeland.

Over time, the program evolved to take an “all-hazards” approach to homeland security. Disaster management, infrastructure protection and resilience, and the problem of domestic terrorism began to loom large in the research program and curriculum offered by CHDS. Emerging fields, such as social networking and “big data,” were also explored for their potential application in increasing public safety and reducing infrastructure vulnerability to catastrophic disruption. An emerging cadre of public officials, law enforcement officers, and related security and public health officials began to take shape, as CHDS alumni continued to interact using various electronic forums and reoccurring meetings to share best practices in the field of homeland security.

The advances fostered by CHDS were highlighted in the aftermath of the tragic events surrounding the 2013 Boston Marathon. Nearly 30 homeland security officials in the greater Boston area were graduates of CHDS programs, while nearly 200 officials had taken online courses.

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Professors in the program were also interested in how local, state and federal authorities were quick to exploit social media, a subject that had emerged as a critical issue, and a new avenue for building situational awareness. The fact that officials were sensitive to the compressed timelines that would ensue in the network-empowered hunt for the perpetrators helped to facilitate the quick containment of the bombers before they could attack additional targets.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, few of these capabilities, programs or concepts existed. Only the sustained efforts by students, faculty and sponsors created the knowledge, resources and insights needed to respond to what was a recognized threat — what appears to be “self-radicalization” of residents of the United States.

The lesson is clear. Today’s research will be found in tomorrow’s classroom and future efforts to preserve homeland security.
NPS OR Department Wins Prestigious INFORMS Award

By Amanda D. Stein

The Naval Postgraduate School’s Department of Operations Research (OR) was awarded the 2013 UPS George D. Smith Prize by the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) in a nod to the first OR degree program in the United States.

The distinguished award is presented by INFORMS to an institution that demonstrates the “effective and innovative preparation of students to be good practitioners of operations research, management science or analytics.” NPS’ selection was announced at the INFORMS 2013 Franz Edelman Awards Gala on April 8 in San Antonio, Texas.

“By far, the students make the department. They are smart, mature, and hard-working,” said OR Assistant Professor Michael Atkinson, who has taught decision theory and computational methods at NPS. “Most of all they bring operational insight and experience that students of other institutions cannot match.”

Dell noted that the purpose of acknowledging the best practices of exemplary OR programs around the world is to help guide other universities with new or growing operations research departments. While universities can’t necessarily change the student population, which, at NPS, is largely U.S. and international military, there are other factors that can be emulated. Applied research, for example, is a cornerstone of NPS’ OR academics.

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“This is an honor to be recognized as an exceptional program. Certainly what we strive to do is produce exceptional practitioners of operations research who graduate from our program and go on to make a difference in their militaries, both in the U.S. as well as around the world,” explained NPS OR department Chairman, Dr. Rob Dell. “The idea behind the prize is to ensure that the best practices for universities are acknowledged and an opportunity to share best practices provided so other programs can learn and improve.”

As part of the nomination packet, the NPS OR department highlighted some of the best practices that make the university’s program successful.

While the exceptional faculty are critical to the success of the program, there is a strong consensus among the OR faculty that the caliber of students who come through the program sets it apart from other academic institutions. The students who enter the OR department already have an idea of some of the challenges facing the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines around the world. This understanding often translates into applicable research through their thesis work.

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As a department, we focus on our students’ operations research competency because in their line of business, lives depend on ‘getting it right’ like in no other business,” read the team’s nomination packet. “The problems they are expected to solve are not academic exercises, nor is the cost of getting it wrong restricted to just the corporate bottom line.”

The Smith Prize, now in its second year and awarded by INFORMS, is named in honor of the late Chief Executive Officer for UPS, a strong supporter of operations research. The award is intended to support the collaboration between industry and academia to further OR practices.

Members of the NPS Department of Operations Research accept the INFORMS 2013 George D. Smith Prize, April 8. From left, NPS Military Faculty Cmdr. Walt DeGrange, UPS Global Vice President for Engineering Randy Shastick, NPS OR Chairman Dr. Rob Dell, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Resource Management Branch Head Cmdr. Cory Dixon, and INFORMS Chair of Practice and Smith Prize judge Russell P. Labe.
Department of Systems Engineering Ranked 21st in the Nation

By Kenneth A. Stewart

U.S. News and World Report recently released its annual rankings of the top graduate schools in the country, and the Naval Postgraduate School’s own Department of Systems Engineering ranked 21st on the list, standing alongside prestigious programs from universities like Georgia Tech, Stanford, UC Berkeley, Virginia Tech and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Notably, NPS’ systems engineering (SE) program was ranked higher than several older and more established national programs, placing the university’s youthful SE curriculum amongst the strongest in the nation. While systems engineering is not new to the Navy, the current program received its ABET accreditation just three years ago in 2010.

“Systems engineering started as a department in 2002, and we first began educating students in 2006. We went from no resident students in 2005 to over 100 students today … the growth has been phenomenal,” said NPS Department of Systems Engineering Chair, Dr. Clifford Whitcomb.

“Our current ranking just shows that we are meeting a need that the Department of Defense has. We have been able to adapt to that need with incredible growth while maintaining a quality, accredited program at the same time,” continued Whitcomb.

As the DOD’s need for complex technological systems has grown, so too has the need for qualified engineers that are able to bring together disparate systems. This need has made NPS’ SE program a high priority, with graduate students working on everything from shipboard naval systems to missile defense and space programs.

“This national recognition, coupled with our recent ABET accreditation, assures our sponsors and students that the SE department provides extremely high-quality education and research to meet the needs of the Navy and other services. For a department only 11 years old, this ranking is a remarkable achievement, especially to be in the top 25 in the country,” noted systems engineering Professor, Dr. Dave Olwell. “Our dedicated faculty, students and partners can be justifiably proud of their contributions that made this success possible.”

Graduates from the NPS SE program frequently move on to positions within the Navy’s systems commands, the U.S. Army Missile Defense Agency, and the Air Force’s space and missile commands, Whitcomb notes.

“We developed an SE program that would meet our sponsors’ needs to develop competent systems engineers for their programs … We have really managed to meet and exceed their demands to create qualified engineers with backgrounds in systems engineering,” Whitcomb said.

NPS Marines Develop Mentoring Program with Local School

Marine Corps students at NPS are giving back to the local community through a Marine led student-mentoring program. The Motivating Others Through Outreach (MOTO) program is the brainchild of Marine Corps Capt. Kimberly Julka whom, with her team of fellow Marines, are partnering with Central Coast High School to reach out to local teens.

MOTO members received specialized training from University of Phoenix Professor Sheila Babendir before meeting with students. Babendir offered insights into the complexities of working with at-risk youth and trained the Marines to build and sustain healthy student-mentor relationships.

“The MOTO program is a brilliant way to connect military officers, who have already been successful in life, with a group of teens that need help to find the motivation, self-respect and self-confidence necessary to grow into productive adults,” said Babendir. “The MOTO program creates a union between military officers and youth who have a high degree of need for extra time and attention.”
EMBA Class Includes FBI Contingent

By MCSN Danica M. Sirmans

Following last year’s NASA student cohort, the NPS Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program is again proving the degree applies across a broad spectrum of federal agencies. When this year’s class gathered for an on campus orientation in March, the current group included yet another contingent from outside the DOD, this time from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

“Comingling with people from Department of Defense has shone a different light on problems that I don’t necessarily come across working for the Department of Justice,” said Rachelle Salvo, a budget analyst. “It’s interesting to learn about what they experience, and to share the things that we experience, while comparing how those things match up.”

The EMBA program takes a blended approach to student learning, and emphasizes the values of working in groups. Officials note that the team dynamics, with groups of up to five or six individuals based out of the same geographical area, enrich the learning experience.

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“Robots in the Roses is an annual event that allows faculty and students to showcase their research in unmanned systems…and present them to the broader community,” said CRUSER Director, retired Navy Capt. Jeff Kline. “It’s on one hand very useful for the students to come out and see the variety of the things that are going on, but it’s also very good for the faculty to see what other faculty members are doing in order to find opportunities for collaboration.”

CRUSER Director for Research and Education, Dr. Timothy Chung was recently awarded the prestigious Hamming Award for his interdisciplinary work in robotics and technology. He too sees the annual event as an opportunity for collaboration and exploration.

“While CRUSER stands for Consortium for Robotics and Unmanned Systems Education and Research, in general terms, it’s an environment or forum for us to foster collaboration in the areas of unmanned systems and robotics,” said Chung.
Focus On … Making Research Happen

A Monthly Look at Names and Faces on Campus

Behind every successful department on campus is a team working tirelessly to see that students and faculty receive the funding and support they need. Fortunately for the NPS Common Operational Research Environment (CORE) Lab and the Rapid Reaction Technology Office (RRTO), longtime NPS staff member Karen Flaherty doesn’t shy from hard work.

Flaherty joined NPS in 1994 in support of the Defense Health Resources center and witnessed its transformation into what is now the Institute for Defense Education and Analysis. In 2003 she was recruited to assist with the master’s program for the Center for Homeland Defense and Security. In 2007, she took on two roles in support of the RRTO and the CORE Lab.

“It’s given me a chance to explore my abilities and to push my own boundaries in a way to show me what can be accomplished,” Flaherty said. “You never know what the day’s going to bring and generally, if you’re lucky, you learn something new everyday.”

As a research associate, Flaherty’s role with the RRTO is to support the proposal process in regards to funds aiding special operations research and NPS graduate school projects.

In addition, Flaherty provides help to students and faculty in need of aid for thesis and research work via the CORE Lab. The CORE Lab provides advanced methodologies and social network analysis tools to study dark networks. The lab offers training and data analysis on the tools they provide.

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Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mark Ferguson fields a student’s question during an all-hands call in the university’s King Auditorium, April 25. An NPS computer science graduate, Ferguson was on campus to participate in the university’s Board of Advisors subcommittee meeting. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Grant P. Ammon)

Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO) Adm. Mark Ferguson addressed Naval Postgraduate School students, faculty and staff during an all-hands call on the university campus, April 25.

During the visit, Ferguson, a graduate of NPS’ computer science program, took part in the semi-annual meeting of the university’s Board of Advisors subcommittee, and shared his vision for the Navy with members of the NPS community.

Expanding on his experience working with the Navy’s budget, Ferguson noted that in spite of the current ambiguity surrounding the nation’s fiscal outlook, the demand for forward operating naval forces is at an all-time high.

“In spite of the fiscal uncertainty, there has never been greater demand for our Navy and Marine Corps forces around the globe. It is unprecedented,” he said. “With our 283 ships in the Navy, more than half are underway on any given day.”

Detailing his own experiences while studying at NPS, Ferguson shared with students the relevance graduate education has had on his military career.

“When I came here, it was my first exposure to officers from foreign countries,” said Ferguson. “It was my first exposure to officers from other services, and with solving complex technical problems. It exposed me to the most advanced research and innovative thinking in industry, as well as within the Department of Defense.

“My experience here set me on a lifelong course with a love of learning,” continued Ferguson. “That and the exposure to innovation are the critical components of what this school generates.”

Coupling academic rigor with operational experience develops dynamic officers, capable of solving some of the military’s most complex problems. According to Ferguson, this is exactly what NPS instills in its students.

“We see this next century as a maritime century,” said Ferguson. “A century that will demand our naval forces to be available as the nation’s emergency response force. We’re agile, deployable and able to operate forward without a permission slip. We have to be where it matters, when it matters and we’re positioning the force in order to do that.”

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Vice Chief Ferguson Holds All-Hands Call at NPS

By MC1 Grant P. Ammon

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Any Day at NPS ...

There are two events I would like to bring to the attention of the student body. First, on June 22, the Veterans Transition Center of Monterey County will be holding a BBQ to help raise funds for our veterans. Tickets are $30 and it will be a great event to not only eat, but help out our fellow service members! If you’re interested please contact me, and there will also be further information posted soon.

On June 1, NPS will be hosting the Battle of Midway dinner in the Barbara McNitt Ballroom to remember the heroic actions of our service members during that battle in the summer of 1942. The dinner is led by the President’s Student Council with support from the Monterey Bay Commandery of the Naval Order, the Monterey Peninsula Council of the Navy League, and the Monterey Chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association.

The Honorary President of the Mess will be our Interim President, Rear Adm. Jan E. Tighe, and Commanding Officer, Naval Support Activity Monterey Capt. Gerral David, will be the President of the Mess with “support” from “Mr. Vice” fellow student Marine Corps Capt. Milad Afkham. The guest speaker is Dean Emeritus retired Navy Capt. Wayne P. Hughes, Jr. This event will be a formal dining-out and the grog bowl will be present! Ticket sales end May 22. Purchase tickets at www.nps.edu/midway or at the quarterdeck ITT office. As always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at klyost@nps.edu.
On Campus in the Next Month

**May 9**
Dr. Sudharman K. Jayaweera  
Associate Professor, University of New Mexico  
Guest Lecture  
POC Dr. Murali Tummala, (831) 656-2645

**May 15**
CRUSER Monthly Meeting  
Root Hall, Room 242  
POC Lisa Trawick, (831) 656-2490

**May 22**
Dr. Edward Moses  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory  
Defense Energy Speakers Seminar  
POC Gian Duri, (831) 656-3102

**June 1**
Battle of Midway Dinner  
Barbara McNitt Ballroom  
POC Student Council Chairman, (330) 715-7407

**Historical Highlights**
In 1967, NPS student engineers Robert Ediin and Jay Lamb assumed a place among other engineering scholars at a conference of the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) held at Michigan State University.

Professor Rudy Panholzer, left, now chair of today’s Space Systems Academic Group, was then a new faculty member in the Department of Electrical Engineering at NPS. The presence of Naval Officers at ASEE spoke eloquently for NPS as a premier source of professional engineering education, and the chance to interact with colleagues formed an important component of professionalism for student researchers, he recalls. NPS’ program offered “hardware-in-the-loop education,” he says, “hands-on” engineering that gave students the chance to apply real-work practice to innovation in the field, and still does.

Students Ediin and Lamb might be interested to know that their work remains “in print” today, as a part of Calhoun, the NPS Institutional Archive. It has been downloaded 21 times so far this year.  

*Historical Highlights are provided by the Dudley Knox Library.*