Professor Leigh Caraher, director of Applied Communication and Learning Lab, U.S. Army War College, participates as one of 29 professional military education faculty judges for SECDEF and CJCS Essay Competitions, hosted by NDU Press, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, May 12, 2023 (NDU Press)

Enhancing National Security
Increasing Female Faculty in Professional Military Education Would Strengthen U.S. Security

By Magdalena Bogacz

The relationship between national security and professional military education (PME) is long-standing. Traditionally, PME institutions

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were established to do two things: to better prepare future leaders of the United States and select allies to overcome multidimensional threats to the apparent well-being of their people, and to sharpen the U.S. military's competitive edge. Both functions are essential to national security. Hence, PME institutions play an integral role in preserving the Nation's physical integrity and territory as well as protecting and defending its citizens.

However, as some scholars have noted, PME experiences a persistent problem: "the counterproductive 'sea of sameness.'"[1] PME is dominated by men, just like the military and majority of academia. In fact, women, on average,

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occupy only 10 percent to 15 percent of all faculty positions at Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force PME institutions.[2] Gender disparity is even more pronounced at the senior Service schools. This is to say that there is a slightly higher percentage of women faculty in primary developmental education schools, but the number decreases as the level of education increases, with the fewest women faculty in senior developmental education schools such as the Air War College or Army War College.

Gender gaps in and of themselves are not problematic; there is nothing intrinsically wrong with having an unequal gender distribution among different professions. In fact, some researchers argue that it is in our nature to have different interests and thus pursue different occupations and domains of life.[3] This view, called the gendered-interests hypothesis, could potentially explain away the root cause of gender imbalance in some academic disciplines. Hence, although female underrepresentation in PME is not necessarily a sign of gender discrimination, gender bias, or stereotype threat, and might in fact have come about by women's autonomous decisions to stay away from the field, it is important to consider the implications of such severe gender imbalance for the quality of education that these institutions provide as well as the subjective conditions in which they produce new knowledge.

The collective intelligence of any academic community comes from heterogeneity of its members—from exposure to the free exchange of ideas, mix of personalities, disagreements, and variance in demographic and social backgrounds. Moreover, diversity of thoughts and perspectives could, in principle, provide more creative and objective working environments.[4] Thus, PME with such a small percentage of women instructors is at best limited in scope, because it eliminates a variety of different perspectives, and at worst unreliable, because it produces limited knowledge. There might be truths to which national security will have no access unless PME increases the diversity of instructors' experiences.

For example, female academics make it easier to understand women in war, female peacekeepers, violence against women, and women who are political leaders, as well as the perspectives of the U.S. allies and partners that have a "feminist foreign policy."[5] Moreover, female academics would contribute to a better understanding of peace negotiations and peace agreements; "women's perspectives and participation, which are vital to achieving and sustaining peace, are too often overlooked in conflict resolution, prevention, and relief and recovery efforts."[6] There is an established and robust correlation between peace agreements signed by female delegates and durable peace.[7] In fact, United Nations data from the analysis of 40 peace processes since the end of the Cold War shows that "in cases where women were able to exercise a significant influence on the negotiation process, there was a much higher chance that an agreement would be reached than when women's groups exercised weak or no influence."[8] Moreover, women's participation in a peace agreement, in and of itself, increases the probability of that agreement's lasting at least 2 years by 20 percent and lasting 15 years by 35 percent.[9] Hence, without an increased number of female academics, knowledge discovery and knowledge building, as they relate to peace, negotiations, and leadership, will remain impaired.

Advancing inclusion of women in PME as it pertains to faculty representation will better equip both military and national security to adapt to a socially and demographically changing world. The remainder of this article explicates military homogeneity, including the gender gap in PME, then explains the significance of women's underrepresentation in PME. Next, it makes the case that increasing participation of women in PME would strengthen national security by strengthening the knowledge produced and providing a more comprehensive picture of the security environment. Finally, it discusses barriers to faculty diversity and provides an evidence-based list of hiring and retention practices that would help ensure that the best women apply to and stay at PME institutions.

Military Homogeneity and Lack of Faculty Diversity in PME

Although women have played a role in national security since the Revolutionary War, Brenda Oppermann refers to the process of their integration in the U.S. military as a "perennial struggle."[10] Undeniably, progress has been made. Oppermann lists five events that played a critical role in advancing women's inclusion in military operations:

- passing the Women's Armed Services Integration Act
- passing Public Law 94-106, which allowed women to attend service academies
- repealing the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (often referred to as the Combat Exclusion Rule)
- conducting combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan
- implementing the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

Oppermann suggests that the first three events helped with integrating women into the Armed Forces, whereas the last two highlighted the importance of gender perspective, which turned out to be indispensable in military operations.

Public Law 94-106, authorizing women to attend Service academies, passed in 1975. Since then, women's admission to military academies has meant that they are able to receive the most prestigious education alongside their male counterparts and, more important, can finally assume military leadership positions in significant numbers. A similar evolution affected female academics. However, although Public Law 94-106 passed 48 years ago, women continue to be underrepresented in a vast majority of PME institutions. For example, recent demographics data indicates that 14,536 civilians work for the Air Education and Training Command (AETC), one of the nine major commands of the Air Force (USAF) reporting directly to USAF Headquarters. The primary mission of AETC, which was established in 1993 by combining Air Training Command and

Air University, is to "recruit, train, and educate Airmen to deliver air power for America."[11] Among the civilians working for AETC, 69 percent are men, and 70 percent of these men are Caucasian. This means that about 4,506 female civilians work for AETC. Moreover, less than 2 percent of the civilian workforce have a doctorate, and only about 20 percent have a master's degree.[12] Since most faculty positions at PME institutions require a master's degree (but strongly prefer a Ph.D.), it can be reasonably inferred, based on data from various PME institutions, that the percentage of civilian female faculty with a Ph.D. at AETC is significantly less than 15 percent.[13]

In the past, almost 10 percent of academics at the Naval War College were women, but this number has steadily declined, with 9 women having left since 2021. Of the 99 faculty and staff members at Marine Corps University, only 15 are women. Moreover, the numbers fluctuate depending on the level of education. For instance, primary education schools, such as the Squadron Officer School at Air University, generally have more women faculty than senior-level education schools. The Air Command and Staff College currently has 105 faculty members, 11 of whom are women, while Air War College has only 3.[14]

The situation of women in PME is reflective of academia as a whole. Numerous studies demonstrate that women have been underrepresented, underrated, and underrewarded in most academic disciplines for decades.[15] Some fields, however, are more gender-imbalanced than others. For instance, the extreme underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields and occupations is well documented.[16] Such gender disparities permeate academia and labor markets, as shown by various measures, from the number of students enrolled in undergraduate courses and the number of students earning degrees to the number of full-time faculty members and earning gaps.

Although significant progress has been made in terms of the visibility and advancement of women in some academic fields, a severe gender imbalance persists in others.[17] PME is one of the sectors that continue to have a large gender gap. As a result, women's contributions to PME academics and scholarship are likely similar in scale to those of the initial wave of women entering colleges and universities about three decades ago.

Significance of Women's Underrepresentation in PME. It is important to examine the gender gap in PME for a variety of reasons. As a result of gender inequity in the field, women and their scholarship are not fairly represented. Although women constitute a little over half of the total population of the United States, "they do not occupy half of all full-time university faculty positions, publish half of all academic journal articles, or constitute half of the highest social status members of academia."[18]

Fields experiencing severe gender imbalance have been equated to a microcosm of the larger U.S. society, in which hierarchies arise from systemic discriminatory practices.[19] If this is true, women's underrepresentation in PME may be a result of systemic gender discrimination. And if so, then advancing inclusion of women as PME faculty is a matter of gender equality and fairness of organizational practices.

Nevertheless, women are not the only casualty of the gender gap in PME. The entire sector of military education also suffers negative ramifications. The lack of gender parity across PME programs and academic departments affects the way in which PME is executed nationwide. Knowledge produced under limited conditions (such as a lack of heterogeneity of thought or diversity of experiences) is conceivably less reliable than knowledge produced in a more inclusive and comprehensive environment. In addition, a field that is potentially influenced by implicit bias, stereotype threat, and gender discrimination may suffer from subjectiveness and thus be inclined to promote idiosyncratic ideas.[20] Finally, the relative lack of female faculty (and by extension, of their gender perspective) impairs adaptation to a changing world; today's knowledge-based economies require more comprehensive pictures of security environments, which cannot be generated without women's perspectives. An understanding of the asymmetry of powers in patriarchal societies, gender prejudice and discrimination, feminist foreign policies, women in war, and women in the military is significantly diminished without the participation of female academics. Hence, the gender gap in PME may be a contributing factor to weakened national security.[21] Therefore, it is necessary to move toward more gender-balanced faculty distribution for three significant reasons: fairness of organizational practices, the quality of PME, and enhanced national security.

Enhancing National Security by Increasing the Number of Women Faculty in PME. In their 2020 document titled *Developing Today's Joint Officers for Tomorrow's Ways of War*, the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented their new vision and guidance for PME.[22] They called on education leaders to implement fundamental changes, where appropriate, to achieve intellectual overmatch against adversaries. The rapidly evolving security environment, the Joint Chiefs continued, requires changes in the character and conduct of warfare: "Our vision is for a fully aligned PME and talent management system that identifies, develops, and utilizes strategically minded, critically thinking, and creative joint warfighters skilled in the art of war and the practical and ethical application of lethal military power."[23] This vision requires that our reimagined PME programs should rely more on innovation, creativity, original thought, and cutting-edge research to keep up with globalization, the return of Great Power competition, and the constantly changing character of war.

The dynamic and globally integrated environment requires a new and all-encompassing approach to teaching and learning. Such a new approach should, in principle, provide a more comprehensive learning experience and thus generate more comprehensive knowledge about the security environment. One way to generate a competent and exhaustive teaching and learning environment is by bringing in diverse talent. Educators

For first time in history of West Point, four current members of West Point faculty, from left, Colonels Julia Wilson, Kate Conkey, Julia Coxen, and Katie Matthew, have both commanded an Army battalion and earned a Ph.D., U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, March 27, 2023 (U.S. Army/Elizabeth Woodruff)

are supposed to challenge students, and a nondiverse faculty has less of a chance of challenging students. Moreover, by including more female voices, PME would increase its chances of gathering, assessing, analyzing, evaluating, and disseminating information in a more inclusive, global, and complete fashion.

Therefore, uneven gender distribution among PME faculty has negative effects on national security. Only by equally engaging women and men at the faculty level can we hope to satisfy the Joint Chiefs' wish to "maintain our competitive advantage and successfully prepare for emerging ways of war our Nation could face."[24] Advancing inclusion of women in PME is no longer optional. There are truths to which national security could have no access unless PME promoted female scholarship. Hence, diversifying faculty would deliver a blend of academic excellence, multidisciplinary expertise, and a more comprehensive picture of the security environment.[25]

Barriers to Faculty Diversity. In the past few decades, many colleges and universities have embarked on a journey to increase historically underrepresented minorities and women on their faculties. As a result, much has been published on best practices for improving faculty diversity in terms of recruitment and retention.[26] Yet most institutions remain homogenous, and men still assume disproportionately more academic leadership positions than their female counterparts.

There are complex hurdles to faculty diversity. For instance, several scholars have noted five important barriers:

- the "pipeline" challenge
- outdated faculty recruitment and retention practices
- faculty diversity myths that abound in higher education
- the decentralized administrative culture of the academy
- the view that faculty diversity is incompatible with academic excellence.[27]

In terms of the gender gap among faculty, I would add two more obstacles that specifically impede women's progress in academia: historical barriers that kept women away from education for centuries, and current challenges that women face in academia, such as gender discrimination, gender bias, and stereotype threat. To overcome these challenges and increase the number of female faculty at PME institutions, our efforts should focus equally on hiring and retention practices. We need to search for, onboard, and keep the best possible women faculty members by updating our hiring and retention practices and creating an organizational culture and day-to-day work environment that will make women want to come to and stay at PME schools.

Richard Clark and Fred Estes have identified three influences responsible for organizational goal achievement: knowledge, motivation, and organizational resources.[28] According to these authors, organizational performance goals can be analyzed in terms of gaps. Gap analysis delineates an organization's performance goals and then determines gaps between the organization's current and desired achievement of those goals. Hence, to meet the goal of more gender-balanced

Brigadier General Linell A. Letendre, Dean of Faculty, delivers remarks to Class of 2022 at Graduation Ceremony at Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 25, 2022 (U.S. Air Force/Justin R. Pacheco)

faculty distribution, PME hiring committees require appropriate knowledge, motivation, and organizational resources.

Lack of knowledge and skills constitutes one of the three major causes of performance gaps. To be effective, organizations and performers need to know what their performance goals are and how to achieve them. Because people are frequently unaware of their own lack of knowledge and skills, it is important for them to be able to reflect on their potential knowledge and skills gaps and actively work toward closing them before, or while, attempting to accomplish their goals. Thus, PME hiring committees need to know about gender gaps in PME as well as understand historical barriers that have kept women from entering PME. They also need to possess adequate skills to successfully implement diversity-oriented hiring and retention practices, all while actively reflecting on their own gender biases.[29]

In addition to knowledge, another key influence on performance is *motivation*, defined as "the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained."[30] This definition suggests that motivation can be measured by three factors: active choice to pursue a given action, degree of involvement, and persistence.[31] Motivation is innately cultural: "We develop motivational beliefs from others with whom we interact in the variety of social contexts in the ecological niches we inhabit."[32] Thus, motivation is context-specific and depends on the dynamic interplay of internal (beliefs and perceptions) and external (sociocultural and organizational) factors. PME hiring committees need to be self-motivated to reach the goal of hiring more women faculty. Hiring committee members must recognize diversity as important and valuable in and of itself. In addition, they should feel confident in their abilities to implement the necessary measures, such as gender-equitable hiring practices, to successfully reach organizational goals. Confidence in one's ability to reach a certain goal has been called self-efficacy, and it can be individual or collective.[33] I suggest that hiring committee members require both individual and team confidence in possessing necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their recruiting duties correctly and efficiently.

Organizational influences are the final performance factor. Organizational culture and resources can be either barriers to or assets in reaching complex organizational goals. Researchers have divided organizational influences into two categories: cultural models and cultural settings.[34] *Cultural models* are an organization's shared beliefs and values that define individuals' attitudes and judgments, whereas *cultural settings* are manifestations of cultural models, such as policies, practices, resources, and people. The two are intertwined; organizational culture is a product of interactions between people and their work environment.[35] For those reasons, PME institutions should work toward developing a welcoming climate that is safe and supportive of women; the degree of success in doing so will affect the degree of their success in attracting and retaining more diverse faculty candidates. Consequently, to help hiring committees reach the goal of diversifying faculty in terms of gender, PME institutions should prioritize organizational change by promoting a culture of inclusivity. One method of doing so involves having effective role models in leadership positions, who set high expectations regarding faculty diversity and provide

top-down support, such as effective hiring infrastructure, financial resources, and professional development opportunities for hiring committees' members.

Promising Practices for Increasing Female Faculty in PME

High-performing organizations have been defined as "organizations which are highly responsive to the customer, bring value to all stakeholders (employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders etc.); continuously improvise their processes, products and give better financial results on consistent basis in comparison to their competitors."[36] Analysis of this definition provides us with a few key characteristics of high-performing organizations: employees with a high level of individual initiative, high productivity and innovation, aligned performance goals, and effective leadership.[37] To translate these key characteristics to a PME setting means understanding PME in terms of its core values. The Joint Chiefs' new vision for PME encourages educational leaders to transform our current system: "The profound and rapidly changing character of war and conflict in the 21st century compels us to transform our leader development to maintain our competitive advantage and successfully prepare for the emerging ways of war our Nation could face."[38] If PME's purpose is to produce the strong and ethical leaders needed by the Nation, then PME's goals must align with national security goals. And developing adaptive and effective joint warfighters, and thus enhancing the security environment, is possible only if PME itself adapts to the fast-changing world. We must tackle emerging intellectual requirements to continue having a strategic military advantage over our adversaries. As the Joint Chiefs put it, "We must consistently prioritize critical and creative thinking, continuous learning and professional development, and the pursuit of transregional and cross-domain excellence in the development and assignment of joint warfighters."[39]

To achieve this blend of excellence and cross-domain expertise, PME needs to hire more women. What follows is a short list of evidence-based gender-equitable hiring and retention practices derived from my earlier work. These faculty recruitment and retention strategies have been shown to be promising in attracting, hiring, and keeping a more diverse pool of faculty.

Research on how to close the gender gap in academic fields that have historically excluded women from participation has found that there are several promising practices that can increase the number of women who apply to and choose to stay in academic departments that are dominated by men.[40] Hiring best practices include use of intentional and diversity-oriented language in job advertisements, deliberate efforts to recruit broadly and advertise inclusivity and diversity, and spousal hiring. The best retention practices comprise a shared commitment to achieving diversity of views, backgrounds, and experiences and creating a family-friendly environment.

PME's ability to hire the best female candidates would increase if more time and effort were invested in using intentional and diversity-oriented language in job advertisements. Each position description should be crafted with language that appeals to underrepresented populations and should contain a note on PME's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion efforts. Moreover, PME should seek candidates who work between different areas and create bridges to other disciplines; interdisciplinary study in and of itself promotes diversity of thought and research. Furthermore, PME should put deliberate effort into recruiting women broadly. Job postings should be sent to often overlooked places of recruitment that are known to have large numbers of qualified women candidates. Ultimately, PME should try to share job postings with as many candidates as possible to ensure that they reach nonstandard channels of recruitment and increase the chance of attracting historically marginalized populations. Diversifying a pool of initial candidates is important; it increases the chance of getting the best woman for the job. And finally, to hire more women, PME should consider offering spousal hiring. Statistically, women who belong to the academy are more likely to be partnered with another academic than their male counterparts.[41] Institutions that offer spousal hiring as part of their gender-equitable hiring practices are more likely to attract women applicants.

In terms of retention, two practices in particular have proved effective.[42] The first is a shared commitment to achieving diversity in views, backgrounds, and experiences. PME's organizational culture should insist on working toward making women feel equal to their male counterparts. Creating a culture that is welcoming and safe for women is one of the best methods to retain them in the sector. Women and their viewpoints need to be given the same amount of respect and attention as we see PME giving men and their ideas. Only with equal acknowledgment will women stop feeling like the other, the outsider, the second-class-citizen faculty. Besides committing to a culture that actively addresses historical exclusion of women, PME should focus on showcasing family friendliness. This organizational culture feature is especially important for retaining women for the long term. Female academics' careers are disproportionally affected by childbearing and childcare. PME may need to consider special accommodations to level the playing field between female faculty and their male counterparts, such as flexible schedules and a gender-neutral parental leave policy.

This article argues that to enhance national security, PME must focus on hiring and retaining more female faculty. The status of our nation's security depends largely on the status of women in PME. Women provide diversity of thought that is otherwise unachievable; the gender perspective that female faculty provide is critical in developing our joint warfighters for tomorrow's ways of war. As a result, to enhance national security, we must focus on broadening our educational perspectives by recruiting the best female academics. Without increasing the number of women in PME, the United States is failing to maximize its potential success in national security. **JFQ**

Notes

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