

## Commander's Guidance for Senior Leader Ethics Education

### **EXPLORATION TOPIC: GUARDING THE ARMY ETHIC**

The intent for this module, *Guarding the Army Ethic*, is to provide a platform of study and engagement with peers that will enhance an Army professional's understanding of a courageous communication environment within the Army. Both leaders and followers are constantly assessed by what they do and do not do as demonstrated in their behaviors and actions. How they communicate in our Army Culture and in all Civil-Military relations highlights the importance of a shared understanding of values and behavior. Army Values and behavior consistent with the Army Ethic are critical to providing the honorable service that the American people expect. They are equally important to the stewardship of the Profession's personnel and resources, and in developing and maintaining trust and mutual respect throughout the Army, the American public, and their elected officials.

In providing insight into this communication, this module recommends an "analysis of both the Ethic and candor (the quality of being open, sincere, and honest) and the environments in which Army professionals operate (internal to the Army and in Civil-Military relations). At the senior leader level, leaders help shape and define the culture of the Army, the direction of cultural change, and organizational climate.

The first area for investigation is the Army's essential characteristic of Trust and its importance in all relationships. What is candor and how does it apply to communication in these relationships? Does candor alone promote trust? Is candor related to living the Army Values? If so, how? If not, why not? Should candor be an Army Value? Can a leader promote candor in peers and subordinates? How?

The second area for investigation includes ethical and safe climates. Do these climates promote candor and trust? What conditions are necessary for staff and subordinates to voice opinions – supporting or dissenting – in a culture of authority and hierarchy? What are the conditions, resources and processes that help build moral clarity and strength? What is the value of the Army Ethic, espoused values, and artifacts? How do we make decisions that are ethical, efficient and effective? How do we, as Stewards of the Army Profession, pass best practices on to junior leaders?

The third area for investigation examines the Army Ethic as the azimuth and measurement of our Profession. What is the value of the Army Ethic, espoused values, and artifacts? How do we make decisions that are ethical, efficient and effective? How do we, as Stewards of the Army Profession, pass best practices on to junior leaders? How does the concept of non-tolerance fit into Army Culture?

The fourth area for investigation looks at the specific roles for Senior leaders during Civil-Military relations, joint operations, communication with elected officials, and communication with the public and the importance of trust coupled with the necessity of candor. How can leaders gain those skills? Strategic leaders are the ultimate representatives of the organization and its cause and purpose. Not only do they represent the organization but also as the top leaders for the Nation's military, they serve as champions, diplomats, and ambassadors for the country. Due to their elevated level of responsibilities and visibility, strategic leaders are held to higher expectations and receive increased scrutiny for both successes and failures in ethical decisions. How do senior leaders find the balance between advising with disciplined candor and being willingly subordinate to, and a servant of, the American people through their elected and appointed civilian authorities? What negotiation skills are necessary to navigate the various relationships involved?

Together with the foundational modules, *The Army Profession as Our Unifying Purpose and Context* and *Investing in Character Development*, this module promotes learning in the higher categories of the

cognitive and affective domains. Learning new material, applying the learning, and engaging in topic discussion is the suggested method.