



Demand grows for culture courses

Online CCAF-Credit Courses

2009 Number of Applicants



2012 Number of Applicants



“I have had a blast taking this course. I feel as if I could handle cross-cultural situations a lot better.”

Tech. Sgt. Ronald Beasley
Introduction to Culture
Course Graduate

Airmen want culture learning. That’s the message Air Force Culture and Language Center officials are getting, based on the increased demand for the AFCLC’s online culture education courses. Enrollment statistics show a significant rise in applicants during the three years that the Center has offered the courses, and the AFCLC attributes that rise to the course content and quality of instruction.

“The response over the last three years has been phenomenal,” said Mr. Jay Warwick, AFCLC director. “It’s a testament to how important cross-cultural competence is in today’s global Air Force. Airmen value these courses because the content is useful and relevant to their missions, and we’ll continue to work with our students to improve the courses based on student feedback.”

Student feedback is an important part of the process, said Dr. Patricia Fogarty, the AFCLC’s assistant professor of cross-cultural relations. Students’ attitudes are assessed prior to and following the course, and the students are also asked for specific feedback on what they liked and didn’t like. “We always appreciate receiving student feedback, since it’s integral to the development and improvement of the courses,” Fogarty said. One recent example of the course’s popularity among Airmen came from a student’s post-course feedback.

“I have had a blast taking this course. I feel as if I could handle cross-cultural situations a lot better,” wrote Tech. Sgt. Ronald Beasley. “Overall, I think the most important aspect of the course is to keep an open mind, remain objective and not to pass judgment too quickly without knowing all the facts.... Great course!”

The AFCLC offers two online, self-paced courses to

enlisted Airmen: “Introduction to Culture,” and “Introduction to Cross-Cultural Communication.” Both courses are free for students, and each fulfills three hours of social science or program elective credit in the Community College of the Air Force program. The courses are part of Air University’s Quality Enhancement Plan, which focuses on developing cross-culturally competent Airmen across the continuum of education. The first iteration of ITC was offered in 2009, and the AFCLC launched CCC in 2011.

In 2009, the AFCLC offered two sessions of ITC, with a total of 410 available course “seats.” Five hundred and five Airmen applied for those two initial courses. In 2012, the AFCLC offered two sessions for both ITC and CCC. Nearly 5,100 Airmen applied for the 2,250 course seats available. Since 2009, nearly 1,800 Airmen have successfully completed either ITC or CCC, said Dr. Lauren Mackenzie, the AFCLC’s assistant professor of cross-cultural communication. The Center has grown the size and number of courses offered to keep up with the increasing demand, Dr. Mackenzie added.

“These courses represent our effort to provide military cultural education to the most students in the most efficient and far-reaching way possible,” Mackenzie said. “We believe the process adopted here at the AFCLC could be a model for teaching culture throughout the Department of Defense.”

The next online CCAF-credit culture course will be ITC in spring 2013. The ITC application period begins Feb. 21. Dates for both ITC and CCC registrations schedules are available on the AFCLC’s public website at www.culture.af.mil/courses.

Colleagues,

As we approach the end of 2012, we're looking forward with a renewed excitement for our business – leading the development of a cross-culturally competent Total Force for our U.S. Air Force. Although our focus is on the future, I'd like to catch you up on the events of the last quarter here at the Air Force Culture and Language Center.



All areas of the center have been fantastic in serving Air University and beyond. The staff here has excelled whatever the task - from teaching elective courses at Air War College and providing curriculum to Enlisted Professional Military Education to conducting mobile training teams that showcase our commitment to the warfighter.

Our Culture Branch began the fall sessions of our two online, distance-learning courses for enlisted Airmen. These courses are a great introduction to cross-cultural concepts. The courses are free to students, and they provide Community College of the Air Force credit. It's a win-win for everyone. These courses "sell-out" every time they're offered. I can't say enough about all the hard work our faculty and staff have put in to ensure these courses are valuable to, and valued by, our Airmen.

The people in our Region Branch have been busy as well. In addition to providing training and education support to the Air Advisor Academy both stateside and in Afghanistan, the Region team completed the first AFCLC Expeditionary Culture Field Guide focused on a country in the Asia-Pacific region. We receive requests from across Department of Defense for our ECFGs, and I'm sure the Philippines ECFG will be no exception. This product is just one example of the invaluable expertise our Region faculty

and staff members provide to a diverse audience of government customers.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the successes coming from our Language Branch, and the Language Enabled Airman Program in particular. LEAP is now an official Air Force Program of Record, and I couldn't be more proud. We held our largest LEAP selection board ever in September, and for the first time, we considered large

numbers of enlisted Airmen. In the end, we selected 206 highly-qualified Air Force officers, cadets and enlisted Airmen to become a part of LEAP. I look forward to seeing the great work they'll do for the Service.

We have already had so many examples of how LEAP participants make a difference in real-world operations. A case in point is the commentary on Page 3 from a young Captain who worked with Joint POW/MIA Accountability Command on a Language Intensive Training Event recently. Reading his story touched my heart, and I think it will touch yours, too.

The Negotiations Center of Excellence also continues to provide exceptional education and training across the AU spectrum, ensuring our military service members have the skills they need to operate in complex environments.

In closing, I'd like to thank all of you – our language, region and culture advocates around the world. We couldn't accomplish our mission without the support each and every one of you provides. Together, we can provide the LRC expertise that our warfighters demand, in 2013 and beyond.

JAY J. WARWICK, AD-25, USAF
Director, AFCLC

NEWS

AFCLC to offer 'one of kind' communication course at AWC

"How does your culture shape the way you communicate?" The Air Force Culture and Language Center's new Air War College distance-learning elective course answers that question, and addresses how leaders can set the conditions for more effective intercultural interactions.

The "Cross-Cultural Communication Competence" course will be offered for the first time to approximately 1,000 AWC correspondence students in early 2013. The course is the first one of its kind, said CCCC instructor Dr. Lauren Mackenzie, the AFCLC's assistant professor of cross-cultural communication. "The other

service branches address communication issues in their language, leadership and negotiation courses," said Dr. Mackenzie. "However, the Air Force is the only branch that both recognizes communication as a field of study and offers semester-length graduate courses devoted specifically to improving cross-cultural communication competence."

In the new course, leaders will learn about the unique contributions that the field of communications offers to people who operate in culturally-complex environments. The course provides the foundational skills and concepts that are research-proven enablers of cross-cultural competence.

Mackenzie said the CCCC course will also highlight how culture is displayed in the way people communicate.

"A typical verbal greeting in China, for instance, might be 'Have you eaten? In Afghanistan, it may be 'How's your family?', and in Korea, 'How old are you?' Mackenzie said. "Cultural values are reflected in the first question a person from this culture is likely to ask you during the greeting process."

Prospective students can learn more about the course by going to the AWC distance learning website at: www.au.af.mil/au/awc/dl/index.htm or by contacting the AFCLC at afclc.outreach@us.af.mil.

LEAP Airman returns 'home' to recover MIAs

By Capt. Huy Tran
Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D.

Through the rice fields, mountains, and dense jungle of Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam, we went until we found the crash site. Aircraft parts were everywhere. We knew we had arrived at the right place when I felt chills crawl down my spine.

My journey to get to this site was a long time coming. Born and raised in Ben Tre, Vietnam, a son and grandson of Vietnam War veterans, this recovery mission was dear to my heart. My dad was a company commander in the South Vietnamese Army, and spent nearly five years in a prison camp after the fall of the South. My grandfather served as the Vice Commander of Ben Tre Province, and he was also imprisoned by the North Vietnamese for five years. When I was 11, my family left everything we had behind in Vietnam, in search of a new life and to find freedom.

I grew up in South Carolina, and I always knew I wanted to be in the military. I never thought that being



DoD photo by Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Nina Hughes, U.S. Navy

Capt. Huy Tran, a Language Enabled Airman Program participant, interviews a witness who saw a U.S. aircraft crash in Vietnam in 1967. Tran speaks fluent Vietnamese, and recently worked with the Joint POW/MIA Accountability Command for a recovery mission as part of his Language Intensive Training Event participation through LEAP.

in the Air Force would bring me back to Vietnam as a serviceman, but it did, through my participation in the Language Enabled Airman Program. I'm not a linguist in my assigned Air Force job; however, through competi-

tive language scores and hard work at my primary job, I earned the opportunity to join LEAP. The program takes Airmen who have language skills that the Air Force needs, and helps them

See LEAP, Page 4

Cultural battlegrounds: Why culture matters

by William L. Dulaney, Ph.D.
Professor of Cross-Cultural
Organizational Communication
Air Force Culture
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In every culture, there exists the possibility of a mob of people that could be easily compelled to action by those who know how. Understanding culture, for the military professional, should be thought of as the art and science of understanding cause and effect in social contexts. Period.

In operational contexts, culture is human terrain; just as real as the ground on which we fight, the airspace we own, and the seas we dominate.

Culture subsumes, among so much else, a people's morals, values, and ethics. What is beautiful, right and wrong. What people will or will not fight and die for. These are all aspects of culture that military professionals need to understand to be successful in 21st Century warfare.

Why worry about what is beautiful? Military Information Support to Operations cannot produce effective media and/or conduct psychological operations without a working knowledge of what certain people regard as pleasing to the eye, ear, or heart.

Understanding what a people consider right or wrong is as important to the private on his first foot patrol

through an Afghan village as it is to the four-star general who makes a speech to another nation on international television.

The knowledge of what people are willing to fight and die for should be obvious. Sadly, it is not.

Evidence is clear that the spate of Green-on-Blue shootings in Afghanistan is overwhelmingly caused by cultural transgressions. From refusing to urinate in private to condemnations of the Qur'an, we as a military seem not to understand that we sometimes cause our own problems.

Military professionals must of necessity not succumb to flimsy explana-

See CULTURE, Page 4

LEAP, continued from Page 1

maintain and improve those skills.

As a member of LEAP, I became more informed about the role language plays in politics through live, online language classes called the LEAP eMentor program. My LEAP professor Philip Ho, has broadened my skills beyond the normal language requirement. In class, we discuss, all in Vietnamese, current events and how they play a part in our politics, our military, and future aspects. That's what makes LEAP eMentor classes different from any other language class. I still maintain my primary duty while being a part of LEAP, but the program has taken my language skills to another level and allowed me to utilize them to serve the Air Force. Programs like LEAP are what make the U.S. Military second to none.

Due to my top language scores that are required by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), LEAP offered me the opportunity to support an actual mission which counts as a Language Intensive Training Event. With the support of my squadron members, Director of Operations, Commander, and Group Commander, I was able to take part and represent my squadron in this mission. After passing language interviews with JPAC, I found out that I would be going to Vietnam in support of a recovery mission searching for missing American servicemen.

I was thrilled that finally I was able to use my special language skills to contribute and serve. Most importantly, I

was given a chance to bring heroes home to their families and final resting place. There is no other satisfaction than knowing that those families can finally have answers and closure.

I was assigned to help with the recovery of three missing Navy aircrew members whose aircraft went down in 1967. My work began with negotiations with Vietnamese government officials for land compensation. I then aided by translating information from a witness.

The witness led our recovery team, made up of Americans, Vietnamese government officials, and local workers to the site. It was surreal to see the location, to think about what happened that day, and to imagine yourself in the same position. Recovery is rigorous, physical work, but knowing that we were giving our best in search of fallen heroes made it enjoyable.

Before I departed Vietnam, a repatriation ceremony was held in Da Nang. The Vietnamese officials signed the documents turning over the possible remains to the U.S. JPAC Vietnam detachment commanders. We then placed the possible remains on a U.S. C-17. It was a very moving experience.

I'm grateful that LEAP enabled me to use and enhance my language and cultural skills to support the military, including military families. Hopefully, I'll be able to contribute again, and to assist the U.S. in partnership operations with Vietnam.

CULTURE, continued from Page 3

tions, such as those bandied about on television, radio, and internet news sources, that "those" people are just "crazies". Sure. Fanatics exist in the form of extremists all around the globe. Many of them are lobbing Molotov cocktails, rocks, and RPGs at our embassies and consulates across the north of Africa as I write this.

But one must ask him or herself: Which is more likely? An entire culture of people is crazy enough to be incited to violence by a poorly produced video clip downloaded from the Internet. Or, there are a few – maybe only one – individuals or organizations behind the violence.

Experience has shown that the latter is usually the case. One example is a band of bad actors that understand a culture so well that all they need do is search the Internet for the most effective stimulus to create a predetermined effect on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

Leaders of extremist, Islamist, and illicit organizations understand well that culture is a fire burning in the heart of every human. All one needs to do to make that fire erupt into action is fan the flames just a little. And then sit back from a safe distance and watch. Watch as their small efforts

spread across a region or even a continent. Watch as we Americans continue to try and explain what is happening while wearing what can only be described as blinders of ethnocentrism. Watch as we lose more American lives and treasure fighting an enemy that is overwhelmingly outmatched on every single plane of warfare save one: the human terrain.

So the challenge seems clear: Military leaders of all ranks must strive to cleave the extraneous information away from the actual causes of deadly effects. To understand that it is impossible to fight an idea or ideology, but very possible to target our awesome military might on the specific bad actors perverting ideas and ideologies. To bring the fight to the few who are manipulating the many.

(Dr. William Dulaney is the professor of organizational communication at the Air Force Culture and Language Center, part of the Spaatz Center for Officer Education at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. He spent 12 years on active duty for the Air Force prior to receiving his Ph. D. in Human Communication Theory and Research. He also served as the Senior Human Terrain Social Scientist in Region Command South, Afghanistan, for the U.S. government.)



Photograph courtesy U.S. Department of State

(Left to right) Arthur Bell, Consular Chief/Military Affairs Officer, U.S. Embassy to Togo; Ambassador Robert E. Whitehead, U.S. Ambassador to Togo; Maj. Shannon Farrell, 1st Lt. Anthony Betteridge, 1st Lt. Esther Anderson, and Capt. Sean Mortenson. Mortenson, Anderson, Farrell and Betteridge are Language Enabled Airmen Program participants. The Airmen were invited to meet the U.S. Ambassador during a Language Intensive Training Event in Togo, Africa. The next LEAP selection board for enlisted Airmen will be January 2013; the next board for officer and officer candidates is scheduled for July 2013.



Photograph by Mr. Greg Day

Dr. Patricia Fogarty, the Air Force Culture and Language Center's assistant professor of cross-cultural relations, interviews Col. Johann Westphall, chief of aerospace medicine at Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., for the AFCLC's Cultural Studies Project. The center collects Airmen's cultural experiences from deployments and overseas assignments to help develop cross-cultural professional military education for Airmen of all ranks. All Airmen are eligible to participate. The first step is an online survey. Selected participants are contacted for follow-up interviews. For more information, see the AFCLC's website at www.culture.af.mil/csp.

ABOUT THE AFCLC

AFCLC VISION: The Air Force Culture and Language Center, as the acknowledged experts, will lead the U.S. Air Force in building a cross-culturally competent Total Force to meet the demands of the Service's dynamic global mission.

AFCLC MISSION: The Air Force Culture and Language Center creates and executes language, region and cultural learning programs for Total Force Airmen, and provides the Service with the subject matter expertise required to institutionalize these efforts.

The Air Force Culture and Language Center was founded at Air University in April 2006, embracing the Air Force Chief of Staff's intention to improve Airmen's cross-cultural competence.

In April 2007, the Air Force further demonstrated its commitment to culture learning by selecting cross-cultural competence as the centerpiece of Air University's re-accreditation efforts. In December 2007, the Center was made responsible for culture and language training, as well as education, across the entire Air Force.

Air University's Spaatz Center hosts the AFCLC. The AFCLC's Language, Region and Culture Departments are staffed with a team of highly-qualified military and civilian experts. Since 2008, the AFCLC has partnered with the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence, which is co-located with the AFCLC, at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

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