

**Minutes****Military Education Council****September 6, 2024 1:30 PM****Naval ROTC Conference Room, Armory Room 237B**

**Present:** James Brennan, Jenny Bateman, Dave Casteel, Chung-Yi Chiu, Kent Choquette, Yulanda Curtis, Jonathan Ebel, Zac Miller, Matthew Pruyn, Jason Scalzitti, and Elle Wroblewski

**Absent:** Athol Kembball, Joseph Lehman, Jason Sakowski, and Ethan Stringer

- I. Meeting called to order at 1:31 pm. Introductions were made and Prof. Brennan provided some history on the Military Education Council and its roles.
- II. Minutes from the 4/26/24 meeting were approved as provided.
- III. Old Business
  - a. Ms. Bateman shared that an MOU with Department of Intercollegiate Athletics regarding use of the Armory Floor has been completed and signed.
  - b. Prof. Brennan explained that there was an upcoming Association of Naval ROTC Colleges and Universities Meeting on October 24-26. He offered the opportunity for a MEC member to attend. As no other council members were available, Prof. Brennan will attend.
- IV. New Business
  - a. Prof. Brennan explained the duties of the Faculty Review Subcommittee and requested volunteers to serve in this capacity. Prof. Choquette, Prof. Chiu, and Prof. Curtis will serve as the Faculty Review Committee for the 2024-2025 academic year.
  - b. Prof. Brennan recognized the Teachers Ranked as Excellent- Spring 2024. AFAS 112: Justin Zinkl, MILS 202: Christine Boyd, NS 308: Dave Casteel
  - c. Prof. Brennan and Ms. Bateman provided an update on the annual budget. For FY25, the budget request for \$12,000 for IT support, IT equipment, and inflation was approved. Also approved was the request to increase the Room and Board scholarship fund to again fund fifteen full room and board awards. The request for funding to renovate an old restroom into a laundry and shower facility was denied. Lt. Col. Scalzitti mentioned the effectiveness of the Room and Board Scholarship in recruiting High School Scholarship recipients.

Additionally, all centrally funded units were recently asked to provide plans to fulfill recurring reductions in FY26 at 2%, 4%, and 6% reduction scenarios. Armed Forces'

plan included first reducing the operational budgets to the ROTC units. The operational budgets to the units are for expenses that that University is not required to fund, but that add enrichment and effectiveness to the programs. At the next reduction level, the MEC would stop attending the NROTC Association conference and cut some “optional” updates to the Armory building. At the 6% level, there would be further reduction to the ROTC operational budgets and all “optional” building updates would be stopped. The narrative explained that there is only a small portion of the budget that is available for expenses that are not contractually obligated, and that all of the described reductions would be detrimental to the program. LTC Miller stated that he was requesting information from Army Cadet Command for a comparison of how universities fund their ROTC units. He stated that UIC’s Army ROTC budget is significantly larger than UIUC’s.

The Commanding Officers, Prof. Brennan and Ms. Bateman met with Bill Bernhard, whom the unit reports to at the Provost level, in August. In that meeting, Dr. Bernhard explained the background for needing to make reductions to centrally budgeted units and stated that he did not expect that Armed Forces would be asked to take the deepest cut. Dr. Bernhard will be following up with the unit with some information on where the tuition for the IUs of ROTC courses ends up- as a centrally budgeted academic unit, we currently do not receive that funding. Additionally, we requested he help identify a contact person to assist the unit with communication and marketing.

- d. Events
  - i. CAPT Casteel shared that Naval ROTC is planning the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb at Memorial Stadium at 6:00 am on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The ROTC units and civilians are invited to climb stairs equal to the number it took first responders to get to the top of the twin towers. They expect a good number of local fire fighters, police, and fraternities to participate.
  - ii. Lt Col Scalzitti reported that Air Force ROTC is coordinating the POW/MIA Vigil on September 20<sup>th</sup>. During this 24 hour vigil cadets and midshipmen will patrol the POW/MIA flag in remembrance of those prisoners of war or missing in action. The location is still to be determined, but will either be on the Quad or at the Armory flag pole.
  - iii. CAPT Casteel spoke about the upcoming Naval ROTC’s WGNB Reunion Weekend beginning October 18<sup>th</sup> with the Naval Ball. The unit has invited all former NROTC members and will be making the inaugural induction into the Naval ROTC Hall of Fame. The recipient’s family will be recognized during the football game on the 19<sup>th</sup>.
- e. Lt Col Scalzitti gave a briefing on the Air Force ROTC. Highlights include: enrollment this fall of 80 cadets, 27 of them new this year. Expecting to commission 3 in December in 12 in May. Four new freshman are HHSP (High School Scholarship) recipients- the offer of the Room and Board Scholarship was instrumental in them selecting UIUC. War for the Sword event in October is an Air Force ROTC competition

hosted at UIUC. Growing each year, they expect 11 detachments to attend this prestigious event.

V. The Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.

