

Civilian Education System/Advanced Leadership Course—My Journey and Reflections

Army doctrine defines leadership as “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.” I recently had the opportunity to be immersed in Army doctrine, strategy, and leadership concepts via the Civilian Education System (CES) Advanced Leadership Course (for grades 13-15) at the Army Management Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, KS. Honestly, I had no idea why a leadership course would take 4 weeks, but after going through this very challenging and rigorous curriculum, I am convinced this course, as well as the basic (grades 1-9) and intermediate (grades 10-12), are critical for the Army to operate effectively and efficiently in a complex—unknown, unknowable and constantly changing—world. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to test and develop my leadership abilities through some very challenging problems and learning conditions. I was struck that there were very few AMEDD civilians in attendance. That’s why I am taking the time to write this—to encourage you to take advantage of this valuable educational opportunity. I was able to form close and, what I am sure will be lasting, relationships with a diverse cohort: strategists, logisticians, resource managers, counter-intelligence, comptrollers, personnel, engineers. I engaged with Senior Executives from the Pentagon, Germany and elsewhere who shared their sage advice and leadership philosophies. The main lessons I learned: national strategy and my role within it, the Army’s emphasis on developing adaptable leaders who are masters of both task and human relationship components of getting the mission done, and the importance of developing others. So make sure you talk to your supervisor, include this course in your IDP and go to www.civiliantraining.army.mil for more information.