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Report to John P. White, Assistant Secretary, Department of Defense; by H. L. Krieger, Director, Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

Contact: Federal Personnel and Compensation Div.

Organization Concerned: Department of the Army; Department of the Navy; Department of the Air Force.

Authority: Department of Defense Appropriation Authorization Act [of] 1977 (P.L. 94-361).

A limited review of the Department of Defense's (DOD's) higher education programs revealed the need for reevaluation of the programs. Fiscal year 1978 enrollments in off-duty or part-time education programs were estimated at 800,000 at a cost to the Federal Government of over \$86 million. The programs were developed independently to meet each service's special needs, but few efforts were made to modify or cancel programs in accordance with those needs. The services are incurring additional costs in their overseas programs by contracting separately for educational programs with stateside institutions of higher education. Contract award and administration functions are duplicated and, in at least one case, higher prices were paid for the same services. DOD should consider consolidating the programs which rely on public and private institutions and simplifying the administrative overhead structure with a view toward cost reductions. (Author/HTW)



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND
COMPENSATION DIVISION

B-175773

JUN 19 1978

The Honorable John P. White
Assistant Secretary of Defense

Dear Dr. White:

We have completed our limited review of voluntary higher education programs in the Department of Defense (DoD) and wish to bring to your attention an area which warrants further study. We believe there is a need for DoD to reevaluate the status of these programs with a view toward consolidating and simplifying the administrative overhead structure.

Fiscal year 1978 enrollments in off-duty or part-time education programs are estimated at 800,000, at a cost to the Federal Government of over \$86 million. Available voluntary higher education programs and the organization administering them are:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Administering organization</u>
Servicemen's Opportunity College (SOC)	DoD
Servicemen's Opportunity College (SOC) Associate Degree	Army
Project AHEAD	Army
Navy Campus for Achievement Degree Program	Navy
Community College of the Air Force	Air Force

The higher education programs were developed independently to meet each service's special needs, and often an academic institution participates in multiple programs. Few efforts were made to modify existing programs to satisfy those needs or to cancel old programs when new programs were established.

1/ These programs are described in more detail in the appendix to this letter.

FPCD-78-44

An example of service efforts to adapt an existing program to meet special needs is the Army's SOC associate degree program. For this program, Army officials requested SOC to modify its program to satisfy needs of Army non-technical personnel. The modified program began in September 1977 at major installations in the United States and will be expanded to overseas commands during 1978. Now with both SOC and the associate degree program available, DOD could reevaluate the need for the degree component of Army's Project AHEAD.

The services are incurring additional costs in their overseas programs by contracting separately for educational programs with stateside institutions of higher education. Contract award and administration functions are duplicated and, in at least one case, higher prices were paid for the same services. For example:

- The Army contracted with 13 schools to provide a variety of courses in Europe leading to a high school diploma or an undergraduate or graduate degree in a number of areas. The U.S. European Command assigned responsibility to the Army Procurement Agency for contracting educational services in Germany for all services. Agency officials told us that, while they were aware of Air Force contracting for these services they have not pursued the apparent duplication.
- The Air Force contracted with 10 stateside schools for educational services. All 10 schools are under contract to the Army for the same services. Further, one school charges those enrolling through Air Force education centers \$39 per semester hour while charging \$38 per semester hour for Army students.
- Each Navy installation or ship is responsible for its educational program. The Navy's program in the United Kingdom consists of one contract with a stateside school which is also under contract to the Army.

We see an opportunity for DOD to look into consolidating the programs which rely on public and private institutions and simplifying the administrative overhead structure. Accordingly, we think it advisable that you and appropriate service officials reevaluate voluntary higher education program administration with a view to possible cost reductions through streamlined or consolidated activities.

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We would be happy to meet with you or your staff to discuss these matters further and invite your comments on actions which you plan to take. Because of their interest in our work in this area, we are providing a copy of this letter to officials at the American Council on Education.

Sincerely yours,



H.L. Krieger
Director

VOLUNTARY HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS
AVAILABLE TO MILITARY PERSONNEL

SERVICEMEN'S OPPORTUNITY COLLEGE (SOC)

DOD sponsors the SOC program which is available to members of all services. In 1972 the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges developed with funding from the Carnegie Corporation, a two-year program incorporating a network of junior and community colleges making special efforts to satisfy the educational needs of military personnel. Because the idea met with immediate acceptance by the military and the institutions, a four-year program was inaugurated in 1973 under the auspices of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in cooperation with the military and 12 institutions. The two and four-year SOC projects have now merged, jointly funded by the Carnegie Corporation and the Department of Defense. Over 375 institutions of higher education currently participate in SOC.

SOC ASSOCIATE DEGREE

At the request of the Department of the Army, SOC developed, in September 1977, a formal institutional network offering associate degrees to Army personnel. The SOC Associate Degree network has contracted with 55 institutions, and availability at all major Army bases world-wide is planned by fall 1978. The network is designed to serve over 200,000 personnel in non-technical fields who have high school educations, and have not been able to transfer military training and experience into applicable academic degrees.

PROJECT AHEAD

Project AHEAD (Army Help for Education and Development) was established in the spring of 1974. Through this program the Army works with over 1,400 educational institutions to enable qualified new recruits to enroll in college. The participating colleges and universities operate their programs and have no obligation to the Army.

NAVY CAMPUS FOR ACHIEVEMENT DEGREE PROGRAM

The Navy Campus for Achievement is an educational management system for coordinating and integrating all off-duty education programs with on-duty education and military training for active duty Navy personnel. The degree program is a major component of the system. The 19 schools affiliated with the program are located at areas of concentrated Navy population.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE AIR FORCE

The Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) is an accredited educational institution offering an associate in applied science degree to Air Force enlisted men and women. Originally, the major function of the CCAF was the issuance of a transcript to separating personnel showing college credit hours accumulated for Air Force skill training programs, college-level courses taken in off-duty hours, and non-commissioned officer professional military education. Career Education Certificates and, in limited cases, Instructor in Technology Certificates were offered to those successfully completing the course of study. Any degrees were awarded by civilian institutions.

Subsequently, Public Law 94-361, Department of Defense Appropriation Authorization Act 1977, dated July 14, 1976, granted CCAF the authority

APPENDIX

to award associate degrees, subject to a determination by the Commissioner of Education that the standards for the award of academic degrees in agencies of the United States had been met. Approval to grant degrees was received in January 1977 and, thus far, over 2,500 associate degrees have been awarded. At the time of our review, approximately 80,000 Air Force personnel were registered in the program.