



National Defence

Défense nationale

Deputy Minister

Sous-ministre

National Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K2

Quartier général de la Défense nationale
Ottawa, (Ontario)
K1A 0K2

The Honourable Kevin Sorenson
Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Sorenson,

As promised in the Government Response to the Forty-Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, entitled *Report 6, Royal Military College of Canada – National Defence, of the 2017 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, National Defence submits its response to Recommendation 1, due 17 September 2018.

Sincerely,

Jody Thomas

Enclosures: 1

Response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Report 6: Royal Military College of Canada, of the Fall 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada

Recommendation 1

That, by September 2018, National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a report detailing what progress has been achieved with regard to 1) clearly defining and strengthening military training of Officer Cadets at the Royal Military College of Canada so that it is relevant, practical, and provides value to operational units; and 2) integrating this improved military training with the academic education of Officer Cadets.

Background

In its response to the Auditor General's 2017 Fall Reports, National Defence stated that it would conduct a "review of the entire complement of military training activities, including leadership and ethics, delivered to Naval/Officer Cadets throughout the academic year and summer training period." The aim was to make training activities more relevant and valuable to operational units, while ensuring a "reasonable balance between academic and military training."

Making military training more relevant and valuable to operational units

Royal Military College (RMC) reviewed the Military pillar of the Regular Officer Training Program (ROTP) and has aligned it more closely with the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) Leadership Development Framework, the armed forces' guiding document for officer development. Beyond adopting the same standards as the CAF uses to train and assess its own officers, RMC has developed an individualized assessment process, which is part of the Professional Development Program and specific to the Military pillar. It will ensure each Naval/Officer Cadet receives guidance tailored to his or her own strengths and weaknesses, particularly with respect to leadership development.

This leadership development has been enhanced by ensuring that key training wing personnel are of a higher rank. Increased ranks come with more experience and skills, which will be of benefit in providing direction, guidance, and oversight, along with coaching and mentoring of Naval/Officer Cadets. These measures will improve Naval/Officer Cadets' readiness to contribute to their units on graduation. As part of an ongoing review and validation process, the College will engage with the CAF's training establishments to obtain feedback on the updated syllabus's strengths and weaknesses.

Effective this year, RMC is putting Naval/Officer Cadets through additional, and more realistic, real-world scenarios in their military training. A significant portion of the training now occurs outside the classroom, built around operational scenarios including conducting investigations,

conducting military planning, and handling subordinates in situations involving military discipline and the military justice system. This approach will stimulate critical thinking skills in Naval/Officer Cadets in ways more closely akin to what is required in the armed forces. Giving third- and fourth-year Naval/Officer Cadets responsibility for developing and delivering a portion of the training is also strengthening the leadership development component of the RMC program.

Effective summer 2018, RMC is ensuring that Naval/Officer Cadets receive higher-quality work-experience opportunities for those not otherwise engaged in occupation-specific phase training, Second Language Training, or the continuation of the Basic Military Occupation Course. Co-operation with the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army and Royal Canadian Air Force is making it possible to identify even better opportunities. The key criteria for matching a Naval/Officer Cadet to a summer position will be how well the role aligns with the individual's areas of occupational interest and what opportunities it presents for leadership development. Planning for summer 2019 will begin October 2018, based on a review of the summer 2018 program.

Finally, National Defence has improved engagement between the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the leadership of the CAF's educational institutions by adjusting CAF governance structures. The commander of the Canadian Defence Academy is now a member of the Armed Forces Council, the senior military body that advises the CDS, and will also be in direct contact with the CDS at meetings of the Council of Canadian Defence Academy Commandants, a new body chaired by the CDS. Together, these changes will provide the leaders of Canada's military-educational facilities with a better understanding of the CAF's operational needs, and the CDS with the means to ensure that the colleges' programs comply with his intent and vision.

Integrating and balancing military training and academic education

RMC is improving co-ordination between military and academic programs through regular weekly meetings of the Military, Academic and Athletic Wings to ensure alignment of all activities, respect for Commandant's priorities, as well as opportunities for synergies. In addition, the RMC Senate - whose function it is to ensure that the quality of RMC degrees meet the highest standards - has initiated a Four-Pillar Review Committee, which is reviewing the implementation of the ROTP at RMC with the aim of supporting all four pillars as essential requirements for success in the RMC-ROTP program. RMC has also initiated a comprehensive review of the university core curriculum to ensure that it fully aligns with the educational needs of the CAF. This sub-committee of the university's Faculty Board will be integral to better co-ordinating the revised Military pillar with the academic program. Most importantly, it will ensure the academic program's "theoretical" aspects are synced with the practical dimensions of the Profession of Arms.

While the review of the core curriculum will ensure RMC's university education continues to be connected to the Profession of Arms, RMC has already improved integration at the classroom-level between academic education and military training by underscoring the practical relevance

of academic material more systematically. For example, both Operation HONOUR and the Defence Policy, *Strong, Secure and Engaged*, are already incorporated in RMC's third-year course on Organizational Behaviour and Leadership with topics including diversity, biases, perception, values, equity and culture. A more "hands-on" approach to learning – and particularly senior cadets' involvement in delivering training – will also strengthen the tie-in between course material and military training.

The College has also taken steps to ensure balance between academic education and military training by protecting periods of time during the day for specific academic or military activities. In addition, an enhanced vetting process for extra-curricular academic activities has been put in place to minimize their impact on Naval/Officer Cadets' ability to perform military activities. The College is also continuing its efforts to improve civilian faculty members' understanding of, and appreciation for, RMC's unique military nature. As an example, the New Academic Staff & Faculty Orientation Program introduces new faculty and staff to the CAF, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the military Training Wing.

To achieve lasting structural change, the CAF is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Canadian Military Colleges Governance framework, which will apply to the operations of both military colleges. This review will also provide a formal way to adjust the structures governing the relationship between academic education and military training. It is scheduled to commence with the dissemination of the RMC Strategic Plan and the findings of the RMC Governance Committee by 31 October 2018 with the receipt of findings from the RMC Senate Working Group on the integration of the other three pillars into the academic programme by April 2019, after which the process to enact the agreed changes will begin.

Conclusion

National Defence is taking tangible steps to implement the action plan it developed in response to the Auditor General's 2017 Fall Report, making the military training of Naval/Officer Cadets at the Royal Military College more relevant, practical and valuable to operational units. Changes to the curriculum, along with a more active learning approach, better work-experience opportunities and more engagement between the Canadian Defence Academy and the CAF leadership are strengthening the Military pillar of the Regular Officer Training Program and ensuring its relevance to operational units. Adjustments to CAF governance structures, review of the four pillars and the core curriculum and better co-ordination between military and civilian branches of the RMC program are deepening integration between academic education and military training and, in due course, will help address the balance between them.