

Naval Postgraduate School and NPS Foundation expand partnerships, foster innovation opportunities at WEST 2024

During WEST 2024, the Naval Postgraduate School and NPS Foundation engaged industry and DOD thought leaders, shared the work NPS is doing, and built community.

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, February 22, 2024

[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- The U.S. Naval Institute and AFCEA International hosted an impressive week during the annual WEST 2024 Conference in San Diego, Feb. 13-15, providing extensive opportunities for the Naval Postgraduate School and NPS Foundation representatives to engage with thought leaders, listen to the concerns of senior Naval leadership, share the work NPS is doing to address those concerns, and build community.



Adm. Samuel J. Paparo visits with Naval Postgraduate School students at NPS' WEST 2024 Conference booth, Feb. 15, 2024. (Photo courtesy of NPS)

The conference, which focused on the critical question, "Are Acquisition and Readiness on Pace to Meet Global Security Demands," ignited valuable discussions across the keynote speeches by senior Department of the Navy leadership and during the many panels and individual interactions. A recurring theme was the need to innovate faster – changing both the culture and the climate for our Fleet and Force – and make uncomfortable changes in the way we innovate, adopt and adapt technologies and solutions in order to compete and win decisively.

"We need warfighters who ruthlessly pursue warfighting excellence... who can deliver the advantage of autonomous and unmanned systems... who can operate and innovate alongside their systems... and who have the knowledge to deal with mission and navigation autonomy and can work across many domains," said Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations, during the opening keynote on Feb. 13.

Throughout WEST's keynotes and panels, Department of Defense leaders highlighted the shared national security responsibility across government, industry and academia.

"We in the government will not reach our goals nor will we succeed in our mission without your help. We need the brainpower and muscle of industry and academia. Your expertise, time, and resources are vital for developing the cutting-edge technologies we need," said Secretary of the Navy, the Hon. Carlos Del Toro during his keynote on Feb. 15.

The requirement for interdisciplinary and collaborative work is a key

component of the [Naval Innovation Center at NPS](#), which is a convening place to accelerate "ideas to impact." As such, the NPS and NPS Foundation group embraced WEST 2024 as a platform to engage in vital conversations with current and potential industry partners, such as

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AT&T, Lockheed Martin, NVIDIA, Booz Allen, and Google Cloud. The meetings provided an opportunity to explore collaborative research and development opportunities, advocate for NPS' role in the defense innovation ecosystem, and discuss the Naval Innovation Center facility.

NPS and NPS Foundation representatives visited Qualcomm's headquarters on Feb. 15 for discussions about the ongoing collaboration between NPS and Qualcomm. The visit provided NPS leadership the

opportunity to engage with Qualcomm's technologies from AI on device to autonomy. The conversation centered around collaboration within the Emerging Technology Innovation Lab and the Naval Innovation Center at NPS, emphasizing the significant value of the NPS-Qualcomm LP-CRADA, which puts advanced wireless commercial capabilities in the hands of NPS students and faculty. This relationship has been instrumental in driving forward research and innovation initiatives that address the concerns of the DOD at the speed of commercial technology.

Investment in the minds of our service members was another important topic at WEST. The



NPS President Retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau led a panel on Feb. 14 to explore how the Navy and Marine Corps can leverage their learning and technical institutions more purposefully and work with industry partners to accelerate "concepts to capability" at

Naval Postgraduate School was frequently highlighted as the exemplar in developing experienced and agile leaders and connecting active-duty students, top researchers and technology experts to understand global threats and develop new capabilities.

“It’s the minds in this room and it’s the people you lead that can and must meet the challenge. I just spent this last week at Naval Postgraduate School reviewing promising tech solutions from even more promising warrior-scholars in Monterey,” said Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, Commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, during the morning keynote on day two of WEST.



NPS NPS President Retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau and students from the Naval Postgraduate School gather at the NPS booth during the annual WEST 2024 Conference.

[Retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau led a panel on Feb. 14](#) to explore how the Navy and Marine Corps can leverage their learning and technical institutions more purposefully and work with industry partners to accelerate “concepts to capability” at greater speed and scale.

The panel, titled “Neurons and Networks: Educating and Innovating Our Way to Decision Advantage,” brought together U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Matthew Glavy, Deputy Commandant for Information, U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Doug Small, commander of Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR), Navy Lt. Zachary Vrtis, an NPS student pursuing his doctorate in mechanical engineering, and Justin Norman, Acting Portfolio Director/Technical Director for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) and a Marine Corps Reserve officer.

The panelists highlighted the need to encourage, empower and harness the innovative talents of our service members and DOD workforce at NPS and across the rest of the Naval Education Enterprise and Naval Research & Development Establishment. Small noted that “Our thing as leaders has to be when they get out of NPS, encourage that continued behavior, maybe even require it. ... The Navy’s been on this journey of seeking out opportunities to remove barriers for people and that’s the way we need to change that culture. We have to change that mindset. That’s our job – to remove barriers for people like Zach to be able to bring these ideas to bear.”

NPS staff and alumni participated in numerous other panels during WEST, sharing their expertise on topics such as meeting the demands of the current global security landscape, security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, acquisition innovation and adoption, maritime capability

requirements, force design, cyber warfare, quantum technology, artificial intelligence and information warfare.

The NPS Foundation & Alumni Association also brought NPS alumni, faculty, students and supporters together with DOD leaders and academic and industry partners at our Alumni Reception on Feb. 13. The event strengthened our NPS global community and enabled networking that will lead to collaboration to address common challenges.

During the reception, Rondeau ignited the attendees with a passionate speech about the value of NPS' research and education in today's volatile global environment. She and the NPS Foundation leadership highlighted the Naval Innovation Center at NPS as a critical technological resource and central connector for the defense innovation ecosystem that will accelerate the scaling of national security solutions at the speed of relevance.

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