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Contact: Ed Barker

850.452.4858
(DSN) 922.4858
(FAX) 850.452.4900

FY-16 Olmsted Scholarship Program seeking applicants

PENSACOLA, Fla. – The Naval Education and Training Command announced June 2 that career-minded line and Supply Corps officers interested in developing language skills and regional cultural knowledge are encouraged to apply for the fiscal Year (FY-16) Olmsted Scholar Program.

Detailed in Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 115/14, the Olmsted program is a unique scholarship opportunity offering two years of graduate study using a foreign language while providing overseas cultural and travel opportunities and often leads to a graduate degree at a foreign university. Applicants for the FY-16 program should be available to start language training in summer/fall 2015, begin study at a foreign university in 2016 and complete study in 2018.

The Navy is looking for leaders who display the qualities of dedicated career officers and who aspire to command as line and Supply Corps officers. Applicants must have demonstrated strong leadership qualities, solid overall performance, strong promotion potential, and superior demonstrated scholastic ability. Candidates must have three years of commissioned service - but no more than 11 years of total active federal service as of April 1, 2015, to apply for the scholarship. Specific designator eligibility is listed in the NAVADMIN.

Historically, Olmsted Scholars have benefited from the program and continue to promote to senior leadership positions, including 12 past Navy scholars that achieved flag rank.

One Olmsted Scholar that uses his international experience on a daily basis in his job at the Pentagon is Capt. Jeff Kim, deputy director of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Strategic Actions Group (N00Z). Kim studied at Leiden University in the Netherlands from 1997 to 1999 as an Olmsted Scholar.

"The Olmsted Foundation Scholarship Program afforded me the rare opportunity as an active-duty officer to study fulltime at a foreign civilian institution," said Kim. "The benefits of the program go well beyond country-specific expertise. Two years of language and cultural immersion at a European university allowed me to see global issues through a different lens. The Olmsted Scholarship is unique among postgraduate programs, and the education gained abroad continues to shape my thoughts on strategy and policy. Operating forward is at the core of what we do in the Navy, and Olmsted Scholars bring valuable perspectives and experiences to lead and support forward operations."

Olmsted Scholars interact daily with locals and immerse themselves in the culture of their host country. A background in a specific foreign language is not a prerequisite to selection. Scholars are expected to live on the local economy and travel widely. Olmsted scholars receive their normal pay and allowances, and if married, are normally accompanied by their families.

The Center for Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) is currently accepting applications from regular or full time support line and Supply Corps officers for the FY-16 Olmsted Scholar Program. Applicants are required to meet a list of qualifications and prerequisites and submit a command-endorsed nomination package that must be received by CPPD in Pensacola no later than Aug. 29. In October, the applications are reviewed and a final, Navy-sponsored list of nominees is selected. Up to 10 Navy scholars may be selected by the Olmsted Foundation Board of Directors for the FY-16 program.

The Olmsted Foundation, named in honor of Maj. Gen. George and Carol Olmsted, and the Department of Defense have jointly sponsored this scholarship program since 1959. Since its inception, the foundation has focused on educational and charitable purposes.

Retired Army Maj. Gen. Bruce Scott serves as president and chief executive officer of the Olmsted Foundation and was an Olmsted Scholar from 1979-81 at the University of Freiburg (Albert Ludwig) in Freiburg, Germany. Scott believes the success of the program is a direct result of the vision of the man for which the foundation and the scholarship program is named.

"General Olmsted, our benefactor and founder, certainly possessed great vision when he said that the world's greatest leaders must be educated broadly," said Scott. "For over 50 years, our program has educated young officers in foreign language fluency and foreign cultures, which are becoming more and more important in today's world and in supporting the 21st Sailor and Marine initiative."

With the selection of the 56th Olmsted Scholar Class in March 2014, 600 scholars have completed, are completing or are preparing for two years of

study abroad. Their studies to date have been in 40 languages, in 202 different foreign universities, spanning 60 countries worldwide.

The Navy nominations are submitted to the Olmsted Foundation Board of Directors, along with nomination packages from the other services. During a comprehensive personal interview, the foundation staff examines the nominee's academic and professional background, motivation to be a scholar, choice of foreign university, proposed course of study, language aptitude and career goals. Taking all this data into account, the interview panel makes its recommendations to the board for final decisions on the nominees at its meeting in March 2015 for the FY 2016 Olmsted Scholar class.

Specific guidelines and additional details for applying for the Olmsted Scholar Program can be found in NAVADMIN 115/14.

All eligible and interested officers should visit the Olmsted Foundation website at www.olmstedfoundation.org for additional details, including important information regarding selection of country/city/university for their scholarship education preference.

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Story by Ed Barker, Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs.