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SUBJ/ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026 MIT SEMINAR XXI AND DARK TRIDENT CALL FOR APPLICATIONS//

REF/A/DOC/CNO NAVPLAN 2024/18SEP24//

NARR/Ref A is the CNO's 2024 Navigation Plan (NAVPLAN).

RMKS/1. This NAVADMIN is the call for applications for the Academic Year (AY) 2025-2026 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Seminar XXI program and the Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO's) research group Dark Trident.

## 2. MIT Seminar XXI

a. Program Information. Seminar XXI represents a unique opportunity for future policy leaders to share perspectives, while cultivating their understanding of the intricate relationships among economy, society, and culture in the international environment.

Seminar XXI Fellows develop broad perspectives and analytical skills that enable them to evaluate and formulate national policy. Seminar XXI is an educational development program for current and future leaders in the U.S. national security and foreign policy communities. Administered by MIT's Center for International Studies, the program is intended for professionals with significant potential to move into key decision-making roles in the next 5-10 years.

Program participants, known as Fellows, come from a wide range of sponsoring organizations including the armed forces, Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private companies. The goal of Seminar XXI is to equip rising military officials and civilian executives with the multi-dimensional analytic skills needed to understand foreign relations and shape effective policy options for the United States.

b. Schedule. Participants will meet for a total of nine sessions during the 2025-26 academic year, beginning in September 2025 and ending in May 2026.

Sessions will include one (1) introductory session; three (3) weekend sessions in Warrenton, VA; and five (5) weeknight sessions in Washington, D.C.

c. Eligibility. Navy Seminar XXI Fellows will be Navy officers

(O5-O7) and civilians (GS14-15, SES, or equivalent) with clear promotion potential, and opportunity to apply these skills in their future assignments in the Navy. This application process is open only to individuals serving in Navy organizations, on the Joint Staff, or in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), or other offices without dedicated Seminar XXI quotas attached to commands located within a 225-mile driving distance from the National Capital Region for the entire period of September 2025 through May 2026. Navy personnel in Government and Defense Agencies with MIT Seminar XXI programs must apply through their parent organizations. Please contact the OPNAV N712 POCs listed in this NAVADMIN for questions on eligibility.

d. Program Specifics. For AY25-26, MIT will select a total of 80 personnel across the Federal Government. Of these, 12 will be Navy nominees. A total of twelve (12) Navy officers and Civilians will be selected for the AY25-26 Seminar XXI fellowships. Selectees must meet minimum attendance requirements and are encouraged to attend every class with the full support of their command. There is no tuition cost to the participants or their individual commands, regardless of duty station. However, participants or their commands are responsible for all non-tuition expenses, including travel, for Seminar XXI meetings and activities.

e. Admission Process. A Navy selection panel will choose from all Navy applicants those 12 individuals with the best combination of experience, accomplishments, and clear potential for significant future advancement and leadership positions. The selection panel will review applications for both programs; MIT Seminar XXI nominees will be notified upon completion of panel deliberations by early April 2025. OPNAV N3/N5/N7 will provide the list of the 12 Navy nominees selected by the panel to the MIT Seminar XXI Admissions Board by early April 2025. Navy nominees accepted by MIT will be notified by mid-June 2025.

f. Service Obligation. Military MIT Seminar XXI Fellows incur a service obligation of one year upon completion.

### 3. Dark Trident

a. Program Information. From 1981 to 2016 CNO was supported by the Strategic Studies Group (SSG). Resident at the Naval War College (NWC) in Newport, RI, and with a new cohort of SSG fellows each year, the SSG worked directly for the CNO. Its initial purpose was to educate future flag officers in strategic thinking; later, it was intended to deliver tangible products to the CNO. In 2001, then CNO Admiral Vernon Clark created the Deep Blue organization to conduct strategic analysis and work on special projects. During AY25-26, CNO will stand up a new research group, Dark Trident, as a pilot program. The purpose of Dark Trident is to leverage the expertise and experience of select officers and civil servants, including those with advanced education and/or developmental experiences, to assist in providing advice on, and potential solutions to, current and future Navy challenges by developing actionable products and plans to support execution of CNO's NAVPLAN and Project 33 targets as per reference (a). At the beginning of AY25-26, CNO will provide a list of topics for Dark Trident to focus on. At the end of the year, the group will brief the Navy 4-Star leadership on their research findings and recommendations.

b. Schedule. Dark Trident will take a part-time, hybrid approach over the course of AY25-26 (September 2025 - June 2026). Three (3) in-person

sessions are planned for development and research at appropriate Department of Navy (DON) installations (such as the Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School, Navy Labs, Systems Commands, and Operational Commands). In between in-person sessions, the group will meet and work collaboratively in a virtual environment.

c. Eligibility. Dark Trident team members will be Navy officers (O4-O6, Active Component and Training and Administration of the Reserve (TAR)) and civilians (GS14-15 or equivalent) who will be stationed on shore duty within the continental United States for the entire period of September 2025 through June 2026. Applicants must be able to travel three times per year for in-person sessions. Please contact the OPNAV N712 POCs listed in this NAVADMIN for questions on eligibility.

d. Program Specifics. Up to twelve (12) Navy officers and Civilians will be selected for the AY25-26 Dark Trident team. Selectees are strongly encouraged to attend every in-person and virtual session with the full support of their command. Commands are responsible for all travel/TDY expenses for Dark Trident in-person sessions and must prioritize participants' Dark Trident related activities.

e. Admission Process. For AY25-26, the Navy will select up to 12 eligible personnel to participate in Dark Trident. A Navy selection panel will choose individuals with the best combination of experience, ideas, and potential to work with other team members to develop actionable solutions for the CNO. The selection panel will review applications for both programs; Dark Trident selectees will be notified upon completion of panel deliberations by early April 2025.

f. Service Obligation. There is no service obligation for participation in this program.

4. Application Procedures. AY25-26 applications are due to OPNAV N712 NLT 04 March 2025. Reserve Officers, please contact N095, as the deadline for reservists may be earlier.

a. Individuals may apply for all programs for which they meet the eligibility requirements via a single application; however, individuals will only be selected to participate in one program. Annotate which program(s) you are applying for in the subject line of your application. Those applying for both programs shall rank their program preferences in their application.

b. Application Package. Each nomination package must include the following: an application letter including a personal statement, a Curriculum Vitae (CV), a command endorsement letter acknowledging individual/command responsibilities, and two letters of recommendation (one of which must be from the first Flag officer or SES in the applicant's chain of command).

Prospective applicants should contact OPNAV N712 to request templates for all required documents. All applications should be submitted by applicants directly to OPNAV N712; copy your ranking authority (described below) as applicable. The deadline for submission of all individuals' application materials to OPNAV N712 is 04 March 2025. Reserve Officers, please contact OPNAV N095 for appropriate guidance, as the reserve process may vary.

c. Organization Rankings. Organizations with more than one applicant should rank all candidates submitting application packages from their command.

Military and civilian applicants should be ranked separately, although a combined ranking may also be submitted. MIT Seminar XXI and Dark Trident applicants should also be ranked separately. A template for the ranking memorandum is available upon request from the N712 POCs. The deadline for rankings is 11 March 2025.

5. Points of Contact. Send requests for application document templates and any questions to the OPNAV N712 or OPNAV N095 POCs as applicable:

a. OPNAV N712: Ms. Jennifer Rigdon Teter, Deputy Branch Head, 703-692-1934, jennifer.c.rigdonteter.civ@us.navy.mil; LT Blake Copeland, Action Officer, 703-692-1184, Blake.A.Copeland3.mil@us.navy.mil; Ms. Hannah Olivieri, Contract Support, 703-693-0450, hannah.g.olivieri.ctr@us.navy.mil.

b. OPNAV N095: LCDR Jason Ely, Deputy EA, 703-693-5757, jason.m.ely.mil@us.navy.mil.

6. Released by VADM D.W. Dwyer, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans, Strategy, and Warfighting Development (N3N5N7).//

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