

NAVAIR college interns train for future int'l sales careers



Rear Adm. Mark Darrah, who oversees the Program Executive Office for Unmanned Aviation and Strike Weapons (PEO (U&W)), addresses a group of student interns who are pursuing a career in Foreign Military Sales. PEO U&W is the first organization within NAVAIR to establish an FMS intern program to support significant increase in international sales. (U.S. Navy photo)

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Six college interns at NAVAIR are gaining valuable experience in foreign military sales this summer, helping them to prepare for future jobs in this growing career field.

The interns, who are currently supporting the Program Executive Office for Unmanned Aviation and Weapons, attended an orientation session July 20 at Patuxent River, where [Rear Adm. Mark Darrah, who oversees PEO U&W](#), addressed the group and provided an overview of the organization.

“FMS is a challenging area,” said Darrah. “This is an excellent opportunity to start your career here from the very beginning and learn things you need to know to be successful in the future.”

PEO U&W is the first organization within NAVAIR to establish an FMS intern program to support the significant increase in FMS requirements. [From 2010-2015, U&W's FMS portfolio grew from \\$2 billion to \\$5 billion a year in sales.](#) Mike Sears, PEO U&W international programs lead, said he anticipates those numbers will continue to increase, particularly due to the political state of the world and the proven reliability of U.S. weapons systems.

“A few years ago we looked at the potential growth in FMS and determined we needed to increase our workforce in this career field to keep up with the demand,” he said. “The hope is if we bring in college students at the entry level they will grow in the International community and become our future FMS leaders.”

Carol Kolman, PEO U&W's resource, management and administration lead, pulled together this unique program when she saw the challenges the PEO was having filling FMS billets with experienced personnel. Her hard work and vision made this possible, Darrah said. The PEO plans to continue hiring three to four students per year through the federal government's [Pathways program](#) with the expectation they will become part of the FMS acquisition workforce upon graduation.

“I am getting to work with extremely knowledgeable people and senior leaders who are willing to invest in my future and help me learn, said Katie Sutton, who is in her second year of the intern program. “They are teaching me and helping me to build who I will become as a NAVAIR employee.”

For more information on PEO U&W's FMS intern program please contact Carol Kolman at 301-757-8027.