

B

Canadian National Leadership Program



THE CNLP

Citizen.Soldier was also the catalyst for another of Breakout's culture-changing ventures. Interviewed for the film, defence commentator Brian MacDonald observed that an "entire generation of upper and middle management Canadians had become disconnected from the military" following the military's decision to cancel a longstanding and highly regarded officer-training program at Canadian universities. From a modest beginning at McGill University in 1912, the program at its height was training some 5000 officer-cadets a year in 60 reserve units at 27 Canadian universities. When the program was cancelled in 1968, the institutional ties between the universities and the three services effectively ended – and Canada lost its most effective program for leadership development and nation-building.

As it happened, similar programs continued in the United States, Britain and Australia. In the US, Vietnam-era agitation had driven the program out of the Ivy League colleges, but by 2012 they had restarted at institutes like Harvard, Yale and Columbia. So why did these programs not re-emerge in Canada as well?

Breakout took up the challenge with the production of three films telling the story of the implications of terminating the officer training program, how the program had continued to thrive in Britain, and where the US program stood today.

In the first film, No Country for Young Men, prominent politicians, academics, journalists and business leaders described what they had learned during their youth from participating in the Canadian Officer Training Corps in the Army, Navy and Air Force and how they had applied those lessons to their lives. The second film, For Queen & Country, was based on original research by Dr. Neville Poy, the internationally renowned surgeon. The film followed students in the British Army's university officer training program at Cambridge and interviewed graduates who had gone on to distinguished careers in industry, government and the military.

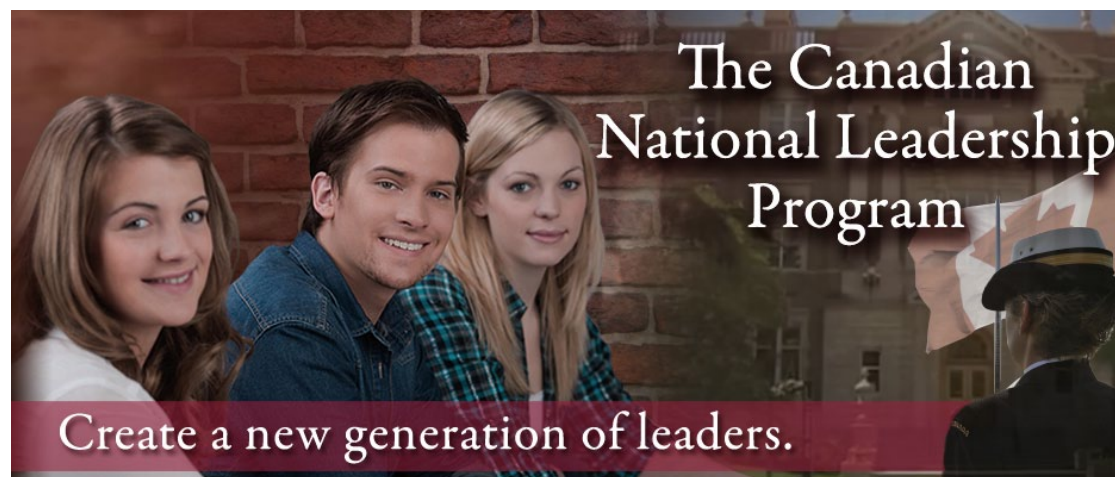


The third film, Bridging the Gap, explored the clash of cultures which lay behind the civil-military crisis of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, and examined the role played by the university-based Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program in advancing civil-military relations. The film focused on the revival of the program at Columbia University to learn why and how ROTC was experiencing such a resurgence of interest.

In parallel with the development of these films, Breakout embarked on its most ambitious undertaking to date attempting to convince Canadian universities and colleges, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the government to restore the partnership between institutions of higher learning and the Canadian military which previously had had such a positive impact on the attitudes and skills of generations of students entering the workforce and making their mark on Canadian society. The initiative was entitled the Canadian National Leadership Program (CNLP).

The first step was to take the temperature of the country. Was Canada ready for such an initiative? In October 2009, Breakout organized a symposium in the West Block on Parliament Hill which settled the question. With sponsorship from the W. Garfield Weston Foundation, Scotia McLeod, and others, the symposium was co-chaired by Senators Pamela Wallin and William Rompkey. No Country for Young Men was screened, and commentary was provided from such distinguished Canadians as the former Speaker of the House of Commons John Fraser, historian emeritus Dr. Jack Granatstein, Donald Wallace of the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy, the former principal of Royal Military College Dr. John Scott Cowan, George Roter of Engineers Without Borders, Dr. Douglas Bland from Queen's, Dr. Neville Poy, and philanthropist Blake Goldring.

The majority of those attending reacted enthusiastically and offered their assistance to Breakout, and we subsequently embarked on the long, sometimes frustrating and eventually successful quest to make the Canadian National Leadership Program a reality. It was a daunting task for an organization comprising just a handful of people, but diligent staff work, communications, and support to universities and military units served to remove the obstacles which typically obstruct cultural change. In due course, Breakout was able to secure CNLP endorsements from a broad cross-section of Canadians including university presidents and deans, military commanders, Cabinet ministers and parliamentarians of every political persuasion. In 2011, Breakout met with the Governor General. We obtained his personal endorsement for the program, including his agreement to be its patron once the CNLP was officially launched. In 2011, Breakout testified before the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence which later that year issued its report *Answering the Call* which recommended the CNLP as a "model for the training of Canada's future leaders."



THE CNLP PILOT PROJECTS



Canadian National Leadership Program - leadership, citizenship and nation building for our times.



The big breakthrough was the decision that same year by the University of Alberta to take the lead among universities. In June 2011, the Provost of the University, Dr. Carl Amrhein, wrote to the Prime Minister commending Breakout's initiative as "leadership, citizenship and nation building for our times" and volunteered to host a CNLP "proof of concept pilot programme." U of A had attended the Ottawa symposium previously mentioned and had subsequently requested 200 copies of No Country for Young Men.

Initially, the Canadian Armed Forces reacted with some caution to the idea of providing the military trainers and facilities which the program would require, concerned about how the CNLP would fit with the military's own plans for the recruitment and training of officers and were fearful of the potential cost at a time of shrinking defence budgets. In late 2012, however, the Commander of the Army, LGen Peter Devlin, convinced the Armed Forces Council to allow the Army to serve as a test-bed for the other services, drawing on Army resources which could be freed up from the Western Military Area headquartered at CFB Edmonton to support the University of Alberta pilot project. The Army and the University thereupon concluded a Memorandum of Understanding laying out the terms of their joint venture, and in July 2013 the Hon. Peter MacKay formally announced the government's support for the program. In January 2015, University of Alberta academic authorities granted accreditation for the pilot project to begin in the fall of 2015 and approved the granting of a Certificate in Military Leadership to students who successfully complete the program.

Breakout has put particular effort into securing a pilot project at a francophone university. Without the active involvement of Quebec-based institutions, the CNLP could never become a truly national program.

There were an abundance of skeptics aplenty who believed Quebec was too isolationist or too pacifist to ever accept participation in a program which featured collaborating with the military. However, they did not know the history. Quebecers have been strong supporters of the military when deployed in causes which are unambiguously in the Canadian interest, and Quebec has hosted some of Canada's most storied regiments. Initial discussions with leaders of the Reserves in Quebec produced considerable enthusiasm for bringing the CNLP to Quebec. After Breakout made a series presentations to the top military leaders in Quebec, the Commander of the Army LGen Marquis Hainse (who had replaced LGen Devlin) authorized a second Army-led CNLP pilot project for Quebec and tasked 2nd Canadian Division in Montreal with initiating it up by the fall 2015 – most likely at the Université de Montréal.

Breakout has also sought to tap into the vast potential represented by community colleges. Canada has 98 universities with over 800,000 full-time students; but it has another 130 community colleges on 900 campuses with 900,000 full-time students. Fortunately, a major inroad into this group was provided by LGen Devlin who, after retiring from the Army, took up the position of President of Fanshawe College in London, Ontario. Fanshawe has six campuses across the province with a student enrollment larger than that of the University of Alberta. In April 2014, Peter Devlin wrote to Breakout expressing his intention to introduce a pilot program at Fanshawe “to demonstrate the successful application of the CNLP concept to community colleges in Canada.”

With Breakout spreading the word, today 26 university and college presidents and deans across Canada have expressed an interest in participating in the CNLP, with some inquiring about the possibility of hosting pilot projects. Breakout has also met with military commanders across the country, several of whom have declared an interest in establishing pilot projects similar to the one in Alberta. Among the interested parties are the two other universities in Alberta, the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University, as well as Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. The government has approved pilots in five regions across Canada.



EXPANDING THE VISION



As Canada approaches the 150th anniversary of Confederation, a new vision awaits. There are 1.7 million full-time students enrolled in universities and colleges. If just one percent were to participate in the Canadian National Leadership Program, this would translate into approximately 4500 graduates entering the workforce every year. In ten years, the result would be over 45,000 of such individuals, many already in junior or mid-level executive the CNLP. Their presence would transform not just the workplace but Canadian society: a new generation of confident, creative and courageous young men and women determined to make Canada their own, citizens building their own nation.



THE CNLP - A PROGRAM TO DEVELOP THE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CANADA NEEDS

The CNLP is much more than just a program to help Canadians reconnect with their military. It is also an excellent program to develop the employment and leadership skills of young Canadians.

Corporate Canada knows what employability skills it is looking for in university and college graduates, and the graduates themselves have a pretty good idea what these are. But neither are getting what they need from Canada's post-secondary institutions. And very few seem to understand how to develop the skills required.



Approximately 20 years ago, The Conference Board of Canada formed a Corporate Council on Education. One of its products was a profile of the generic skills, attitudes and behaviours employers look for in a new recruit. The profile described a person with an ability to communicate, to think critically, to function effectively in a work environment, and to exercise leadership. The Conference Board's updates [Employability Skills 2000+](#) summarizes the skill set.

In its 2012 survey, the Canadian University Survey Consortium reported that a third to a half of the 15,000 graduates polled believed their university education had not helped them sufficiently to develop corporate Canada's desired employability skill-set. Satisfaction levels were underwhelming right across the spectrum of employability skills.

- Leadership skills (self-confidence 54%, interpersonal skills 54%, leadership skills 48%),
- Communications skills (oral communications 61%, cooperative interaction in groups 57%),
- Critical thinking skills (thinking analytically 71%, identifying and solving problems 52%) and
- Work skills ("general skills and knowledge relevant for employment" 51%, planning and completing projects 61%, persistence with difficult tasks 58%, time management 56%, ability to work independently 72%, entrepreneurial skills 18%).

So there's a problem. When the Corporate Council on Education asked the question "How are employability skills developed?", the answer was that "Employability skills are developed in school and through a variety of life experiences outside school. The student, the family and the educational system, supported and enhanced by the rest of society, share this responsibility." In other words no one is responsible.

Imagine a university and/or a college program that focuses on developing the working skills – in fact, the life skills – both employers and graduating students say they want and need. A few such programs do exist, but they tend to be limited to sectors of the economy where there is a well established linkage between training and professional success. Examples include medicine, nursing, law and other such professions as well as the apprenticed trades, such as electricians, welders, industrial mechanics, etc.

What is missing is a training program that develops core competencies – leadership, analytical thinking, communications, work skills – applicable to any and all professions. What would such a program look like? Well, look no further than the Canadian National Leadership Program (CNLP), which incorporates into a student's university or college experience some of the highly regarded leadership and citizenship training common to military officer development programs in advanced democracies, without requiring participants to commit to national service.



To date, some 26 Canadian institutions of higher learning have expressed an interest in participating in the CNLP program. The Department of National Defence has agreed that the Canadian Armed Forces will provide the trainers and facilities.

What distinguishes the CNLP program is that it combines **classroom learning about leadership with experiential learning of leadership**, using a military officer development model. Students enroll full-time in a university or college program of their choice, while taking a number of courses on leadership themes – for which they receive academic credit. In addition, participating students enroll in the Reserves as officer-cadets for the duration of their time in the program – and are paid for the training they receive.

Training takes place on average one evening per week and one weekend per month during the academic year, and for up to 12 weeks during the summer. In the first two years, students learn skills such as communications, problem-solving, teamwork, small-task leadership and basic fieldcraft (first aid, hygiene, survival and evacuation skills). In the third year students shift to “leadership in action” mode, leading and supervising new recruits. On successfully completing the program, participants receive a certificate recognizing the skills they have acquired – for some, this would be a huge advantage for landing the job they want.



At some institutions, the military component of the CNLP training may be viewed as unsuited to campus life or institutional priorities. However, this is clearly not the view of the 26 institutions who are considering participating. Nor was it the view of the 27 Canadian universities and colleges who participated in a similar program until it was cancelled in 1968 for reasons which had nothing to do with its merits. Nor is it the view of the 18 universities in the UK, which include Oxford, Cambridge and London, where such a program has continued to thrive; or of the approximately one thousand civilian colleges in the United States also involved, including Harvard, Yale and Columbia who all recently welcomed the program back to their campuses. What these universities value is the leadership competencies students acquire from the military training which benefits them in whatever profession they choose.

To quote one British “Captain of Industry,”

“A very large amount of my success as a businessmen in the UK has been driven by what I learned at the OTC (Officer Training Corps) twenty years ago. What I learned from my academic degree has got no comparison to the value I learned from the OTC.”

- Chris Hinstead, CEO Public Technology LTD, London.

The Canadian National Leadership Program goes to the heart of the existing student employability skills issue – the character of the individual. No other program has ever been as effective in ensuring students enter the workforce not just with subject-matter knowledge, but also, with personal and organizational leadership ability. It does so in a purposeful and practical way, utilizing a model whose effectiveness has been demonstrated in Canada and in other countries. It is a model which is attracting increasing interest and support from institutions of higher learning across Canada.
