



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
WEST POINT, NEW YORK 10996

July 24, 2012

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Department of Electrical Engineering
and Computer Science

Masters Degree Study Selectees
Department of Electrical Engineering
and Computer Science
United States Military Academy
West Point, New York 10996

Congratulations! I'm delighted that you have been selected for Masters degree studies and appointment to the faculty of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at West Point, the United States Military Academy. I deeply appreciate your decision to commit four or five years of your Army time to cadets and the EECS mission. Your talents, abilities and energy are our most important resources. The Department is blessed to draw from the Army's top officers possessing academic prowess, technology expertise, and exemplary leadership. Your selection is a mark of distinction of which you ought to be proud. You will be joining one of the finest undergraduate faculties in the world. There is no better way to serve the Army and your own professional development than through the experience you are about to begin. I am looking forward with greatest anticipation to working with you as a member of our EECS family. In order to begin to know us, I ask you to read our web site carefully. Start with the general information about the department at <http://www.eecs.usma.edu/hq/eecs.htm>.

What follows is my guidance on how to proceed from here. My intent is for you to have a rewarding, enjoyable experience at school while preparing to be an exceptional educator during your future EECS faculty tour.

First, seek acceptance at the best graduate program where you can be successful in the time allotted. You owe this to the Army and your future students. There are three steps. If you have any questions as you perform them, ask your program director. First, identify sub-disciplines where you have interest. We're ready to help you sort through the alternatives. Second, identify the highest quality institutions that offer programs strong in your chosen sub-disciplines. US News rankings can be helpful. The Department S1/Recruiting Officer can also help. The Army requires you to find at least one low-cost school option. This is normally easy to do. Some great schools are also low in cost, especially for residents of the respective state. Location close to extended family and other personal concerns can play a role in your choices, but they cannot be overriding. Your top priority must be the excellence of your education. If you need help with your decision, please ask. Finally, gain acceptance and complete the required administrative work to receive your school assignment.

Graduate school ought to be a wonderful, joyous time of discovery and growth. Take advantage of it! However, prepare to feel some stress, at least initially. You'll normally be operating outside the Army community, including the rich support systems we take for granted. Your Army jobs usually put the lives of others in your hands. Responsibility for them drives you forward. Graduate school is different. Rather than responsibility for others, it's about personal development and discipline. You'll be surrounded by great colleagues who nonetheless do not rely on you; they'll have lives and goals quite different from your own. In addition, you will be taking up academic work for the first time in years. If you have recently returned from deployment, there will be added stresses. Post-traumatic stress may manifest. All

this can be disorienting, perhaps extremely so. Expect your first semester or quarter to be a time of adjustment. Work hard, but do not over-schedule. Allow time to adapt to your new way of living and working. Your mental health is all-important. Just as you would go to the doctor for help with the flu, if adjustment to school or any other matter is causing you to feel unwell, it's your duty to seek out help. If you are not clear about how to do this, ask the Community Mental Health office at Keller Hospital here at West Point, <http://kach.amedd.army.mil>.

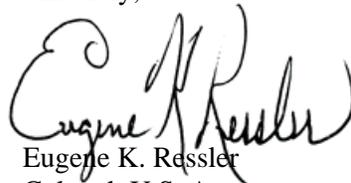
Choose a thesis or project degree program if possible. (However, be sure that completion within two years is the norm. A few Masters thesis programs take longer; these are probably not for you.) Alternatively, augment a coursework-only program with a significant project done as independent study. A thesis or project is excellent preparation for your future. We have a hands-on curriculum with many projects throughout, where you will certainly play a role. Most noteworthy are cadet majors' senior design projects. External observers frequently comment that cadet design work is at the graduate level. Use your own projects to learn what makes a good experience so that you can provide excellent ones for cadets. Additionally, our programs provide Honors degrees, where a thesis-like paper is required. You may be an honors paper advisor. In addition, a thesis or project provides an excellent opportunity for technical writing. A teacher must write well. Many schools have excellent writing improvement courses that you should consider if writing is not a personal strength for you.

Quickly devise a complete plan and schedule that will take you to successful graduation and satisfy any guidance from your program director. Your school or advisor may prefer an open-ended approach, but this is not an option due to the fixed time available and your specific goal to prepare to be an EECS educator. Strive for key people to "buy in" to the approach you are taking. Communicate with them early and often. If you have two years to study, it ought to be easy to meet graduation requirements. Use the extra time to prepare to teach EECS courses. I view strong ability to teach multiple courses in our curriculum as a great strength in a faculty member. If you have any interest in Ph.D. studies in the future, consider exploring the possibilities with your advisor.

Finally, keep us up to date. Submit the required reports to the S1/Recruiting officer and Human Resources Command, but also stay in touch with your program director through email or phone calls a few times each year. We want to know how you are doing and help you succeed.

Again, welcome to the EECS team! We have the best mission in the world, preparing the Army's future leaders by providing them with the best possible education in our technology disciplines. I hope you share the excitement and happiness that we feel every day. We're devoted to support your preparation for the day you'll join us, and we are all looking forward to that day!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eugene K. Ressler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "R".

Eugene K. Ressler
Colonel, U.S. Army
Professor and Head of Department