MIT SEMINAR XXI

FOREIGN POLICY, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Preparing leaders in U.S. national security and foreign policy for the next stage of their careers

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

SEMINARXXI

Shaping the Future of U.S. Policy

Seminar XXI is an educational 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 five to 10 years.

Program participants, known as Fellows, come from a wide range of sponsoring organizations including the U.S. armed forces, government agencies, NGOs, and private companies. Candidates must be nominated from within their organizations to apply to the program.

While session topics change regularly in response to shifting U.S. security concerns, the overriding goal of Seminar XXI has remained consistent since the program's founding in 1986: to equip rising military officials and civilian executives with the multidimensional analytic skills needed to understand foreign relations and shape effective policy options for the United States. Critical to achieving this goal is the program's emphasis on interagency participation, which allows for candid discussion among key players from all corners of the national security and foreign policy communities.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

- 9-month duration
- Convenient evening and weekend sessions in the Washington, D.C. area
- Interagency participation across military, government, nonprofit, and private sectors
- Renowned faculty from MIT and other top institutions worldwide
- Nongraded program leading to a certificate from MIT

"Seminar XXI was a pivot point in my career, opening my eyes more widely to the interconnections in the global world. I loved every minute of the yearlong experience, which provided me with deep intellectual capital that I drew on as a four-star admiral and NATO commander and still use today as dean of The Fletcher School."

—James Stavridis, Dean of The Fletcher School, Tufts University

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Seminar XXI runs from September through May. Designed for working professionals, the program meets approximately once a month for a total of five evening sessions in downtown Washington, D.C., and three weekend sessions in Warrenton, VA.

During sessions, faculty members present their topic areas and then open discussion with a Q&A period, which often continues informally over dinner. Weekend sessions include breakout groups that enable smaller-scale, focused conversation. Staff members intentionally assign tables and groups to facilitate cross-pollination of ideas among Fellows from varied work backgrounds.

Faculty members include renowned social scientists from MIT and subject matter experts from other top universities and research institutes in the United States and abroad. Past faculty members have included Michèle Flournoy, Condoleezza Rice, Bernard Lewis, Sumit Ganguly, Samuel Huntington, Sarah Chayes, John Mearsheimer, Joseph Nye, Anne-Marie Slaughter, Gerard Prunier, and James Dobbins.

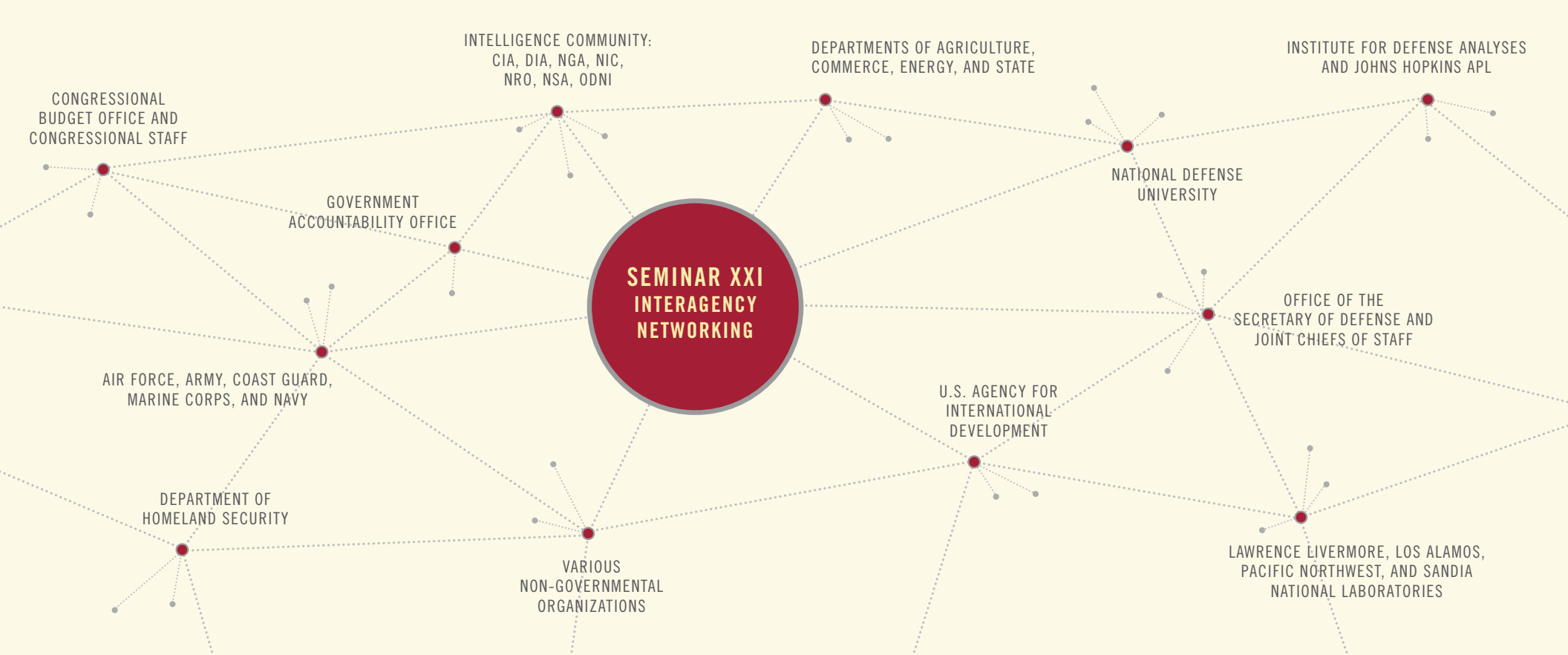
ANALYTIC APPROACH

Faculty members employ a three-part framework for analyzing policy-related issues:

Paradigms *are the lenses, or specific worldviews, through which people see and understand things. By adopting different paradigms, Fellows can develop a fuller and more nuanced context for analysis.*

Social science theories *are used to explain events and make predictions. They help Fellows better understand the relationships among political structures, economic forces, societal and cultural constraints, and international pressures.*

Empirical knowledge *includes history, research, and the first-hand information that Fellows absorb on the job. This knowledge is used to test theories and develop evidence-based recommendations.*



BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

Seminar XXI is recognized throughout the U.S. national security and foreign policy communities as an indispensable—and utterly unique—leadership development program. The program's value is best illustrated by its alumni/ae, who have gone on to assume some of the nation's most influential policy-related positions.

In addition to vital career preparation, Seminar XXI offers several benefits:

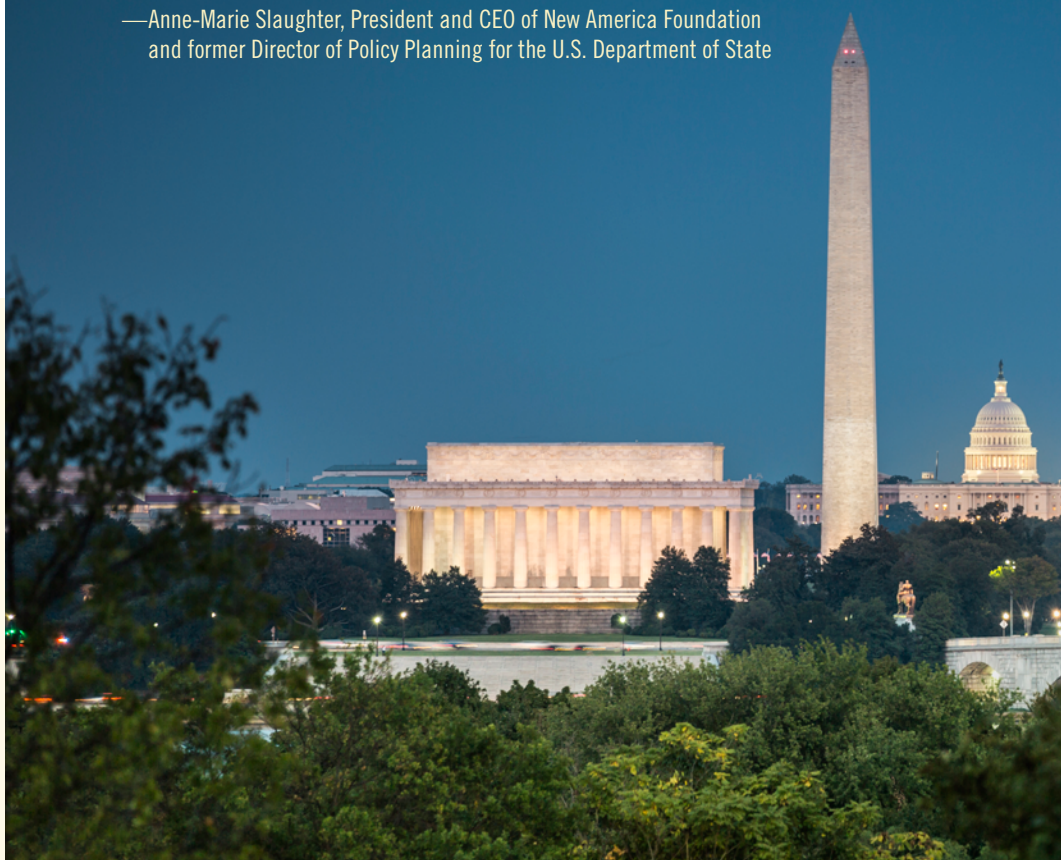
- **Interagency networking**—Seminar XXI breaks down barriers between military and civilian organizations, enabling frank and revelatory conversations among agencies that might otherwise never talk to each other.
- **Access to renowned faculty**—Seminar XXI taps the brightest minds in social science for its faculty members. Fellows get to interact with faculty during presentations as well as over dinner and weekend sessions thanks to the program's immersive format.
- **Endorsement from MIT**—Given MIT's long track record of national service through applied research, a certificate from MIT carries weight in the policymaking community and can open doors to exciting career opportunities.
- **A loyal alumni/ae community**—Seminar XXI's more than 2,000 alumni/ae are fiercely loyal to the program—and each other. Relationships begun during the program often turn into lasting career connections, giving alumni/ae a valuable source of professional feedback and support from outside their organizations.

High-level positions held by alumni/ae:

- *Deputy Secretary of Defense*
- *Commanders of Pacific, Strategic, Southern, and Transportation Commands*
- *Supreme Allied Commander Europe*
- *Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff*
- *Chiefs of Staff of U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force*
- *Commandant of the Marine Corps*
- *Director Central Intelligence Agency*
- *Director National Security Agency*
- *Director USAID*
- *Commander Multi National Force Iraq*
- *Vice Commandant U.S. Coast Guard*

"Seminar XXI is more than a program; it's an institution. I always loved meeting the wide range of participants from different services. The alumni/ae network spans the entire national security establishment and includes many leaders who are all the wiser for having attended."

—Anne-Marie Slaughter, President and CEO of New America Foundation and former Director of Policy Planning for the U.S. Department of State



ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Internal Nomination · Admission opens in February

- *Candidates must be nominated by a senior executive in their organization to apply to Seminar XXI.*
- *Each organization designates a Point of Contact (POC) who coordinates the internal nomination process.*
- *Nomination procedures vary by organization, so those interested in applying should check with their POC to determine the steps they need to take.*

Submission of Applications · Deadline: April 15

- *Seminar XXI gives each sponsoring organization a finite number of program spots to ensure diverse representation among the military, government, and private sectors.*
- *POCs submit the strongest applications from among those nominated.*
- *Individual applications from other appropriate and interested groups within the national security community, such as non-governmental organizations, may also be considered.*

Selection of Fellows · June

- *The Seminar XXI Admissions Board, which is drawn from the alumni/ae board and executive committee, meets in early June to review applications.*
- *POCs and accepted Fellows are notified by mid-June.*
- *Program invoices are issued by mid-July.*

For inquiries regarding admissions, please contact Executive Director Tisha Gomes Voss at 617-258-6862 or tishag@mit.edu.

Seminar XXI Program

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