When companies like Amazon and Netflix started getting attention for delivering goods and services in a new, streamlined way, the business world took notice and began investing heavily in supply chain management. While the field has always been around, it has recently gained a new level of appreciation and importance, likely due to the staggering success of organizations that have learned to apply it. Dell, for instance, said the supply chain is “the biggest leverage point we have.”

On its website, the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) defines its activity as “encompassing the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities to include coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third party service providers and customers.” In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies.

Supply chain management has become a field of choice for many current and former military members because of the overlap with the skills learned in the service. Servicemembers and veterans make great candidates for a career in supply chain management because of their proven abilities to prioritize and organize, learn quickly and adapt, manage relationships, make decisions, solve problems and work in teams. In fact, CSCMP cites a study by Auburn University and Central Michigan University in which supply chain employers indicate these skills and abilities as crucial for employment in the industry.

Whether a military member’s interest in supply chain management serves to complement his or her current active duty role or to transition to a career outside of the military, there are several attractive options for students seeking to further their education in this expanding field.

**North Dakota State University**

Dr. Denver Tolliver, director of transportation and logistics for North Dakota State University, explained that his school’s online Master of Managerial Logistics (MML) program targets logisticians, industry professionals, military officers and DoD civilians. The program covers fundamental logistics and supply chain management, operations management, purchasing and demand management, and emergency management.

NDSU’s online MML is offered in cooperation with the Army Logistics University at Fort Lee, Va. Students who successfully complete the theater logistics planner program at the Army Logistics University may be awarded nine transfer credits toward the completion of the MML. NDSU also offers a Ph.D. in transportation and logistics, an M.S. in transportation and urban systems, and a non-disquisition Master of Transportation and Urban Systems. A certificate program in transportation and urban systems is targeted at practicing professionals.

Noting the growth of the supply chain management industry, Tolliver said, “Both business and military operations are increasingly global in nature. At the same time, transportation is becoming more
integrated with electronic communication and information systems. As a result, professionals with education and skills in modern supply chain management and logistics are in high demand.”

Tolliver pointed out that just as moving people and supplies efficiently and effectively is critical to success in military operations, moving raw materials and finished goods efficiently and on time can boost the bottom line in private industry. “There are opportunities in public-sector, non-military careers as well. Agencies recognize that well-designed transportation systems can enhance a region’s economic competitiveness and quality of life. Many of the world’s transportation systems are facing capacity constraints—there are times when there is just too much traffic for anything to move efficiently. Environmental concerns, public opinion and soaring costs often make expansion of those systems all but impossible. Consequently it’s up to planners and logisticians to find ways to make existing systems function more efficiently so that their capacity can be used more fully.”

During its seven years, 95 percent of NDSU’s MML program graduates have been active duty military members. “With a focus that combines logistics and supply chain management theory with techniques and technology from both military and civilian worlds, the MML program gives students a unique perspective,” Tolliver said. “Our curriculum includes courses on planning, adaptive planning, international logistics management, crisis analysis and homeland security, organizational change management, and transportation systems security. All of these courses focus on giving students the tools to plan, analyze and confidently make decisions under rapidly changing conditions with limited information. Additionally, the MML program is interdisciplinary, drawing on expertise from business, emergency management, engineering and other disciplines. Consequently, NDSU’s MML degree helps students develop skill in leadership, business practices, problem analysis, transportation modes, change management, cultural awareness and other areas that are essential for dealing with a broad variety of challenges faced by both military and civilian logisticians.”

Bellevue University

“Building strong relationships with product suppliers and working with customer-focused logistics service providers are critical to building a competitive advantage,” said Dr. Ed Haynes, professor and supply chain logistics management program director at Bellevue University. “Because of this, supply chain management (SCM)/logistics managers directly impact the success of their organizations. These SCM/logistics roles are expanding and can lead in many directions.”

Haynes said that some of the jobs in the field include: analyst, consultant, customer service manager, international logistics

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manager, inventory control manager, logistics engineer, logistics manager, logistics services salesperson, logistics software manager, material manager, production manager, purchasing manager, supply chain manager, systems support manager, transportation manager, vendor managed inventory coordinator and warehouse operations manager.

Bellevue University’s program is unique because of its adherence to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), which is a process of certifying those individuals in the Department of Defense acquisition workforce who have met education and experience requirements and achieved professional status.

Bellevue University, in Nebraska and online, has an undergraduate accelerated Bachelor of Science degree in supply chain logistics management and a Master of Business Administration with concentrations in supply chain management or acquisition and contract management. Bellevue University partners with Defense Acquisition University and offers a Master of Science in acquisition and contract management (MAQC). The MAQC program enables members of the federal acquisition community and its contracting partners to enhance their acquisition managerial practices and meet DAWIA certification requirements.

**University of Maryland University College**

UMUC offers a 36-credit-hour online master’s degree in management with an acquisition and supply chain management specialization. The program emphasizes contracting, supply chain management and logistics application as well as critical thinking, complex problem solving and innovation. The courses focus on creating and implementing global readiness solutions to sustain field and workplace operations. Today’s competitive business environment—with its growing costs, regulatory requirements and corporate interconnections—has made acquisition and supply chain management more complex. Acquisition managers must understand the entire supply chain process, including effective purchasing, contract bidding, budget control, tracking, logistics, delivery and accountability.

Dr. Freda Powell-Bell, academic program director for acquisition and supply chain management at UMUC, cited the Bureau of

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**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

**Major Christina Lewis**

University of Kansas Graduate  
Master of Science in Business (Concentration in Supply Chain Management and Logistics)

I graduated from KU in April 2013. The KU School of Business program is offered to Army logisticians in tandem with intermediate level education at the Command and General Staff College. I came to the program with little strategic experience with large civilian firms. This program helped me appreciate the systems that have to be in place to create and support the logistics networks that function at the tactical level.

As a biology undergrad, I wasn’t sure at first about taking on a business degree. I think the biggest challenges were the accounting and business finance classes, only because of my inexperience in those areas. The class that made the most sense to me was statistics, as it was all about using the statistics results to make decisions, not just about how to get the numbers. In Army logistics, we do tons of statistical decision making. We ask and answer questions like “What is the consumption rate of fuel and how many days of supply should we maintain at each location?” “How much lift capacity is required to clear equipment from a location and when do we need that lift?” and “Which repair parts should be stocked in our warehouses and how many of each of them are really needed to keep equipment operational?” As with many things, there is always an art to answering these questions, but there’s a large ‘science’ factor that is based on historical data trends and predictions of future operational requirements.

I am currently serving at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan with the 3d Expeditionary Sustainment Command. I work in the support operations section as the distribution integration chief. In the end, I’d do it all over again, although the classes overlapping in the fall were really rough to keep on top of. I don’t think a person really understands what they’ve learned from higher levels of education until six to 24 months after it is all over. I know that I will keep striving to learn all that I can to further master logistics and become better at anticipating requirements before the warfighter realizes that he is even short of them. I’m sure that I’ll be pleasantly surprised many more times over this deployment and my career, when lessons from the SCM classes and the situation that I find myself in click together, and I’ll look back on my 2012-2013 experiences at KU with a fond smile.
Labor Statistics, indicating the federal government's employment opportunities in purchasing, procurement and logistics are expected to grow 18.3 percent from 2008 to 2018. In an effort to best prepare students, the UMUC program has a unique dual focus providing content on both contracting and supply chain management.

“This is a special feature not offered by many other programs, which focus on just one area,” said Powell-Bell. “Our approach has proven to be an advantage for the acquisition and supply chain management program since the federal government and military continue to adopt more commercial acquisition, supply chain management and contracting practices.”

**American Military University**

American Military University (AMU) is an entirely online university offering undergraduate- and graduate-level programs in transportation and logistics management, as well as reverse logistics management. The transportation and logistics management undergraduate program offers two concentrations: air cargo and reverse logistics management. At the graduate level, students completing a transportation and logistics management degree may have concentrations in either maritime engineering or reverse logistics. AMU also offers two graduate certificates in logistics management and leadership and logistics.

“People who choose a career in logistics or supply chain management generally have a curiosity about how things work behind the scenes,” said Dr. Robert Gordon, associate professor of reverse logistics management at AMU. “Much of what the military does involves logistics. Putting peacekeepers on the ground overseas takes a lot of logistics to support our service men and women in the field. Logistics ensure that there are uniforms, food, water and other basic necessities available on a daily basis for those personnel. If civilian and military logistics were not complex enough, consider the logistics necessary to support our men and women on the International Space Station. The continual effort of highly skilled and trained logistics personnel makes things happen on land, at sea and in space.”

**Sullivan University**

Sullivan University maintains a branch campus on the Fort Knox, Ky., Army base, and has been educating and serving soldiers for more than 30 years. The relationship Sullivan maintains with
this base gives it the unique opportunity to tailor education requirements to soldiers’ career ambitions. Through the Training with Industry program at Sullivan’s College of Business Administration, students pursuing associate or Bachelor of Science degrees in supply chain management work with the dean, department chair and professors to design and develop their individualized learning experience.

As an example, Ken Moran, Sullivan University’s dean of the College of Business Administration, pointed to a soldier currently enrolled in the program who requested exposure to instructional design, development and delivery in order to prepare for his next assignment as an instructor at an Army training command. “Sullivan University responded by adjusting his training plan and objectives to accommodate the soldier’s interest,” said Moran. “Additionally, the soldier requested that his experience include a wide range of exposure to civilian logistics, distribution and supply chain management operations, so the soldier’s training plan included visits to eight different supply chain management and logistics distribution companies. Among others, the soldier visited UPS Worldport, eBay, Toyota Motors Manufacturing Kentucky, Werner Manufacturing and Ann Taylor Distribution Center. As part of Sullivan’s customized learning plan, the soldier also completed the Dale Carnegie course (Effective Communications and Human Relations), receiving an industry-recognized certificate in persuasive communications, problem-solving and focused leadership.”

This tailored exposure and experience is in addition to the business administration and supply chain management coursework.

**UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS**

“[KU’s program] was created in collaboration with the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College (CGSC) and the Army Logistics University,” said Gregory Freix, director of the Master of Science in business, supply chain management and logistics program at the University of Kansas. “The aim of the collaboration was to create a high quality, accredited educational experience for officers attending the CGSC, develop a curriculum that comported well with both KU accreditation requirements and the Army’s National Logistics Curriculum, and ensure the program could be completed in the 11-month time frame of the officers’ CGSC assignment.” The degree program is delivered entirely on the military reservation at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. In the six years since its inception, the MS-SCM program has graduated 175 military students across most branches.

The curriculum addresses basic business elements (accounting, statistical decision making, corporate finance, managerial economics and organizational change management) as well as basic and advanced supply chain applications (fundamentals, procurement and supplier management, transportation and warehousing, project management and enterprise resource planning systems). It culminates with a capstone course co-taught by a KU faculty member with extensive prior executive experience and a current CEO from the logistics arena.

Freix pointed out that students enrolled in KU’s program are simultaneously completing a rigorous and demanding professional military education curriculum. “The combination is daunting, but the caliber of officer/student self-selecting into the program and the carefully chosen faculty who deliver it combine to provide successful results.”

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has a relatively new undergraduate degree program in supply chain management, but it has quickly grown to more than 100 students. The university also has a supply chain management graduate program. For those in a UNL graduate program already, it is a minor; for those in the UNL MBA program, it is a specialization; and for students who come to the university for this curriculum only, it is a certificate program. Sheri Irwin-Gish, executive director of communications and marketing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Business, said “Students take four courses offered 100 percent online and sharpen their analytical skills and strengthen knowledge of this evolving field. They also learn to leverage relevant technology to make supply chains faster and more efficient, and they expand their expertise in a field that is in high demand. The courses are taught by the same world-renowned faculty from our nationally ranked MBA program.”

Indeed, UNL’s online MBA is ranked second in the nation for veterans by U.S. News & World Report. An added incentive is that active duty military receive a 15 percent discount for graduate courses offered at the College of Business Administration.

“We have only been offering the undergraduate supply chain management major for two years, but to date, all of our graduates and upper level students have had multiple opportunities in the supply chain field with attractive salaries all over the nation,” said Dr. David Olson, James and H.K. Stuart Chancellors distinguished chair for supply chain management at UNL’s College of Business Administration. “I would rate career prospects for supply chain graduates as among the best at the university.”

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