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Report to the

Faculty, Administration, Board of Visitors, Students

of

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
Washington, D.C. 20319

by

An Evaluation Team representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's self-study report
And a visit to the campus on March 25 – 28, 2012

The Members of the Team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair, and is sent directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission.

It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist National Defense University. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and of the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

President/CEO:
Ann E. Rondeau, Ed.D., Vice Admiral, USN

Chief Academic Officer:
John Yaeger, Ed.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs

Chair of the Board of Visitors:
Edward L. Weidenfeld

I.   Institutional Overview

NDU is a Masters and Postbaccalaureate Certificate granting institution that was initially accredited in 1997 and last reaffirmed in 2007. NDU has a branch campus in Norfolk, Virginia and an additional location at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. There are over 3,000 students currently enrolled in graduate credit-bearing programs.

II.   Nature and Conduct of the Visit

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution and other institutional documents, the team finds that the institution meets 12 of the 14 standards but fails to meet two of them (Standard 3 – Institutional Resources and Standard 5 – Administration) for the same reason: significant and long-term technology infrastructure and staffing deficits.

III.   Compliance with Regulatory Requirements

As a federal institution, NDU is not subject to Title IV requirements. While the requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 do not apply to NDU, the Team found evidence that it adheres to practices called for under this statute.

IV.   Evaluation Overview

At the time of this visit, NDU is confronting a recent change in mission, a probable reduction in funding, a requirement to produce a mission analysis within a short timeframe, and a transition in presidential leadership.

Areas of greatest concern found by the team include the need to develop university-level operational goals, address significant and long-term technology infrastructure and staffing deficits, and integrate the enterprise. Recommendations are made to address these and other priorities.

Numerous noteworthy findings are identified in the final report. These extend from a high commitment to maintaining program excellence to numerous efforts to increase the inclusiveness in planning and decision making processes. Other areas of commendation include:

- The strength of NDU's student body.
- A curriculum that is well crafted to support adult learners.
- The strength of program-level learning assessment.
- The high quality of the faculty and administration.

In various ways, NDU is facing many of the same issues as other public universities in the United States. Its unique role and mission to prepare future military, industry, and international leaders make assurance of compliance with standards for excellence even more essential.

V.   Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Standard 1: Mission and Goals

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- On 6 February 2012, by direct order of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), the mission of the National Defense University (NDU) is "to support the joint warfighter by

providing rigorous Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and select others in order to develop leaders who have the ability to operate and creatively think in an unpredictable and complex world."

- This mission replaces the one included in the Self Study, namely, "to prepare and support leaders to think strategically and lead effectively across the range of national and international security challenges through interdisciplinary teaching, research, and outreach."
- In a memorandum dated 6 February 2012 from the CJCS to the NDU President, NDU is directed to develop a mission analysis by 31 March 2012 providing for an approved action plan to implement the revised mission. The interpretation of this mission by stakeholders of NDU is that the CJCS intends to realign the focus of NDU to one centered principally on the core JPME mission.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- We commend NDU for the proactive and comprehensive manner in which the analysis of the new mission has been undertaken.
- NDU is uniquely positioned among universities to combine joint professional military education with strategic research on complex security and regional studies. This synthesis of research and teaching enhances educational explorations with informed discussions of national policy and security concerns.
- We commend NDU for the development of a strong research component that adds demonstrable value to the status and relevance of the university. The successful development of the research office has legitimated NDU as a distinctive university with the ability to produce knowledge; the research component strengthens its value to the nation.

Non-binding finding for improvement ("Suggestion"):

- That NDU maintain a mission consistent with that of a university that is capable of developing and disseminating knowledge.

Recommendations:
- NDU must develop a set of goals that addresses the new mission.
- These goals must guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning and resource allocation.
- The goals should be developed through collaborative participation by those who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional improvement and development.

Requirements: None

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- The University has engaged in two strategic planning processes during the past ten years, the latter in August 2011. The university provided evidence that the five colleges have developed goals, objectives and assessment tools that are aligned with the strategic plan.
- Within the colleges there is evidence of on-going planning, resource allocation and renewal activities.

- To assist with transparency and university-wide input and participation, the university established the Executive Council, Deans Council, the University Resource Board, the Information Technology Steering Committee and the newly formed Faculty Advisory Council.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- The team commends the university for committing the financial resources to enhance the overall understanding of the university's assessment activities, including the development and staffing of the Office of Institutional Research.
- The team commends the University for the appointment and timely deliberations of a university-wide mission analysis workgroup. The workgroup has researched, developed and detailed a series of options for consideration in response to the revised mission statement.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- The team suggests that NDU operationalize the strategic plan at the University level. While the team found evidence that the previous strategic plans have been operationalized at the college levels, there was limited evidence that the same linkage existed at the broader university level.
- The team suggests that NDU implement *assessment* activities to review the effectiveness of its planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal processes at the university level. The team noted that systematic assessments occur within the colleges at the program level but have only recently begun at the university level.

Recommendation:
- The team requests that the University prepare a Monitoring Report due October 2013 that includes a revised strategic plan using the 6 February 2012 mission statement as its foundation. During the visit, the team was provided with an updated mission statement for the university developed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The memorandum included an expectation that a mission analysis process be completed by 31 March 2012.

Requirements: None

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

The institution does not meet this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- The University's budgeting process is inclusive and transparent with the goal of ensuring that all members of the community are informed about the institution's priorities for resource allocation.
- The University's revised organizational structure includes adequate institutional controls to deal with its financial and administrative policies and procedures.
- The University anticipates the approval of its comprehensive facilities master plan by the National Capital Planning Commission in May 2012. The university completed a facilities utilization plan in November 2011 and has procedures in place to update its seven year replacement and maintenance schedules on an annual basis. The university effectively uses these plans to inform its capital project decision making.
- In its report to the MSCHE in 2001, the visitation team reported funding challenges with IT staffing and infrastructure. The present team found that the same vulnerabilities remain,

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which create a situation of potential mission failure. Specific concerns include the lack of an enterprise student information system, dissatisfaction with academic computing services, including the ability to access the network for instructional purposes, inadequacy of accounting software, and the need to develop secondary data resources (i.e., a data warehouse) to serve the analytical needs of decision-support, institutional research and assessment.

- Staffing challenges are present in the Information Technology Office. Staffing in this area has been plagued with very high turnover, including the pending departure of the CIO. There are grave concerns regarding the competitiveness of the salary ranges and the overall understaffing within the unit. Current staffing is at 64% of reported need.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- The University Resource Council has been an effective tool in increasing overall stakeholder participation and transparency relative to the budget process and the current fiscal challenges facing the University.
- The University responded promptly to the Department of Defense request to reduce its FY13 direct fund budget request by $10 million.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- The team suggests that the university seek external consultation to complete a building conditions study to provide baseline data in the development of an infrastructure life-cycle plan. The University's seven-year replacement and maintenance schedule is not comprehensive and does not include roofing, building envelope, HVAC and other system considerations that may result in unanticipated and untimely disruptions in service.
- In light of the limited financial resources NDU should explore alternative revenue opportunities that leverage the intellectual capital of the faculty. When considering this option it will be important to ensure alignment with mission.

Recommendations:
- The team recommends the University identify and implement a more robust accounting software solution for the resource management team. The current software lacks the necessary reporting and forecasting capabilities currently used in budget development and analysis functions. This precludes achieving a clean audit.
- The team recommends that the University develop a comprehensive multi-year budget process to supplement its on-going assessment and planning efforts. The inclusion of a multi-year budget process could provide the University Resource Board and Executive Council with an opportunity to strategically consider a series of alternative approaches and options to satisfy the competing goals and priorities over a 2-3 year period. This process should be on-going and updated on an annual basis.
- The team requests that the follow-up report due on 1 October 2013 include a revised multi-year budget that is aligned with the revised strategic plan and anticipated reductions in their direct funding appropriation.

Requirement:
- The team requires that the follow-up report due on 1 October 2013 include an external comprehensive information technology assessment. The assessment must provide NDU with the evidence necessary to develop a comprehensive technology operations plan and technology replacement plan. The external assessment should also include a review of the staffing needs of the office. Once developed, these plans should be shared with the

University Resource Board, with the goal of identifying potential funding options for their implementation. These plans should be submitted with an implementation schedule by 1 June 2014.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- The governance responsibilities at NDU do not follow the traditional higher education governance models. Responsibility for the governing functions is shared between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Comptroller and the Board of Visitors (BOV).
- The University through the CJCS selects the President of NDU and performs the annual performance review with input from the Board of Visitors.
- The University through the OSD Comptroller provides oversight for the University's budgeting and financial management functions.
- The University's BOV takes an active role in providing advice and counsel to the President of NDU and the Chairman when appropriate. As an example, the team noted advice provided to the CJCS in November 2011 regarding the intended conversion of the Commandants' positions from military two-star billets to civilian Senior Executive Service positions. In a January 2012 response, the Chairman informed the BOV that the Commandant's position would be maintained as a military position at the one star rank.
- The University has established procedures for the appointment of new members to the BOV. The University provides a comprehensive orientation for new members.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- The current BOV comprises a distinguished and dedicated group of senior policy makers, educators and military leaders.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- The team suggests that NDU develop a formal process for assessing the effectiveness of the board in meeting its stated objectives.
- NDU may wish to consider other structural models for the Board that would assist it in providing support for the president and advice to the CJCS.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 5: Administration

The institution <u>does not meet</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- NDU has established an effective balance between rotating military personnel (including the President) and permanent civilians (e.g., the two senior Vice Presidents and component deans) in leadership and key staffing positions.

- In accordance with findings from its own assessment, as well as recommendations from the prior Middle States visiting team, NDU has established several councils (executive, deans, faculty advisory, resource, and information technologies) to improve communication and mechanisms for inclusive input into decision making processes.
- NDU's professional staff has appropriate expertise and credentials to support institutional requirements. Recent budget cuts and prospects for further cuts require the institution to effect some significant changes in functional and staffing arrangements going forward.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- The senior leadership of NDU is a highly qualified, dedicated and impressive group; the commitment to the institution and pride in the accomplishment of the mission are apparent.
- The Team commends NDU on the progress made toward establishing a university-wide identity and affiliation among a collection of colleges that historically have operated as independent entities. Further progress will be critical for effectively responding to the recent change in and focus of mission on the core learning outcomes of joint professional military education.
- NDUs timely response first to the prioritization exercise and then to a revision of its mission from the Joint Chiefs of Staff demonstrated the institution's effectiveness in quickly gathering extensive input and providing a solid basis for more detailed and comprehensive efforts required to make the significant changes that the revision in mission will require.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- To develop an enhanced university-wide infrastructure that supports traditionally decentralized component units, the institution should consider first developing clear, consensual criteria for deciding what to centralize and what to maintain as decentralized functions. Such criteria can mitigate the difficult decisions that are likely to ensue when considering various possibilities for consolidation.
- To improve clarity about positions with the phasing in of the new organizational structures, the Team suggests that attention be directed to developing comprehensive job descriptions that will enhance accountability and facilitate personnel adjustment to their new posts. This is particularly important at an institution such as NDU where the turnover is high and the typical historical perspectives from individuals may not be available.
- While the Team applauds the work that has already been accomplished on issues related to revising organizational charts with the concomitant creation of new committees and councils and reporting relationships, we suggest that further efforts be implemented to develop processes and procedures to enhance participation in decision-making across all levels of the organization. The implementation of an annual climate survey as noted in the Self Study may help address these issues.
- Deficiencies and possible imbalances in resourcing, staffing, and commitment to NDU's information technology infrastructure represent significant vulnerabilities. Various analyses and reports have detailed staffing, equipment and information systems issues but little has been done to address those issues to date. With the CIO rotating out, the lead civilian employee retiring, and the possibility that the contract for the majority of support staff will be changed to a different provider, the next few months present a particularly critical period to ensure continuation of basic services. Preliminary plans for further consolidation of infrastructure, such as the deployment of an enterprise student information system, will not likely succeed under the current conditions.

Recommendation:

- While the Team applauds NDU for examining its administrative and organizational structure and developing a working balance between rotational and civilian leadership, the Team recommends a comprehensive review of the nature of several key leadership appointments; specifically, the President and the Chief Information Officer. However, NDU will not likely be able to attract a qualified CIO unless it first addresses cited deficiencies in IT resources and staffing.

Requirement (As stated in Standard 3):
- The team requires that the follow-up report due on 1 October 2013 include an external comprehensive information technology assessment. The assessment must provide NDU with the evidence necessary to develop a comprehensive technology operations plan and technology replacement plan. The external assessment should also include a review of the staffing needs of the office. Once developed, these plans should be shared with the University Resource Board with the goal of identifying potential funding options for their implementation. These plans should be submitted with an implementation schedule by June 1, 2014.

Standard 6: Integrity

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- Preserving and fostering integrity through decision-making and program offerings of NDU is one of its six core principles. This is exemplified by the manner in which the leadership directs NDU and the daily activities of the students, faculty and staff.
- In accordance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, NDU's Self Study Report (pp. 36-43) describes "a culture of high ethical standards," which underlies
  - Freedom of inquiry and discussion
  - Academic integrity
  - Management of integrity-relevant information
  - Integrity in dealing with students, faculty, staff, administration, and the public
  - Equal employment opportunity processes
  - A commitment to effective grievance procedures
- This description is attested by NDU's policies, documents, curricula, testimonies from faculty, staff, administration and students, recognition of its unique character and mission, and the Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- The need for an electronic archive of catalogs as updates occur
- The challenges to governance of rapid & unpredictable change
- The need to reconcile the internal impulses of centralization and decentralization
- The feasibility of enabling longer periods of service in more [of] NDU's leadership positions.
- The Visiting Team supports NDU's plan to continue to refine its system of boards and councils: and to continue its strong emphasis on communication, transparency, clear guidance, effective planning, and efficient prioritization.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

The team commends:
- The high standards set for those who have elected to serve their nation as a profession.
- Its commitment to integrity and the infusion of this principle throughout the colleges and other components.
- Having students sign a form indicating that they have read and understand the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Its near 100% graduation rate reported in the Self Study, which demonstrates students' accurate expectations regarding the NDU experience and their appreciation for the quality of the education.
- Its "Non-Attribution Policy," which other institutions of higher education may wish to consider enhancing the free exchange of ideas in a variety of settings.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- The institution has made significant progress in developing and implementing an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.
- The importance of assessment is clearly a part of the military culture that is embraced at NDU. Closing the loop and making the changes needed as identified through assessments results in a safer citizenry and global community. The three colleges that require Professional Accreditation of Joint Education (PAJE) accreditation have matrices in place to measure the extent to which their goals are met.
- The NDU President meets each year with college representatives to review the curriculum, how the courses support the unit's mission, teaching styles, faculty and student assessments as well as the changes that are recommended. This approach to assessment keeps the offerings up-to-date to serve the overall mission while providing the vitality to make changes to address the evolving needs of the students.
- NDU lacks learning and program objectives capable of transcending the component colleges to represent common, university-wide objectives. The lack of such objectives may be exacerbated by forthcoming significant budget cutbacks.
- The lack of an enterprise student information system is identified as a major constraint to obtaining the critical information needed. Although this is necessary, there is an additional need to develop secondary data resources (*i.e.*, a data warehouse) composed of point-in-time, non-volatile extracts that are modeled to specifically serve the analytical needs of decision-support, institutional research and assessment purposes.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices
- The Team was particularly impressed with the multiple, college-level approaches to "strategic-level assessments of purpose, mission and focus" as outlined in the Self-Study and that such efforts are integrally linked in most aspects of institutional planning.
- We commend NDU for the establishment and staffing of an Institutional Research Office and initial efforts to develop university-wide measures of effectiveness.

Non-binding finding for improvement ("Suggestion"):
- There appears to be inconsistency across the colleges in the definition of a credit hour and course load. The team suggests that NDU examine this issue to ensure consistency of workload for students.

Recommendations:
- That the institution's strategic goals be operationalized with university-level measures of institutional effectiveness within a recurring annual strategic planning process that informs the collaborative and systematic management of institutional resources. NDU should report on the steps taken to act on this recommendation in a Progress Report within 12 months.
- While great strides have been made, the Team concurs with the Self-Study recommendation to develop "an annual climate survey to track the transition to a culture of collaboration and transparency across the University" (p. 24) and suggests that such a project be initiated. The Team also suggests that the climate surveys be reviewed to learn if they are gathering adequate and representative data that will inform decisions in an accurate fashion.
- To aid in this effort, the Team also recommends that a University Assessment Board be reconstituted to provide oversight on implementing assessment efforts across NDU. This will be particularly important to determine if the various structural changes to enhance participation in decision-making are working.

Requirements: None

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- Decisions about admissions rest primarily with the Services and sponsoring agencies and are based on a formula intended to help ensure a student body representative of the constituents served.
- The Self-Study process outlines how admissions policies support the mission. Admissions-related materials are presented to incoming students.
- Early in their first course NDU students in all colleges and programs are given a writing assessment. Those failing to achieve a level deemed sufficient for graduate work are advised to take a voluntary 10-week writing class.
- NDU provides a highly personalized admissions and enrollment process.
- Program information is presented on the online and print catalog.
- The institution conducts regular outcomes surveys of its student services to determine program effectiveness. Discussions indicate that there is integration of the feedback though a continuous improvement process.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- NDU currently provides a rare and strategically important opportunity for future military, civilian, and international leaders to work together, learn from each other, and form relationships likely to last well beyond their time together at NDU. This is strength worthy of recognition and careful stewardship.

Non-binding Findings for Improvement ("Suggestions"): None

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 9: Support Services

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings
- As NDU's Self-Study Report states (pp. 50-58), two factors contribute especially to the success of NDU's support services: the common goal of all students to "study an aspect of the national security discipline" and the resultant small, well-defined population of students. At the university level the Chief of Staff and Administration and the Vice President for Academic Affairs "work together to ensure the support services programs fit with the curriculum and overall learning goals of the University." At the college level, faculty, staff, and administration offer a full complement of student services that contribute effectively to the student's academic and personal success.
- As the Self-Study notes, essential student services include: Academic Skills Support, International Student Management, Information Technology, Student Records, Health and Fitness, Support for Student Complaints and Grievances, and Ongoing Assessment of Services, including end-of-course surveys, Focus Groups, and Advising Sessions.
- The Self-Study Report's account of the nature, success of, and challenges for student services is attested by NDU's policies, documents, testimonies from faculty, staff, administration, and students.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices: None

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- The Visiting Team supports NDU's plans to improve systematic assessment of student services by including questions on the end-of-course student surveys to elicit feedback on the following student-related areas: Information technology, Registrar, Mail, Chaplain, and College communications.
- Develop clear guidance on the retention and disposition of records to eliminate the unnecessary archive of student and academic records and to streamline data collection.
- Improve and enhance the student information system and processes for student data collection, analysis, and management to support the institutional level needs for student information and its use in the institutional assessment, evaluation, analysis, and planning processes.

Recommendations:
- Hire a full-time, on-site mental/behavioral health professional—follow-up/progress report
- Make extensive improvements to the information technology services, as described in detail elsewhere in this report—follow-up/monitoring report

Requirements: None

Standard 10: Faculty

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings
- The Team met with NDU faculty representing all colleges both informally and at small group meetings on the North and South campuses at least one of whom was a member of the newly-formed Faculty Advisory Council. They confirmed their direct involvement in curriculum development, evaluation and enhancement at the course and program levels.
- The faculty of NDU are eminently qualified to design, teach and evaluate the specialized joint professional military education and related programs and curricula that comprise the institution's core mission.
- Although there is no tenure at the institution, Title X (civilian) faculty have relatively long careers with the institution, providing a balance with the rotational faculty who, in turn, infuse recent field experience and fresh perspectives into the teaching and learning environment.
- The talented and motivated students selected for NDU's programs further enhance the environment for teaching and learning.
- The institution provides sufficient resources to meet the specialized accreditation requirements and go well beyond those requirements regarding the orientation, support and development of faculty as master teachers.
- Clear policies and guidelines provide the faculty with a well-structured framework within which they can shape and enhance programs and curricula. Rigorous, faculty-driven development, assessment, and review of the courses and curricula are systematic and codified in faculty handbooks and other official documents.
- Recent fiscal constraints have begun to impact some faculty's ability to participate in both domestic and international conferences.
- There is a strong ethos of academic freedom throughout NDU's institutional culture. Care is taken to enable frank and open discussion in classes and the pursuit of scholarly interests. As a military-related institution, NDU has in place appropriate, peer- and military-staffed review units to ensure that information released publicly does not compromise national security.
- The library support and staff are superb and the library staff are fully engaged in the curriculum.
- As mentioned elsewhere in this report, there are significant IT issues related to the general infrastructure and to operational and management information systems, but this does not extend to learning technologies.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- The Team was impressed by the substance of the faculty orientation programs. There is also strong continuing support for faculty professional and pedagogical development, including well-resourced sabbatical opportunities in some of the colleges.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"):
- Hiring qualified faculty and ensuring continuity in rotational faculty ranks remains a challenge. The university should continue to pay attention to streamlining these processes and ensuring that gaps in rotational assignments can be managed without compromising educational quality.
- Although significantly constrained by the pool of available faculty, the institution should consider taking a more proactive role in diversifying the faculty and ensuring that the pool

of available faculty becomes more diverse. For example, NDU could consider forming collaborations and partnerships with institutions that have Ph.D. programs in relevant "feeder fields" such as strategic studies and national security studies to develop action initiatives that attract more diverse candidates into the preparation pipeline.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:
- The institutions educational offerings display academic, content, rigor and coherence that are appropriate to its higher education mission. The institution identifies student learning goals and objectives, including knowledge and skills for its educational offerings.
- The components of the NDU are expected to meet the standards of Joint Professional Military Education, operationalized in the PAJE used by four of the five colleges. (Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC), the National War College (NWC) and the College of International Security Affairs). While both the Information Resource Management College (iCollege or IRMC) and the College of International Security Affairs (CISA) are exempt from PAJE, CISA is in the process of qualifying for accreditation. According to the Graduate Catalog and Student Handbook, the "…JPME curriculum has a unique focus on the development knowledge, skill, and dispositions to prepare graduates for tactical operational and strategic and critical thinking in the joint, interagency, intergovernment and multinational environment" (Self-Study 7). Four of the five colleges offer a Master of Science degree. CISA offers a Master of Arts degree in Strategic Security Studies. iCollege, CISA and JFSC offer graduate certificate programs in a myriad of areas.
- NDU offers educational programs congruent with its mission.
- The Matrices of Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments for Masters Program document provides an excellent overview of direct and indirect measures for each degree granting program.
- The self-studies completed by JFSC, NWC, and ICAF in compliance with the PAJE established by the *Officer Professional Military Education Committee* provide evidence for compliance.
- The NDU annual Library User Survey indicates that most users are either very satisfied or satisfied with the services provided, which include research and reference (Ask a Librarian), library classes and orientations, special collections and classified documents as well as the MERLN website. The MERLN (Military Education Research Library Network) includes resources designed to support the curriculum.
- There is evidence of continuous improvement in the development of the information literacy program in the revisions to the library class materials.
- Annual curriculum review processes including indirect assessments and direct assessments of papers and oral presentations ensure regular revisions to the graduate programs.
- Civilian (Title X) faculty in the degree granting programs have terminal degrees in an appropriate discipline.

- The Student Handbook for each college provides clear directives in rubrics for written and oral communication.
- Interdisciplinary coursework is a cornerstone of the NDU curriculum. It is bolstered by the Electives Program that "…provides each student with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills adjunct to their core program area"(Graduate Catalog and Handbook, 18).
- Students are provided with significant opportunities to engage in field and practical research in each of the academic units. Students at ICAF may be engaged in domestic and international field studies. Students at the NWC enroll in a national security field studies course which entails a first-hand examination of a specific issue or region.
- Case study analyses and collaborative learning are incorporated into the curriculum in each of the component units.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- Closely working with faculty and course developers, librarians are actively engaged in integrating information literacy skills throughout the curriculum. The librarians are part of all course development teams and information literacy is seen as integral to the curriculum.
- The team was impressed by the on-going assessment and alignment of program goals and objectives, course goals and objectives and student learning outcomes.

Non-binding Findings for Improvement ("Suggestions"): None

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 12: General Education

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings
- The Self-study asserts that "[A]s a graduate institution, NDU does not address Standard 12 (p.101).
- Comment: Given the institution's mission to "prepare and support leaders to think strategically and lead effectively," the institution might consider assessing these core competencies across academic programs. Additional core competencies that might be considered include information literacy and communication skills.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices: None

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"): None

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 13: Distance Education & Related Activities

The institution <u>meets</u> this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:

Distance Education
- The distance education programs are in compliance with the MSCHE standards for the "Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (Online Learning)."

Additional Locations and Instructional Sites
Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:
- The myriad educational activities offered under the NDU umbrella are an extraordinary strength of the institution.
- The adoption of contemporary technologies for teaching on-line and creating short courses and certificate programs has succeeded and has been viewed as a successful endeavor by both faculty and students.
- Offering both online and hybrid learning opportunities, the NDU's iCollege, provides creative options for course enrollment in a successful fashion in keeping with the new accreditation requirements for distance learning programs.
- The Team congratulates NDU on the work accomplished with outreach events and related educational activities.
- The Team applauds NDU's innovative and creative expansion of academic offerings at Ft. Bragg.

JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
- The educational opportunities provided are exemplary.
- The leadership is dedicated and well prepared and does a superior job in developing the vision and implementing the mission of this extremely important component of NDU.
- The academic missions for the Schools and the Academic Programs are clearly articulated and well designed.
- The faculty are qualified and prepared for teaching the highly specialized curricula offered. They come from diverse academic and experiential backgrounds lending to the strength of the JFSC; the views and perspectives available to students are strengthened as a result of the diversified faculty.
- Student morale is very high.
- The student service programs are considered to be a great strength.
- The Ike Skelton Library serves a critical function and is highly regarded in the JFSC community—the Library deserves this praise. The staff members are dedicated to their users and their multiple missions.

Non-binding finding for improvement ("Suggestion"):
- Given the strengths of the many related education activities, NDU would benefit from a coordinating effort to advertise across the institution and provide greater collaborations in the provision of these offerings.

Recommendations: None

Requirements: None

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

The institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:

- The Self-Study states that "it is now clear that this process (student learning assessment as continuous and interactive) requires conscious monitoring, evaluation, and renewal" (p.79). This awareness is important in creating and nurturing a culture of assessment. Perhaps not surprisingly because of the relative autonomy of its Colleges, NDU confronts some challenges related to this Standard, especially at the institutional level.
- Primary responsibility for establishing learning objectives and identification and assessment of student learning rests with the Colleges. While the Self-Study recognizes the merits of increased "centralization and consistency to facilitate comparisons over time and across programs" there are historic and practical reasons for the decentralized practices found at the time of this visit.
- Across the Colleges, courses and programs alike appear rich with well-articulated, desired learning outcomes. A review of the degree programs indicates a strong array of learning goals to be achieved by the student upon completion of the course or program. The listed outcomes align logically with their programs and with NDU's mission to produce highly effective leaders and strategic thinkers.
- Review of the Matrices of Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments finds some variation in attention to, and handling of, direct and indirect measures. In all cases, however, assurance is offered that students are assessed multiple times, using different direct and indirect measures. Typical direct measures are course assignments evaluated by faculty. In several programs, rubrics have been developed and are being used to help ensure consistency and rigor.
- NDU academic programs undergo both external and internal reviews to ensure they meet the objectives established in DOD policy and academic standards.
- For courses and programs not covered by the PAJE review, guidance for core learning outcomes derives from the goals of the sponsoring agency or command. Outcomes are formulated using an iterative process that involves key stakeholders.
- Emblematic of NDU's commitment to assessment and continuous improvement, both the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs engage in the curriculum review process. This includes detailed briefings from the colleges to the President and the VPAA before each academic year. Briefings explain any significant changes made as a result of the analysis of both direct and indirect evidence.
- As the Self-Study states (p.82) not all programs have separate written assessment plans but they do have policies and processes in place to identify the measures to be used and to monitor the collection and use of data.
- Also in the Self-Study is recognition that providing faculty with a "solid foundation in assessment standards and their use in evaluating student performance" is fundamental (p.82). This is stated as a relative strength of NDU programs. Interviews with faculty support the idea of an engaged faculty committed to creating meaningful and relevant assignments for their students. Less clear is whether faculty are aware of the expected comprehensive institution-wide approach to student learning assessment.
- Students are informed about course learning objectives by the Colleges. For most, this occurs formally during initial orientation sessions. This information is available in expected media (Intranet, NDU public Website, student handbooks, and catalogs). Course-level outcomes are included in the printed and on-line course syllabi.

Significant accomplishments, significant progress, or exemplary/innovative practices:

- The team commends NDU for offering courses and programs that include strong and well-articulated learning objectives.
- The team commends NDU faculty for their attention to creation and use of multiple and meaningful direct and indirect approaches to evaluating student performance in the set of outcomes established for each of the programs.

Non-binding findings for improvement ("Suggestions"): None

Recommendations:
- NDU should develop consistent assessment plans at both the program and institutional levels.
- NDU should identify, incorporate and assess core competencies across academic programs.

Requirements: None

VI.   Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance and Requirements

Two "requirements" were specified by the Team.

14 "recommendations" are included in this report. A summary of these follows:

Standard 2:
Recommendations:
- NDU must develop a set of goals that addresses the new mission.
- These goals must guide faculty, administration, staff and governing bodies in making decisions related to planning and resource allocation.
- The goals should be developed through collaborative participation by those who facilitate or are otherwise responsible for institutional improvement and development.

Standard 3:
Recommendations:
- The team recommends the University identify and implement a more robust accounting software solution for the resource management team. The current software lacks the necessary reporting and forecasting capabilities currently used in budget development and analysis functions. This precludes achieving a clean audit.
- The team recommends that the University develop a comprehensive multi-year budget process to supplement its on-going assessment and planning efforts. The inclusion of a multi-year budget process could provide the University Resource Board and Executive Council with an opportunity to strategically consider a series of alternative approaches and options to satisfy the competing goals and priorities over a 2-3 year period. This process should be on-going and updated on an annual basis.
- The team requests that the follow up report due on 1 October 2013 include a revised multi-year budget that is aligned with the revised strategic plan and anticipated reductions in their direct funding appropriation.

Requirement:
- The team requires that the follow-up report due on 1 October 2013 include an external comprehensive information technology assessment. The assessment must provide NDU with the evidence necessary to develop a comprehensive technology operations plan and technology replacement plan. The external assessment should also include a review of the staffing needs of the office. Once developed, these plans should be shared with the

University Resource Board with the goal of identifying potential funding options for their implementation. These plans should be submitted with an implementation schedule by 1 June 2014.

Standard 5:

Recommendation:

- While the Team applauds NDU for examining its administrative and organizational structure and developing a working balance between rotational and civilian leadership, the Team recommends a comprehensive review of the nature of several key leadership appointments; specifically, the President and the Chief Information Officer. However, NDU will not likely be able to attract a qualified CIO unless it first addresses cited deficiencies in IT resources and staffing.

Requirement (Same as in Standard 3):

- The team requires that the follow-up report due on 1 October 2013 include an external comprehensive information technology assessment. The assessment must provide NDU with the evidence necessary to develop a comprehensive technology operations plan and technology replacement plan. The external assessment should also include a review of the staffing needs of the office. Once developed, these plans should be shared with the University Resource Board with the goal of identifying potential funding options for their implementation. These plans should be submitted with an implementation schedule by 1 June 2014.

Standard 7:

Recommendations:

- That the institution's strategic goals be operationalized with university-level measures of institutional effectiveness within a recurring annual strategic planning process that informs the collaborative and systematic management of institutional resources. NDU should report on the steps taken to act on this recommendation in a Progress Report within 12 months.
- While great strides have been made, the Team concurs with the Self-Study recommendation to develop "an annual climate survey to track the transition to a culture of collaboration and transparency across the University" (p. 24) and suggests that such a project be initiated. The Team also suggests that the climate surveys be reviewed to learn if they are gathering adequate and representative data that will inform decisions in an accurate fashion.
- To aid in this effort, the Team also recommends that a University Assessment Board be reconstituted to provide oversight on implementing assessment efforts across NDU. This will be particularly important to determine if the various structural changes to enhance participation in decision making are working.

Standard 9:

Recommendations:

- Hire a full-time, on-site mental/behavioral health professional—follow-up/progress report
- Make extensive improvements to the information technology services, as described in detail elsewhere in this report—follow-up/monitoring report

Standard 14:

Recommendations:

- NDU should develop consistent assessment plans at both the program and institutional levels.
- NDU should identify, incorporate and assess core competencies across academic programs.

Schedule and Staffing of Meetings During Site Visit:

Monday, March 26th

NDU Brief: Dr. John Yaeger, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Brenda Roth, Depty Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. R. Joel Farrell, Director, Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment; Mr. Adam Jungdahl, Institutional Research Associate; Ms. Marie-Teresa Rangel, Institutional Research Associate; Ms. Joycelyn Stevens, Institutional Research Associate; Mr. Larry Johnson, Registrar; Ms. Kelly Hart, Assistant Registrar; CDR Elton C. Parker III, USN Military Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Ms. Sherri Weber, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs; Ms. Dolores Hodge, Academic Affairs Operations Manager

Academic Deans meeting: Dr. Craig Deare, Interim Dean of Academic Affairs at College of International Security Affairs; Harry L. Dorsey, Esq., J.D., Dean of Faculty at Industrial College of the Armed Forces; Dr. Mary S. McCully, Dean of Faculty at Information Resources Management College; Dr. John Ballard, Dean of Faculty at National War College; Professors Bob Antis and Pat Hannum representing Joint Forces Staff College

Self Study Co-Chairs Meeting: Group 1 (Standards 1, 2, 3, 7)- Dr. Mark Montroll & Dr. Dave Tretler; Group 2 (Standards 4, 5, 6)- Professor Erik Kjonnerod & Dr. Thomas Blau; Group 3 (Standards 8, 9, 12)- Ms. Meg Tulloch & Professor William Gerhardt; Group 4 (Standards 10, 11, 13, 14)- Dr. Brenda Roth & Dr. Sebastian Gorka

Faculty & Staff Luncheon Participants: *College of International Security Affairs:* Dr. Sebastian Gorka, Dr. Jennifer Jefferis, Dr. Peter Thompson, Dr. Hassan Abbas*; Industrial College of the Armed Forces:* Dr. Barbara Corvette; Dr. Andrew Leith; COL Thomas Steffens, USA; LT Courtney Freeman, USN; *Information Resources Management College:* Dr. Mike Donohoe; Dr. John Saunders; Ms. Adrienne Ferguson; LTC Steve Sledge, USA; *National War College:* Dr. Theresa Sabonis-Helf; Mrs. Susan Sherwood; Mr. LaForrest Williams; COL Gregory Schultz, USA; *National Defense University Personnel:* Ms. Julie Arrighetti, NDU Library; Professor Erik Kjonnerod, Center for Applied Strategic Learning; Mr. Don Mosser, Institute for National Security Studies; CAPT Michael Boock, USN, Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership

Human Resources Directorate meeting (HR Conference Room, teleconference with JFSC): Marcia Miller, Director; Sheila Willis, HR Specialist; Leigh Ann Massey, HR Specialist; John Batdorf, Management Analyst &Manpower Specialist; Shaunta Barnes (JFSC); Edwin Harris (JFSC)

International Student Management Office meeting (Chilcoat Conference Room): John Charlton, Director; Paul Lambert, Executive Assistant

Institutional Research meeting (McNair Room): Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment: Dr. R. Joel Farrell II, Director; Mr. Adam Jungdahl, Institutional Research Associate; Ms. Marie-Teresa Rangel, Institutional Research Associate; Ms. Joycelyn Stevens, Institutional Research Associate; College of International Security Affairs IR Director: Mr. Mark McGivern; Industrial College of the Armed Forces IR Director: Dr. Thomas Dimieri; Information Resources Management College IR Director: Dr. George Fulda; National War College IR Director: Ms. Susan Sherwood; Joint Forces Staff College representative: Professor Dr. Bob Antis

Resources Management Directorate meeting (HR Conference Room): Jay Helming, Director; John Gardner, Budget Officer

Library Staff meeting (Library Team Room 243): Meg Tulloch, Director; Julie Arrighetti, Chief, Division Research and Information Services; Pat Alderman, Chief, Technical Services

Chief of Staff/Secretariat meeting (Chief Cannon's Office): Mike Cannon, Chief of Staff and Administration; COL Brad Booth, USA Deputy COSA

Admissions & Registration Personnel meeting (McNair Room): Larry Johnson, Registrar; Kelly Hart, Asst Registrar; Marcia Miller, Director of HR; LTC Carol Moss, USA, Chief of Military Personnel; Msgt Tina Smith, USAF, Air Force Service Rep; SSG Sandra Sykes, USA, Army Service Rep; SSG Abner Mangapit, USN, Sea Service Rep; MSG Denise Love, USA, Military Personnel; Sheila DeTurk, Director of Student Services, CISA; Dr. George Fulda, Director of Institutional Research, IRMC

Deans of Students/Health & Fitness/Chaplain meeting (McNair Room): Russ Quirici, Dean of Students at Information Resources Management College; Skeets Meyer, Dean of Students at College of International Security Affairs; Frank Pagano, Dean of Students at Industrial College of the Armed Forces; Mark Pizzo, Dean of Students at National War College; Tony Spinosa, Health & Fitness Director; COL Kenneth Sampson, USA, Chaplain

Facilities/Engineering meeting (Library Team Room 243): Chuck Fanshaw, Director of Engineering

Information Technology Directorate meeting (ITD Conference Room): COL Joe Adams, USA, Director ITD/Chief Information Officer

Branch Campus visit to Joint Forces Staff College:
Faculty meeting: *JAWS Faculty*: Dr. Dickson; Col Torres; COL Purvis; CAPT Guiliani; Mr. Roemmich; Lt Col Dooley; *JC2IOS Faculty*: Lt. Col Reiling; JCWS Faculty: Mr. McCauley; *AJPME Faculty:* Lt. Col Powell

Strategic Discussions Session: Maj Gen Joe Ward, USAF, Commandant; Dr. Bryon Greenwald, Academic Dean; Joseph Jerauld, Director, JCWS; Fred Kienle, Curriculum Coordinator, JCWS; Jeff Waechter, Director, JCDES; Dan Goodman, Faculty & Staff Development; Carmine Cicalese, Director, JC2IOS; Bruce Miller, Director, JAWS; David DiOrio, JFSC Chief of Staff; Ken Pisel, Associate Dean AA; Gail Nicula, Chief, Library Division; Thomas Falconer, Chief, Operations; Tammi Dulaney, Deputy Chief of Protocol; Shirley Wallace-Brown, Chief, Student Admin & Reg; Elmer L Buard, Chief, Information Tech Div; Stephanie Zedlar, Chief, Inst. Research, Assessment & Accreditation

JAWS Student meeting: JAWS Students: Lt Col Hansen, CDR Carlson, Lt Col Baggett, Lt Col Williamson, Lt Col Brown, Mr. Morris, Lt Col Anderson

Lunch Participants: Joe Ward, Commandant; Bryon Greenwald, Academic Dean; Joseph Jerauld, Director, JCWS; Jeff Waechter, Director, JCDES; Carmine Cicalese, Director, JC2IOS; Bruce Miller, Director, JAWS; David DiOrio, JFSC Chief of Staff; Stephanie Zedlar, Chief, Inst. Research, Assessment & Accreditation; Dr. Dickson, JAWS faculty; Lt. Col Reiling, JC2IOS faculty; Mr. McCauley, JCWS faculty; Lt. Col Powell, AJPME faculty; Lt. Col Mike Zinno, JAWS student

Conversation with Shirley Wallace-Brown, Chief, Student Admin and Registrar regarding the international student support

Conversation with Jeff Waechter, Director JCDES regarding distance learning

Tuesday March 27th
Team Meeting with Small Group of Faculty- National War College: Dr. Dave Tretler and Dr. Mike Mazaar; Information Resources Management College: Dr. John Hurley and Dr. Russ Mattern; College of International Security Affairs: Dr. Jennifer Jefferis and Dr. Peter Thompson; Industrial College of the

Armed Forces: Dr. Robert Brent and Dr. Kenneth Moss; Joint Forces Staff College: Dr. Bob Antis and Professor Pat Hannum

Team Meeting with Members of the Board of Visitors: Mr. Edward L. Weidenfeld, Board of Visitors Co-Chair; Dr. Stephen Joel Trachtenberg; Mr. Mark C. Treanor; Vice Admiral Vivien S. Crea, USCG (Retired); Ms. Joyce France *representing Ex Officio member Ms. Theresa M. Takei*

Student Luncheon Participants: 4 College of International Security Affairs students: BG Abdulla Shamaal, Maldives; LTC Seabold Hary, Hungary; Ms. Marcia Parker, DIA; MAJ Barry Murphy, USAF; 4 Industrial College of the Armed Forces students: LtCol Richard Brady, USMC; Ms. Carol Campbell, OUSD; LtCol Tom Nicholson, USAF; Col Stewart Liles, USA; 4 Information Resources Management College students: LTC Tim Hartman, USA; Mr. Michael Seelman, FBI; Col Chih-hsien Wei, Taiwan; Mr. Michael Reedy, DISA; 4 National War College students: COL Barry Williams, USA; Ms. Denise Malone, DoS; Ms. Cynthia Whittlesey, DoS; CDR Brian Tothero, USN

Team Meeting with Students (teleconference with JFSC): 2 Industrial College of the Armed Forces students: LtCol Doug DeMaio, USAF; LtCol Michael Jackson, USAF; 2 Information Resources Management College students: Mr. George Parson, DISA; Mr. Daniel Silverman, DoN; 2 National War College students: LtCol Robert Powell, USAF; LtCol Steve White, USMC; 2 Joint Forces Staff College students: Lt Col Giles Harris, British Army; LCDR Don Wetherbee, USN; 2 College of International Security Affairs students: LtCol Diana Staneszewski, USMC; COL Eric Vinoya, Phillipines Army; 2 students from the International Fellows program: Industrial College of the Armed Forces International Fellow: CAPT Rogastian Laswai, Tanzanian Navy; National War College International Fellow: COL Yoshiki Adachi, Japan Ground Self Defense Force