



Realizing the Vision 2022–2027

National Defense University Strategic Plan





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Fort Lesley J. McNair
Washington, D.C.

Students present theses to faculty and fellow students during College of International Security Affairs Thesis Symposium, June 5, 2019



Completed in 1946, Normandy Hall is the front entrance of the Joint Forces Staff College



General James McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army, speaks with the NDU community as part of the President's Lecture Series, August 31, 2022





DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC 20319-5066

December 6, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL NDU FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND
STAKEHOLDERS

SUBJECT: Realizing the Vision: NDU's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan

Thank you for taking the time to read NDU's new strategic plan—it has been almost 2 years in the crafting and has been substantially informed by our accreditation reaffirmation Self-Study and by the input and hard work of many dedicated NDU faculty and staff members.


This Strategic Plan supports our University's key objectives moving forward:

- ◆ It supports the accomplishment of our Board of Visitors–approved strategic goals.
- ◆ It implements the 2020 Joint Chiefs of Staff Vision and Guidance for Professional Military Education and Talent Management.
- ◆ It guides NDU's transition to Outcomes-Based Military Education.
- ◆ It enables the prioritization of our operations, activities, and investments.

We know the future global security environment will be characterized by geopolitical shifts and disruptive technological change. We must anticipate these changes and adapt our curricula, educational delivery methodologies, research foci, and support services to ensure we continue to attract, develop, and graduate the highest quality leaders who can think and act strategically, enabling them to prevail in this increasingly complex, dynamic, and uncertain security setting.

In our plan, we challenge ourselves to continually improve our University, while also investing in our people as we develop our team individually and institutionally. Our strategy is a bold step forward in achieving strategic clarity and unity of purpose as NDU leads the way ahead in Joint Professional Military Education. The next major step to achieving our goals will be crafting a University-wide, component-driven Implementation Plan with specific goals and measurable milestones to chart our progress.

Our course is set to become a more agile, innovative learning organization that will propel the National Defense University into a second half-century of success, producing leaders who can out-think their opposition and provide strategic advantage for our national and global security. I look forward to this next phase of our journey with you!

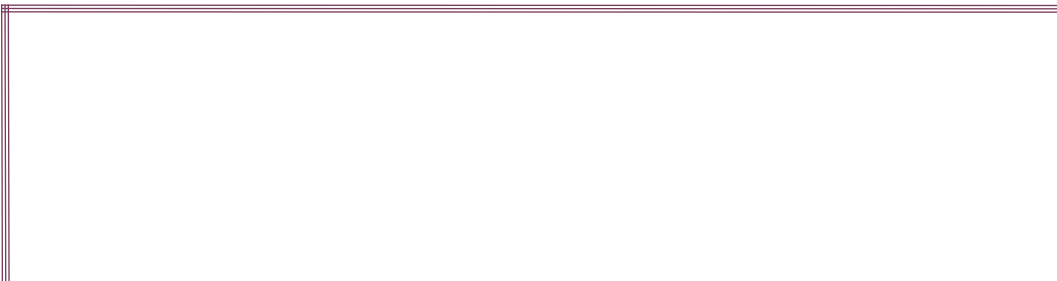

MICHAEL T. PLEHN, Lt Gen, USAF
President, National Defense University




National Defense University holds convocation for incoming class of 2023 on steps of the National War College, August 9, 2022

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As the Nation's premier national security university, the National Defense University must constantly adapt its approaches to strategic-, operational-, and executive-level education. NDU has the responsibility to its stakeholders—from students to national and international security leaders—to remain at the cutting edge of study, research, and analysis in all aspects of military, political, economic, and industrial global security thought.





Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction Academic Symposium, 2020

As we approach NDU's first half-century of existence, this plan propels us forward into an innovative second half-century of developing the world's finest leaders, who will understand and overcome the national security challenges of today and tomorrow.

—Lt Gen Michael T. Plehn, USAF,
17th NDU President

Realizing the Vision 2022–2027 provides a roadmap to move NDU into the future. The strategy will guide and align University operations, activities, and investments from 2022 through 2027 in full alignment with the Joint Chiefs of Staff Vision and Guidance for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) and Talent Management, titled *Developing Today's Joint Officers for Tomorrow's Ways of War*.

Introduction

Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.

—Air Marshal Giulio Douhet

To serve the needs of the United States and requirements of the national security enterprise, the National Defense University (NDU) must rise to meet the challenges of today while anticipating—and preparing for—the challenges of the future. The strategic environment and technological landscape are undergoing tectonic shifts that herald the likely end of 30 years of unipolarity and current U.S. military qualitative technological dominance. To create strategic advantage for U.S. military leaders and other national security professionals in this new era, NDU must rapidly adapt itself to multipolar strategic competition with technological near-peer competitors and adversaries in an environment of disruptive change. This reality requires NDU to modernize its institutions, curricula, and processes to stay in front of geopolitical and technological changes while capitalizing on the full power of the talent and diversity available in students, faculty, and staff. NDU alumni must thrive as strategic leaders who possess the critical and creative thinking skills to successfully address national, regional, and global strategic issues.

This plan sets the foundation for NDU to seize these opportunities and address these challenges. It begins by highlighting NDU’s Vision, Mission, and Values. From that critical foundation, the plan moves on to cover the current strategic context, details NDU’s strategic goals and approach that we will pursue through three lines of effort, and concludes with a brief cost-risk analysis. Once implemented, this plan will be a living document, routinely evaluated for continued relevance and periodically revised as circumstances change.

Charter

The NDU Vision and Mission as well as detailed operating instructions are specified in Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1801.01F, *National Defense University Policy*, signed in October 2022. It explicitly classifies NDU as a Chairman’s Controlled Activity with a Secretary of Defense–approved

charter. According to the instruction, the “fundamental purpose [of NDU] is to educate emerging senior leaders in the defense and interagency communities at the strategic and operational levels. NDU’s primary focus is the provision of JPME, enabled by premier teaching, scholarly research, and academic engagement.”

Vision

NDU will create strategic advantage by developing joint warfighters and other national security leaders and forging relationships through whole-of-nations and whole-of-governments educational programs, research, and engagement.

The NDU Vision serves as the guiding star for the University. The Vision ensures that community members share a similar idea about the role and purpose of the University. In this pursuit the Vision is clear: NDU exists to do one thing: create strategic advantage. NDU’s graduates, intellectual products, and engagement opportunities provide the United States, as well as its allies and partners, strategic advantage across the spectrum of peace, competition, and war. The NDU Vision specifically identifies the student population as both “joint warfighters and other national security leaders.” Since its inception, NDU’s role has been to support the entire national security enterprise, with a special focus on joint warfighters. Critical to creating enduring advantages, especially in an era of renewed multipolar competition, the Vision emphasizes the high value of “forging relationships through whole-of-nations and whole-of-governments” education.

Mission

NDU educates joint warfighters and other national security leaders in critical thinking and the creative application of military power to inform national strategy and globally integrated operations, under conditions of disruptive change, in order to prevail in war, peace, and competition.

Similarly, NDU’s Mission provides a durable objective toward which NDU directs all its effort. The Mission acknowledges that the role of NDU, consistent with its

statutory designation as a JPME institution under Title 10, U.S. Code, is to educate national security professionals in critical thinking and the creative application of military power and to inform globally integrated operations and national strategy across the continuum of peace, competition, and war. These elements drive NDU component curricula and highlight our University's role as the Nation's premier national security educational institution.

Like the Vision, the NDU Mission focuses the University on serving the entire national security enterprise while highlighting NDU's emphasis on joint warfighters. This means NDU is broadly responsible for graduating a student body capable of both the creative application of joint and combined military power in war and the orchestration of all other instruments of national power to achieve national security strategic outcomes.

Additionally, the NDU Mission specifically identifies the global security environment as one of "disruptive change," in which the fundamental concepts and processes of warfare and strategic competition are shifting. This aligns with both the 2022 National Defense Strategy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Vision, which have directed professional military education institutions to adjust their curricula to address this disruptive change.

Values

This plan codifies NDU's Values that are present across multiple documents but not holistically addressed elsewhere. The Values express the foundational characteristics critical to NDU developing and maintaining a positive work and educational environment, making the highest levels of learning and operational support possible and engendering public trust. The Values are intended to endure through changes in national security policies, shifts of education modalities, and topics of discussion in the classroom.

To this end, NDU shall foster and promote the Values of:

- ◆ Academic Excellence: The JCS Vision, CJCSI 1800.01F (*Officer Professional Military Education Policy*), and CJCSI 1801.01F (*National Defense University Policy*), as well as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (NDU's institutional accrediting body), all require rigorous and intellectually challenging academic

programs, research, and scholarship from faculty and students. More important, NDU has a moral obligation to rigorously prepare future national security leaders to understand and overcome future threats to the United States.

- ◆ **Academic Freedom:** CJCSI 1801.01F states that NDU operates under the concept of academic freedom. Academic freedom means faculty and students are allowed to express their opinions, inquire freely, and conduct open intellectual exchange. NDU will not “suppress inquiry or curb discussion in a manner that violates free speech.”¹ However, academic freedom is not absolute; it does not override standards of respect and professionalism, particularly considering NDU’s public obligations. Furthermore, academic freedom does not justify ignoring or usurping statutory obligations and policy requirements to safeguard classified or sensitive information.
- ◆ **Collaboration:** The work of the national security enterprise is inherently collaborative. Collaboration necessitates acculturation as well as relationship-building; both are key aspects of NDU and are required elements of curriculum and the work environment. Academic excellence and the administration of the University are advanced by interactions among students, faculty, and staff. NDU personnel will be collegial, respectful, inclusive, and transparent, focused on mission accomplishment and relationship development. We will share information and insights, listen, and learn from our colleagues.
- ◆ **Diversity:** “Pluralism, inclusion, and diversity are a source of national strength in a rapidly changing world.”² Diversity, equity, and inclusion are about appreciating the inherent value of a variety of points of view and embracing ideas and perspectives across social, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. They are important factors across the entirety of NDU operations, from academics to faculty and student interactions, from research and gaming to personnel management and policies.
- ◆ **Holistic Development:** NDU strives to provide an environment that develops the whole person. The University encourages intellectual development; physical, mental, and spiritual well-being; resilience; and familial connections. Holistic development emphasizes that graduation is not the end of learning. It is vital that students, faculty, and staff cultivate a passion for lifelong development and learning.
- ◆ **Integrity:** A culture of trust, openness, honesty, and ethical conduct is the basis for all other Values at NDU. Without this firm foundation of integrity, the other Values are little more than rhetoric. All members of NDU must both demonstrate and demand integrity in self-reflection and interactions with others.

¹ Middle States Commission on Higher Education, “MSCHE Supports ACE’s Academic Freedom Statement,” accessed on October 19, 2022.

² *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2022), 16.



Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., speaks with Keystone students, June 15, 2017

Colleges and Components

NDU's strength is the varied contributions of its colleges and other components. The need for such diversity has not arisen haphazardly, but rather through a process of evolution based on senior policymakers' foresight and identification of significant strategic gaps. Each NDU component is purpose-built to provide unique high-value capabilities to the national security enterprise. The five NDU colleges each focus on a different critical domain or aspect of warfighting and statecraft, providing an invaluable complement to the land, maritime, air, and space domain emphases of the Service war colleges while simultaneously cultivating a core of shared joint knowledge, skills, behaviors, and competencies. NDU's other components provide capabilities such as nonpartisan national security research, wargaming, international fellow integration, Capstone leadership education, and operations support that are essential to the NDU Mission and add depth and breadth to the University. Each component serves a key role in supporting and advancing the capabilities and capacities of the national security enterprise, ensuring staffs across the Joint Force and interagency possess the quantity and quality of graduates critical to creating and maintaining strategic advantage.



General Mark A. Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, discusses current national security threats and international trends during President's Lecture Series, October 5, 2022

Strategic Context

Now and over the next two decades, we face strategic challenges stemming from complex interactions between a rapidly changing global balance of military capabilities; emerging technologies; competitor doctrines that pose new threats to the U.S. homeland and to strategic stability; an escalation of competitors' coercive and malign activities in the "gray zone"; and transboundary challenges that impose new demands on the Joint Force and the defense enterprise.

—2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America

Accompanying and intensifying this shift are rapid economic, societal, demographic, and climate changes. The distinctions of the past—among military force, the defense industrial base, cyber and space operations, and the private sector landscape—are blurring. The NDU ecosystem must adapt its practices to respond to this change. Competitors' strategies will seek to exploit perceived vulnerabilities in American power across geopolitics, technology, economics, and the environment. This return to complex multipolar competition represents an epochal shift in the international security environment, the scale of which places great demands on the country and thus NDU to rise and help America and its allies and partners navigate these complex challenges.

As geopolitics transform, so do our societies and our students. NDU students of the next 5 years are digitally networked natives who came of age during the rapid growth of nearly instantaneous and borderless communications. Graduates will engage with every conceivable background, culture, faith tradition, and identity. They will need to create workplaces of mutual respect across great diversity. They will need to be inclusive to enable team members to fully contribute to resolve complex problems within shorter decision cycles. Successful future leaders will be experts at making informed, ethical decisions in an increasingly connected, rapidly evolving, and highly diverse environment.

Over the nearly 100 years of operations by NDU and its predecessor colleges, the strategic environment facing the United States has repeatedly and dramatically changed.³ Each time, NDU has adapted to help the Nation meet the challenge. The current changes in the character of war, peace, and competition necessitate similarly bold course adjustments as we once again transition from established, familiar scenarios to grapple with innovative ideas, apply resources to new contexts, and meet the demands of unfamiliar challenges. We must adapt NDU's programs and methods now, before these changes fully manifest, so our graduates are prepared to shape and confront them when they do.

Key Assumptions

As NDU evolves to address changes in the security environment, we must make certain key assumptions. Assumptions facilitate planning for an unknown future. For the purposes of planning, assumptions are considered facts, carefully tracked and regularly assessed for validity. Any invalidated assumption would necessitate reevaluating the Strategic Plan.

- ◆ Assumption 1: NDU's Operations and Maintenance budget will remain essentially flat over the next 5 years, affecting NDU's ability to enroll additional students; develop major new programs; and maintain facilities, personnel levels, and other operational requirements.

³Although NDU was founded in 1976, the Eisenhower School traces its roots back to the Army Industrial College that was established in 1924. The National War College and the Joint Forces Staff College were both established in 1946.

- ◆ Assumption 2: Stakeholders value NDU's contributions to the national security enterprise sufficiently that they will help us identify necessary funding and resources for any significant improvements or additions to NDU facilities or programs.
- ◆ Assumption 3: Non-Department of Defense (DOD) agencies and constituents will continue to provide faculty, students, and funding to advance interagency participation in NDU programs.
- ◆ Assumption 4: The need for broad engagement with allies and partners will continue.
- ◆ Assumption 5: The current multipolar geostrategic environment of intense competition, below the threshold of major Great Power war, will remain largely on the same path for the duration of this strategy.

Stakeholder Requirements

NDU is a military organization and, as a Chairman's Controlled Activity, a subordinate element of the Joint Staff. The University operates under legal and moral requirements to execute the orders and comply with the directives provided by senior military leaders, civilian policymakers in the chain of command, and Congress. Additionally, as the educational institution most directly supporting the entire national security enterprise, NDU also maintains moral and/or regulatory responsibility to non-DOD stakeholders across the interagency community and foreign governments. NDU must account for these steady-state requirements across all operations and functions.

In addition to these enduring requirements, there are currently four significant emergent/cyclic requirements NDU must account for:

- ◆ Implement Outcomes-Based Military Education (directed by DOD).
- ◆ Appropriately adapt the focus of all NDU components to prepare graduates for multipolar strategic competition, joint warfighting and the joint warfighting concept, and the application of integrated deterrence in an environment of broad disruptive change (directed by DOD).
- ◆ Prioritize international engagement through our International Fellows Program and other direct engagement opportunities (directed by DOD).
- ◆ Assure the rigor of NDU programs by maintaining accreditation for the granting of graduate degrees (directed by Congress and DOD).

Internal Context

Addressing the contextual changes in the international environment as well as the expectations of our stakeholders is critical. However, so too is recognizing and addressing the internal hurdles NDU faces.

- ◆ NDU infrastructure is aging and in need of substantial maintenance and refurbishment. Without additional investment in NDU facilities, building systems will continue to deteriorate, jeopardizing the NDU Mission, reputation, and joint education for 2,000+ JPME students and 150 international fellows annually.
- ◆ Surveys of NDU faculty and staff identified suggestions for improvement in morale and other key organizational health areas. NDU has recently identified and addressed multiple drivers that contribute to improved organizational health, and we will continue this important institutional improvement effort. Given NDU's exceptional Mission and unparalleled workforce, the University should be among the best places in government to work—we will continue our progress toward that goal.
- ◆ Services and Agencies that send students to NDU respect its stature but often do not differentiate between the colleges in student assignment or alumni utilization. This can result in a misalignment between student background and college domain/functional focus and contribute to graduates not fully meeting knowledge expectations. NDU must work with stakeholders to resolve this discrepancy before it occurs.
- ◆ NDU's current annual average work-year cost and our assumption of continued flat budgets limit our ability to keep civilian payrolls apace with the cost of living while also affecting our ability to attract, hire, and retain more world-class faculty and staff.
- ◆ Increasing reliance on and demand for information technology systems require continued investment to modernize academic support systems, to develop new capabilities and infrastructure, and to maintain accreditation.
- ◆ Limitations in classified workspace; faculty, staff, and student clearance levels; and extremely limited classified IT systems create substantial challenges, limiting the breadth and depth of classified instruction at the University.

Strategic Approach

The challenge facing NDU is clear: In an environment of dangerous multipolar competition and disruptive change, we must create strategic advantage for the Nation and its allies and partners. Across the spectrum of peace, competition, and war, our



Fall NDU Board of
Visitors' meeting,
October 28, 2022

graduates must out-think and out-compete their peers from China, Russia, or any other nation whose interests are not aligned with ours. Quite simply, our graduates will provide the leadership and intellectual support that enable our national security decision-making to be better than that of our adversaries and competitors. To produce the best graduates and intellectual products, NDU must have top-level faculty teaching world-class curriculum and doing research at the forefront of national security strategic thinking. They must be supported by exceptional staff executing agile and efficient processes, all of which will be enabled with advanced educational and support infrastructure. This approach reflects the vision and ambition contained in our Board of Visitors–approved strategic goals, which will guide our current and future efforts:

- ◆ Strategic Goal 1: Model educational innovation; holistic intellectual and professional development; and teaching, research, and outreach excellence across the national security enterprise.

- ◆ Strategic Goal 2: Provide an attractive environment in which to work, learn, and grow that fosters ethical behavior with an inclusive, diverse, and collaborative professional community that advances national security.

From these goals flow several strategic priorities, which we will use to constantly filter, vector, and assess our actions, enabling us to prioritize all University efforts, drive innovation, and facilitate cross-University collaboration.

Priorities: Our *first priority* is based on recognition that NDU's pacing competition is from the professional military education systems of China and Russia. We must deliver graduates who are prepared to outperform the graduates of our key strategic competitors. We must recognize, leverage, and build on our own advantages, with a clear understanding of our competitors' strengths and weaknesses. Our *second priority* is to purposefully reshoulder the role of providing the intellectuals of choice for the national security enterprise. This priority looks forward and builds on NDU's role in the Cold War. In events such as the Solarium Commission and the National Defense Resources Conferences, and countless others throughout the Cold War, U.S. decision-makers looked to NDU as a creative locus for nonpartisan perspective, national security scholarship, and intellectual support. They must do so again. Our *third priority* is to proactively lead change. The University will incentivize innovation in curriculum; research; and games, exercises, models, and simulations (GEMS). We will develop the faculty, staff, and business practices to lead rather than react to changes in the character of war, technology, society, and geopolitical competition. We will explore new curriculum methodologies and programs, including assessing our ability to deliver national security education via distance learning to more of the national security enterprise that cannot attend NDU programs in person.

We will achieve our strategic goals by focusing on these priorities and pursuing them through three broad and cross-cutting Lines of Effort (LOEs) introduced below and detailed in our Implementation Plan. Taken together, they describe the actions the University and its components will take over the next 5 years.

LOE 1: Enable Student, Alumni, and Stakeholder Success. Student and alumni success defines the value of NDU to its stakeholders. Graduates fill key senior positions across the entire national security enterprise and serve at the highest levels of

allied and partner military and civilian agencies. NDU must provide world-leading education for students and embrace continuing education for alumni and stakeholders. We will explore opportunities to bring these groups together to learn from each other. NDU will provide the education, research, forums, and ongoing scholarly/intellectual support that NDU students, alumni, and stakeholders need to succeed in their national security missions.

Defining success: The first step in pursuing this LOE is to define what success looks like for each group.

- ◆ Student: NDU judges student success by mastery of Institutional and Program Learning Outcomes (ILOs/PLOs). Taken together, ILOs and PLOs outline the set of individual skills and values NDU students must develop and possess to graduate. A successful student has been evaluated on and shown mastery of relevant ILOs and PLOs.
- ◆ Alumni: Alumni succeed both by providing recognized value to the national security enterprise and by successful retention and advancement.
- ◆ Stakeholder: Stakeholders comprise the key constituents of the national security enterprise. Their success is demonstrated by achievement of the strategic objectives of the United States and its allies and partners.

LOE 1 Goals

- ◆ Adapt curricula and research to meet enduring and emerging needs of the national security enterprise. NDU will build on an existing world-class curriculum, focusing additional effort on preparing students, alumni, and stakeholders for what is over the horizon and iteratively reassessing our curricula and delivery to ensure continued relevance. NDU will expand its focus on ethics in national security as well as further developing our experiential educational model, enhancing University capabilities and capacity for GEMS.
- ◆ Ensure Academic Support. We will align, empower, and enable our staff and support elements to modernize processes and technology, so they provide responsive support to all portions of the NDU ecosystem: students, stakeholders, faculty, staff, departments and agencies, allies and partners, the defense industrial base, and private organizations.
- ◆ Expand cross-component and cross-governmental collaboration. NDU is greater than the sum of its parts. Its five colleges, three primary campuses, satellite locations, Centers, Institutes, and affiliations across the interagency community and with allies and partners provide a unique opportunity to propel students, alumni,

staff, faculty, and stakeholders into a future where they are ready to lead and succeed against any challenge they confront.

- ◆ Increase alumni and stakeholder engagement and support. NDU will deepen our well-earned reputation for providing accessible, responsive, world-class national security experts to support our stakeholders. We must invest in ourselves, our products, and our messaging to help national security decisionmakers come to us. We will become the intellectuals of choice for knowledge, ideas, and inspiration on national security matters.

LOE 2: Improve Our University. Leading-edge infrastructure and well-functioning processes are critical to attracting, developing, and retaining the highest-level students, staff, faculty, and stakeholders. NDU must be proactive and forward-looking to improve its processes, revitalize existing infrastructure, and identify critical new requirements. Success will require creativity in pursuing traditional and nontraditional funding streams as well as flexibility to research and adopt cutting-edge technology and best practices to improve our planning and processes. Continuous institutional improvement and modernization will allow us to achieve success in the other lines of effort as well as our outward facing priorities.

LOE 2 Goals

- ◆ Develop beyond state-of-the-art infrastructure. Developing the cognitive fitness required for joint warfighters and national security leaders to succeed in a complex and fast-paced cyber-, space-, and artificial intelligence-enabled multidomain environment requires cutting-edge infrastructure. NDU will develop the facilities and accompanying IT infrastructure required to support leading edge academics, research, and gaming as well as efficient business processes. In a highly competitive fiscal environment, NDU must creatively secure sufficient funding to develop and maintain this infrastructure.
- ◆ Implement industry-leading business processes. NDU business support activities and functions exist in an extremely complicated environment, bridging traditional higher education, military base operations, interagency personnel management, and international engagement. We will develop flexible and agile approaches to seamlessly work across these varied operating environments.

LOE 3: Develop Our Team. NDU consists of a talented team of professionals from across government, academia, and the private sector. Yet as capable as we are now, we must continually cultivate and nurture our workforce to propel ourselves forward. We must seek improvement through recruiting and retaining world-class talent. We will further streamline the hiring process and policies and implement a strategy to identify, attract, hire, and retain diverse new talent. Where we cannot sufficiently fill gaps in coverage of key national security, societal, and educational contexts, we will holistically incorporate supporters, such as alumni, the NDU Foundation, the Board of Visitors, or University partnerships.

LOE 3 Goals

- ◆ Develop faculty and staff to meet enduring and emerging needs. NDU will prioritize professional development and career growth opportunities that enable our staff and faculty to meet the evolving needs of the national security enterprise. We will open new opportunities for faculty and staff to shoulder greater responsibilities across our educational enterprise.
- ◆ Hire to Mission needs. To address the national and international challenges marking this new era, we must proactively identify and address gaps in knowledge, skills, and abilities across faculty and staff. NDU will attract and hire diverse, highly skilled thought leaders capable of developing and delivering world-class education, research, and GEMS to address evolving national security needs. Similarly, we will attract and hire staff with the experience and knowledge to continue to evolve and improve the University.
- ◆ Promote and retain top talent. We will further develop clear career progression pathways and benchmarks for promotion for top faculty and staff. NDU will commit to identifying causes of reduced retention, so we can retain the talent and institutional knowledge needed to create and sustain effective change.
- ◆ Foster an environment of transparency, trust, belonging, and partnership. Our success is dependent on the collective energy, intelligence, and contributions of all our team members. We will promote an environment of belonging, dignity, and respect for all. Through cross-component teamwork, individual action, and leadership focus, we will continue to address transparency, trust, belonging, and partnership—ensuring NDU is among the best places to work in the Federal Government.



General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.), seen here with NDU's Dr. Joseph Collins, addresses students, January 31, 2017



General Jacqueline Van Ovost, Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, speaks with members of NDU community, May 4, 2022



President Barack Obama gives televised speech on counterterrorism policy, May 23, 2013



JAWS students and faculty listen as director of Paris office of German Marshall Fund of the United States speaks at Hôtel de Talleyrand in Paris, May 2022

Implementation

Following the release of the Strategic Plan, NDU will move quickly to develop a holistic, cohesive, and synchronized Implementation Plan. This plan will include annexes from each component and link our strategic goals, priorities, and LOEs to clear, measurable, achievable, and timely objectives. It will ensure NDU remains focused on advancing the quality and rigor of JPME while we adapt to the changing global security environment. Component annexes will, at a minimum, identify key component actions, with identified methods of assessment, to support achievement of the University's Strategic Plan.

NDU President’s Strategic Initiatives. As a manifestation of our priorities, and as we look to the NDU of the future, we have three strategic initiatives that NDU will include, and components will consider, in the development of their Implementation Plans.

1. *Wargaming Center and Cyber Labs.* In the Air Corps Tactical School of the 1920s and 1930s, faculty and students grappled with conceptual challenges for the employment of airpower. Then, after a morning of developing concepts, they got in their planes and tested that theory, found its strengths and weaknesses, landed, and integrated what they learned. Their efforts were key to U.S. success in World War II and beyond. As NDU grapples with disruptive changes in geopolitics, technology, information, culture and society, and even climate, we must have a similar capability. Experiential education must anchor our curricula; GEMS and practical labs are where students can experiment, test theories, collaborate, and demonstrate knowledge. These spaces should be accessible physically and virtually, allowing use not only as classrooms but also as practice forums outside of traditional class time. As we consider how to shape and develop requirements for these spaces, we must also consider long-term usage beyond JPME II.

2. *Distance Learning, Short Courses, and Certificates.* National security enterprise professionals—including those from Capitol Hill, National Security Council (NSC) staff, Departments and Agencies, and select industries—can benefit from our curricula, even if they cannot attend our longer programs in residence. We will examine our current course offerings and explore ways to build a series of short course and/or certificate programs that will provide education from national security fundamentals to targeted courses based around our unique curricula across the University. We will explore how to eventually offer these certificates as “stackable” educational opportunities that can lead to a master’s degree over time.

3. *Infrastructure and Technology Revitalization.* An institution like NDU must have the physical and virtual infrastructure and technology needed to support world-class curricula and cutting-edge research. Balancing innovative technologies against requirements for physical space, IT and other infrastructure, and risk in the cyber domain must be planned for early and reviewed frequently. The dependency between requirements and Mission links our staff and faculty toward one endstate:

world-class capabilities and capacity to meet global security challenges. Our business support team will lead our revitalization, while working with the appropriate academic and academic support components. The business support team will capture and translate idealized conceptions of need into tangible requirements to define our path forward. As we identify and refine these requirements, NDU leadership will take a holistic and transparent approach to adjudicating and resourcing these requirements and working with stakeholders to identify ways to mitigate or eliminate any short-term resource shortfalls.

Costs and Risks

NDU's Strategic Plan is ambitious and requires us to overcome significant challenges, including time constraints and resource availability. Yet, advancing this strategy is vital to the enduring success of NDU, JPME, and protection of the values and ideals of the Nation. We must find creative, new approaches to managing the costs and mitigating the risks while simultaneously ensuring we remain focused on advancing the education of our future national security leaders.

Time

Time to execute: Time is our most limited resource. This decade is a decisive point of inflection for the country. If NDU is to increase its contribution as described in this plan, we have an extremely limited time to do so. Based on extended Future Years Defense Program cycles, relying on significant changes to budget authorizations or new infrastructure risks strategic failure. NDU must pursue new, nontraditional funding and resources while simultaneously looking for lower cost and rapidly fieldable interim solutions that move us toward our endstate goals.

Leadership time: Execution of this strategy will require sustained and significant commitments of NDU and component leadership time and focus. Substantial “up and out” engagement efforts will be required. With extremely limited unscheduled time in Senior Leader current calendars, NDU must develop and refine sustainable methods to further streamline and empower decision-making processes at the lowest level—or risk overcommitment of time and loss of focus at all levels of leadership.



NDU community celebrates the start of Eisenhower Hall renovation project and holds a wall breaking ceremony, December 12, 2022

Faculty and staff time: This strategy increases the expectations placed on instructional and noninstructional faculty as well as staff. The commitments to supporting alumni and stakeholders are significant. While ensuring student success is our number one priority, irrespective of role in the University, furthering our strategic goals will inherently force new approaches to balancing primary and secondary duties. NDU and each component must focus efforts on the most important tasks and redesign, refine, and streamline existing processes and workflows to purposefully open more faculty and staff time. Supervisors and leaders must also carefully work with their teams to help ensure that while new responsibilities are shouldered, NDU does not create non-conductive work environments or set expectations that unfairly upset a healthy work-life balance.

Resources

To fully realize this strategy requires substantial increases in NDU resources. However, one of the key assumptions of this strategy is an austere resourcing environment.

Without substantial effort, NDU resources will likely become tighter due to competing budgetary demands and the impact of inflation. All three LOEs are at least partially reliant on substantial increases in available funding. New or updated facilities, cutting-edge IT, and world-class faculty and staff all come at a significant premium in both initial and sustainment costs. NDU must be creative, agile, and relentless in pursuing and utilizing every possible funding source or risk not attaining its strategic goals. Clear, detailed plans must be developed, now, to help inform Congress, our stakeholders, and others who want to support the University about how these funds will translate into securing the Nation now and into the coming decades.

Conclusion

Change in the security environment is a constant, but there are periods in which that change accelerates in both breadth and depth, driving fundamental transitions in the character of international competition, conflict, and war. The United States is currently facing such a period of accelerated change. The reemergence of multipolar geostrategic competition combined with profound changes in technology, industrial base development, cyberspace and information advancements, global economy and societies, and climate combine to present a significant challenge to U.S. national security interests. As the center of official U.S. national security scholarship, NDU will rise to meet this challenge.

In addition to adapting our curricula, research, and processes to a rapidly changing national security environment, NDU must maintain Middle States Commission on Higher Education accreditation, move toward full implementation of Outcomes-Based Military Education for delivery of JPME, improve organizational health, and expertly manage human capital, budget, infrastructure, and facilities programs within a constrained budget.

As we move from Strategy to Implementation, we must recognize that our strategic goals and priorities will define our path forward. Our LOEs—(1) Enable Student, Alumni, and Stakeholder Success; (2) Improve Our University; and (3) Develop Our Team—in concert with the Implementation Plan will define our operational approach to achieving the tenets of this strategy. Ultimately, with steadfast pursuit of the plan, our staff and faculty—our University—will rise to support the U.S. national

security enterprise, alongside our allies and partners, to meet the challenges of the evolving security environment.

This Strategic Plan is a clarion call to the single most capable body of national security experts and strategists in the U.S. Government: the faculty and staff of NDU. We must innovate, we must adapt, and we must succeed. We will do so by providing integrated support to the academic, research, and gaming missions and developing and maintaining a healthy culture to drive and ensure academic and student success now and into the future.

Susan Eisenhower, granddaughter of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, speaks with NDU students, August 4, 2022





NDU Graduation Ceremony,
June 8, 2022

