



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON DC 20319-5066**

April 1, 2020

Dear Board of Visitors,

I am writing to inform you of National Defense University's activities to protect our personnel and accomplish our academic mission during the heightened Health Protection Condition due to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

On Monday, 16 March 2020, all NDU programs delivering phase II joint professional military education began to be conducted online, including the ten-month programs taught at Fort McNair and the ten-week programs taught from Joint Forces Staff College. Other academic programs have been cancelled, including for example the spring convening of CAPSTONE and PINNACLE.

Thanks to the anticipatory work of our component, faculty, and staff leadership over the preceding several weeks, this transition has proven to be largely seamless. This same anticipatory work also gives us confidence – now being borne out – that online delivery of these academic programs supports each student's ability to complete their program requirements and graduate as scheduled.

To date, we have had one individual test positive for COVID-19, and that diagnosis occurred twelve days ago. The individual is under the care of their civilian healthcare provider in Directed Quarantine at their home, and is reporting mild symptoms. I commend this member of our community for reporting their positive diagnosis to us so that we were able to take action to ensure the continued health and safety of our entire university population. Fortunately, the individual's last time on campus was more than two weeks prior to the diagnosis, so all those who were in close proximity to this person were already beyond the 14-day incubation/presentation of symptoms stage.

The Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of Washington DC have this week issued stay-home Executive Orders; these orders do not prevent NDU employees or contractors from going to their assigned work place. But for the vast majority of our people, their assigned work place is their telework location.

As we respond to the extraordinary challenges presented by COVID-19, we are focused on protecting the health and wellness of our students, faculty and staff, while also meeting our academic mission in these circumstances. In order to reduce the risk of community transmission of the coronavirus, we have reduced to a minimum the number of people required on campus to support the mission. We are also aggressively pursuing efforts to reduce risk for those few who are mission essential and are needed to be physically present.

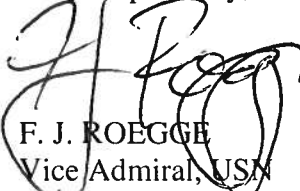
In line with Joint Staff, DoD, and OPM guidance, we cancelled courses, conferences, workshops, and symposia; cancelled official travel and restricted personal travel; and cancelled

delegations, visits and speakers from off campus. We have distributed hygiene information and installed hand sanitizer stations throughout campus, with frequent reminders on each individual's personal responsibility to follow recommended hygiene practices. We have implemented social distancing measures throughout the university, including maximum use of telework flexibility. Under new OPM authorities and where appropriate, we are also able to approve people to work from home even without a telework agreement.

I have been extremely impressed with the faculty's ability to successfully shift curriculum delivery into a virtual environment, and with the ability of our individuals, our components, and our institution to continue to support the Joint Staff and other stakeholders. Similarly, the NDU staff has risen to the occasion by providing service and support that enabled continuity of operations across all functions. The efforts of our Human Resources Directorate to assist our whole team to implement authorized maximum workforce flexibilities was particularly noteworthy. But most significant were the efforts of our Information Technology Directorate to enable our workforce to shift their work online. Preparations for making this transition to the virtual environment didn't just start last month; this foundation was built beginning several years ago with the board's advocacy and support for funding of our IT strategy and modernization plans. We are now seeing the success of all that hard work, including the potential to more clearly envision further improvements in the design and delivery of NDU's academic programs in the future.

Finally, I am eager to discuss with the board our activities since our last meeting in August. Under these circumstances we will look for the earliest opportunity to convene the board virtually, ideally before the end of the current academic year. I'll provide a letter to the board in advance of that meeting to bring you up to speed on recent developments and to suggest how the board can help us envision the future of NDU and its programs.

Very respectfully,



F. J. ROEGGE  
Vice Admiral, USN  
16<sup>th</sup> President