



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
STAFF ADVISORY COUNCIL
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC 20319-5066

NDU-SAC

2 August 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR NDU BOARD OF VISTORS

Subject: Staff Advisory Council Feedback on Proposed Commandant Sharing Change

1. The National Defense University (NDU) Staff Advisory Council (SAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on proposals that affect NDU and its mission enablers. This memorandum reflects staff feedback solicited by Council leaders on the topic of the recently published Information Memo that proposes reallocation of the existing General Officer / Flag Officer (GOFO) Commandants of the Eisenhower School (ES) and National War College (NWC) to also become the Commandants of the College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC) and College of International Security Affairs (CISA) respectively, in a shared manner.

2. The SAC is concerned by this proposal for two main reasons; process and content.

a. There is a perception among NDU employees that the process of developing this proposal would have benefitted from increased openness, transparency, and collaboration. The lack of a formal and rigorous analysis of options to solve specific problems, as stated during the 8 July 2019 town hall, is troublesome and represents an opportunity for increased input from multiple viewpoints moving forward.

b. Staff feedback gathered by the SAC from across NDU echoes each element noted in the "Feedback: Concerns and Alternatives" section of the provided Information Memo. Leadership has cited the fiscal benefits of not filling existing billets, the desire to be unconstrained by the existing structure, and an aspiration to better leverage the rank of the Commandants, but the specific problems intended to be solved with this change remain unclear. Additional staff feedback highlights concerns about the message this change may send to the wider NDU community, joint force, lawmakers, alumni, American public, partners, and adversaries. Any decision that may be perceived as reducing the capability of the colleges addressing our nation's highest defense priorities risks being interpreted as inconsistent with published strategies, policies, and priorities. Focused and qualified leadership is important to each organization.

3. In light of the above, the NDU SAC recommends that a planning team (representing a cross-section of NDU perspectives) be formally established and resourced (including appropriate time) to develop suitable, acceptable, and feasible options that align with the NDU mission, vision, strategy, and ongoing efforts to improve the command climate. Concurrent to that effort, the NDU SAC recognizes that each NDU component has a unique and critical role in our national defense and expresses that each should be manned appropriately, with existing leadership and staff positions prioritized.

4. The contact for this document can be reached at joshua.d.baughman.civ@ndu.edu.

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