



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20319-5066**

**REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF:**

Office of the President

17 March 2014

**MEMORANDUM FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY (NDU) FACULTY**

**SUBJECT: Faculty Concerns about Transforming NDU's Curricula**

1. On March 6, I met with the Faculty Advisory Council and heard a candid sharing of views on issues associated with our "Break Out" Plan and Joint Education Transformation initiative (BO-JET). I take these concerns seriously, and welcome this input very much. The fact that so many faculty have familiarized themselves with the details of our Break Out Plan, and that they feel free to communicate their insights and opinions, portrays a real strength here at NDU. I will continue to value and invite faculty participation throughout the implementation of our plan. I appreciate your reassurance that faculty members "fully embrace change as a vital part of NDU's curriculum". I also appreciate even more your assurance that all faculty will unreservedly do their best to execute our plan; this is the mark of true professionals.

2. I take to heart the concerns you raise about the decision process which resulted in the Break Out strategy. From my perspective, this decision was neither hasty nor uninformed, but the logical outcome of a dialogue about improving JPME that has been underway, and the Provost and others have been actively involved in, since I joined NDU. I can understand, however, that members of the faculty may not have seen the connections between these activities in the same way that I did.

a. Given the mandate I received from the CJCS to "break out", along with my experience in several other academic settings, the resource constraints we are operating under, and my instinctive understanding of how new initiatives can be impacted by the inevitable and regular turnover of personnel assigned to NDU for only a few years, I felt that we needed to "strike while the iron was hot".

b. As we move forward as a team, I have and will continue to solicit input from the faculty and other stakeholders to ensure that we avoid similar misunderstandings in the future.

3. Our planning effort considered six courses of action, eventually focusing on two alternatives. Your concerns that "the rapidity of the proposed changes...risks diminishing the quality of the NDU educational experience for the Class of 2015 as well as NDU's current students" was discussed extensively before our collective leadership made the decision in favor of our current course of action. College Commandants, Chancellors and Deans expressed confidence that we were choosing the best course of action. After careful consideration, I agreed.

a. The most influential factor in my decision was the faith I have in the faculty. To cite your letter: "Once implementation begins, in concert with the notion of 'mission command,' we would hope that you allow the individual colleges to construct curricula appropriate to the needs of their respective students." I recognize that a herculean effort will be needed and I have committed to devote additional resources to the implementation of the BO-JET.

b. In recognition of the additional work that will be required over the next few months, I invite the faculty to recommend steps NDU leaders can take to ease the burden. Your experience is key to the development and implementation of our curriculum. I remain confident that, due to our faculty expertise and passion for student growth, we will offer an even better educational experience for our students in the coming academic year.

4. As Dr. John Yaeger and I emphasized in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2014 Joint Forces Quarterly article, "*Break Out*": *A Plan for Better Equipping the Nation's Future Strategic Leaders*, which explains our educational transformation initiative, change of this magnitude requires a total team effort for implementation. Thus, I am greatly encouraged by the faculty's continuing interest in our plan and I pledge to make myself available to you individually and collectively to discuss its details.

5. Speaking on behalf of all NDU senior leaders, we continue to welcome input from all those who, like yourselves, are dedicated to our institutional mission of providing an unparalleled educational experience to our nation's future national security leaders. Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns.



GREGG F. MARTIN, Ph.D.  
Major General, U.S. Army  
14<sup>th</sup> President

Reference:

- 1 NDU Faculty memorandum, 25 February 2014, "Faculty Concerns about the "Break Out" Plan to Revamp College Curricula"