



**The National Defense University
Board of Visitors
Washington, DC 20319-5066**

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

15 JUN 2015

NDU-BOV

General Martin E. Dempsey, USA
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Room 2E872, The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-5000

Dear General ~~Dempsey,~~

The National Defense University (NDU) Board of Visitors (BOV) met on 20-21 May 2015 at Ft. McNair. It was a very productive meeting and we accomplished a great deal in a short period of time. First, we would like to thank you for your tremendous support and guidance during your time as Chairman. We realize you have many things on your plate but you have been a champion for NDU and it is deeply appreciated. We are certain your leadership and support will have a positive impact on the institution well into the future.

At the outset of this session of the BOV, we were particularly encouraged in how the University climate changed since our last meeting. While there is still some tension, NDU is definitely in a better place. This, we believe, is due in large part to Major General Padilla's leadership. He faced a very difficult situation with several layers of complexity. However, he met the challenge by focusing on the University mission, your directives and by listening to faculty, staff and students. He is rebuilding the NDU team and creating an environment of collaboration and mutual respect. He has also developed a strong relationship with the Joint Staff and the DJ7, Lieutenant General Waldhauser. As a result, morale at the University is on the rise.

We had an opportunity to hear about next year's curriculum, the program review, talent management changes, Middle States compliance, and an executive overview of the recent climate survey. There are opportunities for growth and renewal within all of these areas and we are committed to working with the NDU leadership to keep the momentum going. Although the data show things are improving, there is still much work to do.

We offer you the following recommendations/observations:

1. We are very concerned about the status, prestige, and image of the University. If NDU is to remain the premier joint professional military education institution with a domestic and international reputation, we suggest a revisit of the decision to downgrade the rank of the NDU President from a three-star to a two-star position.
 - As you know, the NDU President is a critical element in advocating for the University to the Services, Joint Staff, other Federal Agencies, and international partners. The University depends on the Services and several federal agencies (State, Energy, Justice, etc.) to send high-caliber faculty members for assignments to NDU. Service Personnel Chiefs typically are three-stars and most government agencies have civilian three-star equivalents. The quality of the faculty is contingent on the ability of the NDU-P to work

with and influence agencies and military departments that send faculty members to NDU. This becomes even more crucial in a period of downsizing and fiscal constraints.

- We believe that within the global military culture, rank is an important indicator of prestige and we are concerned that by downgrading the rank of the NDU President, it has sent a message that NDU is not as important as it once was. We strongly believe the leader of NDU should be equal (if not above) in rank to those who lead other professional military education universities.
- The University President serves the students, staff, and faculty as a role model and mentor that greatly enhances the educational experience. One way they enhance the experience is by inviting key strategic leaders to address the University. The higher the rank of the NDU-P the greater the access. At times, the University even has students who are two stars (international students, Capstone, Joint Combined Warfare School, and Advanced Joint Professional Military Education course).

2. Although we were happy to hear about potential changes to how NDU receives and executes its budget and that there will be some stability of funding in the next few years, we remain concerned that the future levels of that funding will be too low. NDU is on the right track in looking at every program to set priorities within its budget constraints. Accordingly, we believe University leaders will continue to review and assess what programs will ensure institutional quality and relevance. We want to see NDU thrive, not just survive. In order to keep the University abreast of future innovations, including new policy directions, cutting-edge technology, and sustaining high-quality faculty, as well as changing world situations, NDU must have a budget that grows as well.

Again, thank you for your continual support of the University and the Board of Visitors. We wish you much success in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lloyd Fig Newton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lloyd "Fig" Newton, General, USAF (Ret)
Chairman