



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC 20319-5066

INFORMATION MEMO

July 29, 2019

FOR: Board of Visitors, National Defense University

FROM: President, National Defense University

SUBJECT: Roles and Responsibilities of National Defense University (NDU) Commandants and Chancellors

BLUF: NDU is considering expanding the roles and responsibilities of the GO/FOs assigned as Commandants. BOV discussion and feedback is requested on a proposal to dual-hat the Commandant of the National War College as Commandant of the College of International Security Affairs, and the Commandant of the Eisenhower School as Commandant of the College of Information and Cyberspace, and. The objective of this proposal is to improve integration across all of NDU's academic programs, leverage Commandants' operational currency to adapt these programs to meet evolving joint warfighters' needs driven by the changing character of war, and also to also use Commandants in a more strategic role in support of University requirements.

Such a realignment would fill the vacant Chancellor positions at CIC and CISA with a GO/FO; it would not reflect an intention to subordinate one college to another, nor to merge or eliminate any colleges or programs, but rather would apply the same leadership model to each. The focus of Commandants' responsibilities would shift away from day-to-day delivery of academic programs and toward those programs' strategic direction while also gaining new responsibilities to assist NDU in planning, assessment, and engagement necessary for developing coherent, integrated programs. In this context, there are three dimensions of dual-hatting: horizontal integration across programs; vertical coordination of program requirements with NDU resourcing, and a temporal focus from today forward to a three-to-five year planning horizon. Whether characterized as problems to be solved or as opportunities for improvement, progress in each of these three dimensions is needed to move the University forward.

BACKGROUND: Based on recommendations from the NDU Board of Visitors, accreditation concerns from Middle States Commission on Higher Education and NDU's effectiveness and efficiency goals, the University adopted a more integrated, whole-of-NDU approach to planning, assessment, and operations in 2017. The objective of the organizational realignment was to improve the effectiveness of organizational planning, decision-making, and resource allocation and the efficiency of providing supporting capabilities across the enterprise, while also preserving each academic program's uniquely valuable heritage, culture, and student educational experience.

NDU's three original colleges are led by GO/FO Commandants; the two newest colleges have a civilian Chancellor billet currently filled by the Dean of Faculty as Acting Chancellor.

Designing this structure anew would warrant consideration of a military Commandant for each college in order to bring current operational perspective to each college's strategic direction, especially in light of NDU's new mission statement: "*NDU educates joint Warfighters* in critical thinking and *the creative application of military power* to inform national strategy and globally integrated operations, under the conditions of disruptive change, *in order to conduct war.*" (Emphasis added)

DISCUSSION: The rapidly changing character of war and 21st century competition compels NDU to challenge its leader development concepts and programs to maintain our competitive advantage, ensure our graduates can deliver intellectual overmatch, and successfully prepare them for a dynamic and uncertain security environment. Given this environment of rapid change, NDU is evaluating its organizational structure to better consider and anticipate future requirements and design and deliver relevant learning experiences to the appropriate students across all of its programs. The demands of globally integrated operations demand better academic integration across all programs.

In order to successfully execute this mission, NDU will benefit from improved connectivity with the Joint Warfighter and other stakeholders, at the appropriate level, to better design and evolve NDU's academic programs to maintain their relevance. In exploring NDU's strategic plan, it has become clear we can do better as an institution in being able to recognize and appropriately react and innovate to meet the significant challenges taking place within the national security environment; in short, we aim to better answer the question: "What must we teach?"

In answering this question, we have turned our focus to ensuring the University fully understands the learning outcomes that every NDU graduate must possess to successfully characterize and communicate the military dimension of wicked national security challenges in the context of whole-of-governments and whole-of-nations capabilities. Examples of emerging topics that every NDU graduate needs to know, but that today's curriculum does not fully support, include space, electromagnetic spectrum, cyberspace and information, strategic deterrence and all-domain and trans-regional warfare, all in the context of globally integrated operations across the spectrum of conflict. Finally looking across our programs, we have asked ourselves, "How are we going to do this?" NDU's Deans are leading review of potential elements of some increased level of common core curriculum across the academic programs, delivered in an increasingly integrated whole-of-University fashion, with specialties or concentrations that are more adaptable and flexible to meet changing national security requirements.

Our current leadership structure delivers excellent learning outcomes in each academic program, but does not do as well at promoting innovation and integration across the enterprise. This is the greatest challenge NDU faces in order to deliver the academic outcomes required of every NDU graduate that are expected by our stakeholders. Realigning the roles and responsibilities of GO/FOs in the University organizational structure can help to accomplish this.

PROPOSED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NDU COMMANDANTS AND CHANCELLORS: In order to create the capability, capacity, and focus required to enable a flexible and adaptable University culture of academic innovation, integration and curriculum relevance, NDU believes it is time to consider moving beyond its traditional

component/organization-centric senior leader structure to one that has more capability for University-level engagement with strategic stakeholders to inform the design and delivery of relevant and coherent academic programs, now and also forecasting into the future.

The following are some of the responsibilities that would be assigned to Commandants across multiple academic programs and University planning and assessment efforts:

- Serve as an advocate for assigned programs and facilitate integration across academic programs.
- Ensure academic programs' current and future resource requirements are understood and advocated to the enterprise.
- Conduct NDU stakeholder engagement to ensure NDU academic programs are relevant and meet the overall needs of NDU's stakeholder organizations.
- Conduct NDU stakeholder engagement to ensure understanding of stakeholder demand for future student throughput and competencies, three to five years from the present.
- Ensure research and scholarship supports and is relevant to JPME and provides strategic support to national security stakeholders.
- Serving as senior mentors for students, faculty, and staff of associated academic programs.

Active duty GO/FO Commandants positioned with perspective on multiple academic programs and with stakeholder engagement responsibilities can gain a broader perspective of current and future requirements for core and specialized academic curricula. This perspective could identify and inform opportunities to more effectively and efficiently integrate and manage faculty and staff across the University.

There are advantages to having GO/FO Commandants as opposed to civilian Chancellors overseeing an academic program:

- Commandants are rotational and therefore should be arriving with a current perspective of the national security environment and its demands on joint warfighters.
- They should also arrive with current relationships with operational commanders that can be leveraged and which can augment the long-standing relationships of Deans and members of the faculty.
- Commandants can be a more recognizable leadership model for a war college to some allies and partners reflecting an investment in the importance of JPME.
- Leadership of a war college warrants consideration of a military leader rather than a civilian leader, and reflects the warfighting focus of NDU's Chairman-approved mission statement.

There are advantages to having GO/FO Commandants hold greater University leadership responsibility:

- Leveraging GO/FO Commandants adds capacity and capability to enhance NDU's ability to engage its varied stakeholders in support of both the core academic mission and also in the use of PME as a strategic asset in building relationship.
- This engagement with stakeholders can improve the student experience and contribute to coherence and relevance of academic programs, research, engagement, and resourcing across the enterprise and provide a better understanding of stakeholder requirements.

- GO/FO Commandants can bring a fresh perspective to academic programs and enterprise business processes, and assist the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Operating Officer in the fulfillment of their duties.
- Execution of University leadership responsibilities through effective engagements with senior and command leadership across the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, Principal Staff Assistants (PSAs), the Services, and interagency and international communities could better demonstrate the readiness of these GO/FO Commandants for promotion and positions of greater responsibility.

FEEDBACK: CONCERNS AND ALTERNATIVES: The proposed realignment has been discussed in general terms with NDU's component and advisory committee leaders and at a Town Hall with CIC and CISA faculty and staff. The majority of feedback has expressed concern for a negative impact upon the unique identity of each college and upon the delivery of each program's academic mission. Some specific concerns include:

- Loss of senior-level functional or specialized knowledge or subject matter expertise related to a particular academic program (e.g., cyberspace and information).
- Loss of effectiveness of a particular component, organization or academic program if the bandwidth of its senior leader is divided between multiple programs.
- Changes in reporting relationships that could affect unity of command.
- Commandant dual-hatting horizontally across programs is the first-step of a broader agenda to subordinate one college to another, or to merge or eliminate some colleges.
- Commandant dual-hatting horizontally across programs will compromise what is uniquely valuable in each program, rather than enable best practices to be spread.
- What problem(s) would the proposal intend to solve?
- Is this a cost saving budget drill? What subsequent efficiencies are planned?
- Proposal does not yet have important details of operational implementation, making it difficult to assess risk/benefit or unintended consequences.
- As NDU's Executive Council is currently organized, there would be a loss of two senior civilian academic voices leaving only the Provost, and could also result in less diversity of perspective informing University leadership decisions.
- An alternative COA was suggested to remove Chancellors and Commandants from delivery of academic programs. Commandant billets would be repurposed as senior action officers with only University-level responsibilities. Chancellor billets would be eliminated, leaving Deans to execute academic programs.
- An alternative COA was suggested to instead combine CIC and CISA into a new College of Irregular Warfare.
- An alternative COA was suggested to explore the possibility of deepening ties with the Joint Staff by offering Additional Duty (ADDU/dual-hat) relationships for the Commandants of ES and NWC to Joint Staff Directorates aligned with their expertise in return for the Joint Staff aligning GO/FOs to CIC (J39 or J6) and CISA (J33).
- An alternative COA was suggested to seek Reserve GO/FO billets for the Commandants of CIC and CISA.

The public comments session of the BOV meeting provides an opportunity for these concerns and alternatives to be explained to the BOV, and NDU leadership is ready to discuss them.

NEXT STEPS:

- Address BOV feedback
- Develop operational implementation details through University working group
- Socialize resultant proposal with stakeholders: Services, JS, OSD, and Congress
- Address resultant feedback
- No changes in law or policy are expected to be required

Prepared By: VADM Frederick J. Roegge, 202-685-3922