



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

May 6, 2020

Dear Board of Visitors,

Thank you for your continued support of the National Defense University (NDU). I am writing to forward some material for your consideration in advance of our virtual meeting of the Board of Visitors (BOV) scheduled for 11-12 May 2020. The time since our last meeting has been marked by significant changes in our operating environment, most evident through COVID-19 and through the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) Defense Wide Review (DWR).

As I shared with you in my letter of 01 April, I have been impressed with the ability of our team to quickly transition to virtual delivery of our joint professional military education (JPME) programs. Along with the many other actions I described in my letter, this has apparently been successful thus far in mitigating the risk of community transmission on our campus - protecting our students, staff, and faculty from the effects of COVID-19, while continuing to accomplish our academic mission. We have decided to complete this academic year virtually and to conduct a virtual graduation ceremony, and we're making plans for a virtual convocation in August to begin the new academic year, while remaining ready to return to our preferred model of on-campus delivery when conditions allow. We plan to discuss more of these challenges, opportunities, and lessons when we meet next week.

The BOV last convened on 05 August to offer recommendations and observations on a specific proposal to realign component leadership. Subsequently, SecDef Esper initiated the DWR, tasked to conduct a comprehensive review of all Fourth Estate functions and activities to identify resources that can be invested in DOD's highest priorities aligned to the National Defense Strategy and each organization's core competency. Several weeks of tasks and briefs, questions and answers, among the Office of the SecDef, the Joint Staff, and NDU resulted in our task to propose a plan to eliminate the College of International Security Affairs (CISA) and the College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC), and to focus on the core mission of JPME. NDU's resulting recommendations are summarized in the attached slides, which I will discuss more fully when we meet. I will appreciate your observations on our implementation of this guidance and our planning to deliver the new coherent academic program that results. Although the specific proposal of our 05 August BOV meeting is now irrelevant, BOV recommendations concerning communications with internal and external stakeholders remain particularly relevant, and I look forward to discussing with you next week our extensive engagements.

These engagements have helped to inform the work led by the Provost and our Deans to revise our curriculum and the framework within which that curriculum is delivered. Attached you will find the curriculum guidance that is leading development of our new coherent academic program. The Provost will lead our discussion next week of this curriculum redesign effort, and as always, we will appreciate the BOV's recommendations to ensure that throughout this transformation we maintain coherent, rigorous curriculum; minimize risk to accreditation, and

continue to ensure academic freedom. Dr. Yaeger will highlight where we will need your involvement and assistance to prepare for our affirmation of accreditation.

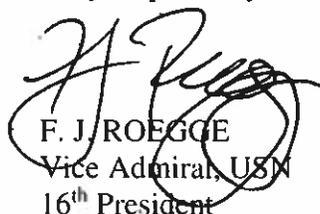
In accordance with our strategy, the “what we teach” and the “how we teach” are enabled by “how we resource and support”. Monday’s session will close with the Chief Operating Officer leading discussion of updates from his functional direct-reports; the attached slides, “Supporting the Academic Mission” are germane. We have benefited greatly and appreciate BOV advocacy in support of efforts such as modernization of NDU’s information technology and facilities. We have much work left in these and other areas, but where the board can now be most helpful is in helping us use the new institutional learning outcomes to improve. We will discuss the process for the transformation, which includes incorporating guidance from the Secretary of Defense and Chairman. Your understanding of “what we teach” and “how we teach” can then inform your recommendations to better prioritize and properly allocate precious mission support resources for the future, so that faculty and staff can provide students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence for the short- and long-term. At the same time, continued BOV support can help ensure NDU’s overall resource requirements are understood and supported appropriately.

Our final agenda topic is to share the succession plan for NDU’s senior leaders. This reflects the requirements of external stakeholders (e.g., the rotations of military and interagency personnel) and the personal and professional plans of individuals; and within those constraints is designed to set up our successors to continue leading this NDU Transformation while preparing for our next accreditation cycle. I will appreciate the BOV’s views on the best practices of the private sector, the academic community, the military and the government to facilitate a successful transition.

For this virtual meeting we are planning to use a combination of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, which we have been using in our online courses, and Livestream. Participation by meeting principals (i.e., BOV members and NDU senior leaders) will be on Blackboard. Livestream is a one way platform (view only), so NDU personnel and the general public will be able to watch the proceedings via Livestream and may comment or ask questions via email; a moderator will read aloud these comments and questions to BOV meeting participants on Blackboard.

The NDU leadership team and I look forward to hosting you in our first virtual BOV meeting. I want to thank you in advance for your help and guidance in ensuring the academic quality, academic freedom of inquiry, and integrity of NDU and its programs, as we serve the public interest in fulfillment of our mission.

Very respectfully,



F. J. ROEGGE
Vice Admiral, USN
16th President