



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

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

BOV-NDU

13 December 2023

General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Room 2E872, The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-5000

Dear General Brown, *Chairman*

We are pleased to report on our recent meeting held on 1 December 2023 at the Fort McNair Campus. It is a privilege for the Board to support you and your University. The meeting was productive and engaging with much relevant information on NDU's progress and challenges. We would like to share these observations:

- On 29 June 2023, Middle States Commission on Higher Education (the civilian accreditation agency for NDU) issued a Notification of Non-Compliance Action to NDU as a part of the process for reaffirmation of its academic accreditation. NDU is, and remains, fully accredited. However, the Commission requested further evidence of compliance in three areas: Educational Effectiveness Assessment, compliance with federal and Department of Defense regulations on Human Subjects Research and Institutional Review Boards, and completion of NDU's Implementation Plan in support of the NDU Strategic Plan. The Board had detailed discussions with NDU leadership on these areas and concluded NDU is on track to provide this evidence to Middle States on 16 January 2024. Ensuring continued growth and sustained excellence of your University is a fundamental priority of the Board and we will continue to engage with NDU on this important matter.
- Hiring qualified retired non-DoD agency faculty is an area where your influence would be helpful. We had brought this up with General Milley as well. The BOV strongly supports the 2010 House Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigationsⁱ recommendation that State Department and other government agency retirees should be able to join PME faculties without sacrificing their retirement annuity. This is a remarkable inequity that limits access to experienced instructional talent from the interagency. We understand that gaining an exemption for agency retirees likely requires a legislative remedy. We recommend the Joint Staff collaborate with OSD and DoS to develop a legislative strategy for presentation to OPM, effectively the lead federal agency for such matters.
- An issue previously detailed for Chairman Milley is NDU's civilian salary allocation, which makes up 50% of its annual appropriation, prohibits the University from employing a more competitive and balanced workforce. While holding the operations and maintenance portion of the budget flat, affordability constraints limit NDU to on-boarding only 360 of 391 authorized faculty and staff by the end of FY 2024 and is not inflation-adjusted.
- Regarding NDU facilities, the \$44M restoration and modernization project for Eisenhower Hall is 22% complete with an estimated completion date of February 2026. A design study

for the restoration and modernization of Roosevelt Hall, home to the National War College, is 65% complete with a current project cost of \$65M. The final design estimate will be ready by August 2024. The University's strategy is to secure the necessary appropriation for a Roosevelt Hall restoration and modernization award in FY25.

- Dr. Patil, a particularly knowledgeable BOV member, reminded Board members and NDU leadership of the unknown funding demand associated with large language model applications. To better scope potential use cases, NDU is pursuing a test program to assess best practices for student and faculty application of ChatGPT.
- In earlier BOV meetings, we suggested the University reinforce its ethics and professionalism curriculum. That effort is now well underway across the University.
- We've asked the NDU team to report back on contingency planning for the potential absence of an FY24 appropriation.

Finally, two calendar items for your consideration: our next BOV meeting will be held **18 April 2024**. You might consider clarifying your expectations for the University and the BOV with a brief discussion with us that day. On **24 May 2024**, NDU will induct Gen (ret) Mattis into the NDU Hall of Fame. If your schedule allows, you may wish to attend.

All members of the BOV offer our warmest wishes for the Holiday Season to you, Sharene and the members and families of the Joint Staff.

Sincerely,



General Norton A. Schwartz, US Air Force (Retired) - Board Chair

The Board of Visitors, National Defense University

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ⁱ Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel p. 124