National Defense University

Strategic Plan for Research
2017–2021
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Introduction

The Research Enterprise at the National Defense University (NDU) is an integral component of joint professional military education (JPME) and incorporates both formal research centers, grouped under the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS), and individual research conducted by teaching faculty and students. NDU research represents collaboration among research and teaching faculty and students as well as direct strategic support to senior civilian and military decisionmakers.

In 1984, the Secretary of Defense established INSS as a policy research and applied strategic learning organization, principally to serve the Secretary and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). Its charter was updated by the Secretary in 1998, charging INSS “to conduct strategic studies for the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the combatant commanders to support the national strategic components of the academic programs at NDU and to provide outreach to other U.S. governmental agencies and to the broader national security community.” INSS has always supported the NDU teaching colleges, but in recent years has significantly increased its involvement in the University’s educational programs at the National War College, Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy, College of International Security Affairs, Information Resources Management College, and Joint Forces Staff College.

In its March 2012 report on the accreditation of NDU, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education wrote:

NDU is uniquely positioned among universities to combine joint professional military education with strategic research on complex security and regional studies. This synthesis of research and teaching enhances educational explorations with informed discussions of national policy and security concerns. We commend NDU for the development of a strong research component that adds demonstrable value to the status and relevance of the university. The successful development of the research office has legitimated NDU as a distinctive university with the ability to produce knowledge; the research component strengthens its value to the nation.

The NDU Research Enterprise, however, is far broader than INSS. Teaching faculty and NDU students also engage in cutting-edge, topical research that advances professional knowledge in the joint domain. Visiting researchers enlarge and enhance the debate. Communities of interest involving students as well as research and teaching faculty explore a wide variety of issue areas.
Selected students may pursue dedicated research under the mentorship of both teaching and research faculty, while researchers routinely lecture and teach in both core and elective course offerings. Research publications are also commonly used as required and recommended readings in the curricula of NDU colleges. Research programs at NDU are a key part of the University’s core mission. A priority of NDU is to enhance and better align its research programs to address complex challenges faced by U.S. national security stakeholders and national security professional educators. NDU Research also performs a key outreach function for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the NDU teaching community. This NDU Strategic Plan for Research 2016–2020 is a nested plan that directly supports the NDU Strategic Plan, academic year (AY) 2016–2017 to AY 2020–2021. The NDU Mission, Vision, Core Values/Guiding Principles, and Strategic Goals are enumerated on the following pages to give context to the Strategic Plan for Research.

Purpose

The NDU Strategic Plan for Research is intended to support, reinforce, and complement the NDU Strategic Plan. It provides the overarching strategic framework and guidance to the Research components of the University. It is both a management tool and a document to guide our decision processes.

Research is a critical and inherent component of education and a core part of any premier academic institution. Research programs at NDU are a key part of the University’s core mission and help enable a world-class JPME experience. As part of this mission, NDU research addresses complex challenges faced by U.S. national security stakeholders and national security educators.

“The National Defense University incorporates some of the nation’s premier national security and defense technology research centers. [They] provide academic venues for increasing the breadth and depth of knowledge regarding national and international security matters and for the advancement of strategic thinking.”

—CJCS Instruction 1801.01C, National Defense University Policy
NDU provides strategic support to decisionmakers and organizations outside the University when such work is within NDU’s capacity, does not detract from the JPME mission, is approved by NDU leadership, and informs civilian and military policy/strategy decisionmaking. The Research components of NDU also perform a key outreach function for DOD and the NDU teaching community. As a nonpartisan, academic venue, NDU research operates under a policy of academic freedom, enabling critical and objective analysis of complex national security issues and challenges, subject to security restrictions. Research components are also called upon to facilitate conferences and workshops on emerging security issues. Senior leaders in DOD and other parts of the U.S. Government leverage these conferences and workshops to inform the dialogue on emerging strategy and policy issues. These events are unique in that they attract a broad audience of both private sector and interagency participants and, in many cases, representatives from the international community. They also provide excellent opportunities to expose students to current issues of critical importance and to meet leaders and staff working those issues.

This plan articulates our research goals as integral to the NDU mission and educational program.

**Vision:** A world-class University Research Enterprise that sets the standard for PME institutions, provides superb support to NDU students and teaching faculty, and informs and influences policymakers and strategists at the highest levels.

**Organization for Research**

INSS serves as the principal focus for research at NDU and is composed of five centers and NDU Press. The Center for Strategic Research (CSR) conducts scholarship on regional and functional international security issues of strategic significance. The Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs (CSCMA) serves as a national focal point and resource center for multidisciplinary research and analytic exchanges on the national goals and strategic posture of the People’s Republic of China. The Center for Technology and National Security Policy (CTNSP) is chartered to study the implications of technological innovation for U.S. national security policy and military planning. The Center for Complex Operations (CCO) has the mission to foster unity of effort among Department of Defense and interagency personnel in complex operations, including stabilization, irregular warfare, and security assistance. The Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction (CSWMD) works at the forefront of research on the impact of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) on U.S. national security.
NDU Press is the University’s cross-component, professional military and academic publishing house. For more detailed descriptions of the centers within INSS, see the annex.

**Environment**

NDU provides a uniquely supportive environment for world-class research. Here, researchers have direct access to a senior military and civilian student body with first-hand knowledge of current security issues, as well as senior leaders, both civilian and military, in the national security establishment. This provides a richness found nowhere else. Second, the Research faculty has developed close ties with OSD, the Joint Staff, senior operational commanders, and officials from the national security interagency process as well as outside think tanks, universities, and foreign counterparts. This connection enables research that is timely, broad-gauged, and relevant to policymakers. It also allows researchers to anticipate and forecast potential future issues and to be positioned to provide timely input to DOD as new security challenges emerge. NDU researchers conduct both self-initiated research influenced by the emerging security environment and sponsored research on specific topics requested by various DOD components and other governmental agencies.

The growing complexity of the future security environment requires a renewed and refocused research effort. A threat environment characterized by a broad range of actors, from international and nongovernmental organizations to nation-states and from nonstate criminal and terrorist enterprises to super-empowered individuals, is challenging national and international security systems. The proliferation of innovative and low-cost technologies is lowering barriers to competition in many domains, while new areas of competition are constantly emerging. The cyber domain, events in the high north, resource scarcity, demographics, and energy security are tangible examples. The interdependence of our globalized economy and its vulnerability to disruption is cause for concern. Security no longer is the sole domain of DOD, but requires the participation and contributions of a larger government and private-sector team. Additionally, we must be prepared to confront and mitigate potential weapons of mass destruction as well as respond to natural disasters. We must therefore broaden and strengthen our research efforts to better understand these emerging challenges and their implications to better support our students, our strategic leaders, and the joint warfighter.

**Scope**

NDU Research is focused on critical, objective scholarship in support of the mission of the University, the needs of senior officials across the national security community, and NDU outreach objectives. The Research mission area develops and refines knowledge to support NDU’s
educational mission by helping the security community see more clearly and understand more completely the implications of future alternatives.

The Research components shall conduct a range of initiatives in national security strategy, defense policy, and national military strategy through research and analysis, publications, and conferences in order to:

◆ support NDU academic programs related to international affairs, national security, and leadership development, teaching support by research fellows, teaching faculty professional development, coordination of research efforts, publications for the classroom, student mentoring, and conferences open to NDU students and faculty

◆ provide independent policy and strategy assessments and analyses to the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, combatant commanders, and the U.S. national security interagency process that is responsive, objective, nonpartisan, and helpful to the formation of U.S. national security decisionmaking

◆ develop and sustain selected outreach programs that provide venues for JPME students and faculty, defense officials, and thought leaders to engage in review, debate, creative discussions, and policy development, reflecting collective or individual analysis, on national security issues in an academic environment infused with a culture of collaboration, transparency, informality, collegiality, and nonattribution.

**Governance**

Inclusiveness, synergy, and collaboration must guide our research governance model. To that end, we will commit ourselves to building cohesiveness and partnerships in research across the NDU community.

The Director for Research and Strategic Support is dual-hatted as Director of INSS and operates under the direct supervision of the NDU President as principal advisor and manager for all research-related matters. His mission is to provide senior executive direction of University research programs and activities to promote and enable research across all components of the University in support of the academic mission. As Chair of the NDU Research Council, the D/RSS also orchestrates liaison efforts with NDU colleges and components, the regional centers, and other national and international research centers and partners to inform and encourage collaboration.

Assisted by a co-chair from the teaching colleges and with representation from all University components, the Research Council fosters innovation, synergy, responsiveness, and collaboration across the NDU Research Enterprise, ensuring that the educational mission benefits to the maximum extent possible from research and that the strategic support benefits from research
efforts by teaching faculty and students. In all of its undertakings, the Research Council supports an educational and research climate that fosters and protects free expression, rigorous analysis, and open intellectual exchange. The council provides the NDU President and Provost advice and recommendations supporting the activities of the Research community at the University.

**Research Focus Areas for AY 2017–2021**

NDU research capabilities are extensive but must be focused for maximum effect. The top priority for all research centers remains enhancing joint education and leader development. Requests to support classroom activities with lectures, presentations, or written products always receive immediate priority. Based on detailed coordination with stakeholders, the following issue areas have been identified as research priorities for AY 2017–2021. They are subject to change based on an evolving security environment and direction by higher authority.
Balance strategic objectives, joint force readiness, and risks in an era of reduced resources (focused on force posture, joint force design, creative operating concepts, and disruptive technologies).

Develop and employ comprehensive national power, including allies and partners, for transregional, multi-domain, and multifunctional conflict in time of scarce resources.

Mitigate global WMD and cyber threats.

Continue rebalancing efforts in Asia with allies and strategic partners.

Inform U.S. policies toward Russia and China in light of their expanding capabilities and activities.

Address emerging and longer term challenges in the Middle East.

Secure the global commons and meet cross-domain challenges.

Strengthen homeland defense support to homeland security (focused on transnational threats such as terrorism and organized crime).

Improve organizational performance in military, civil-military, and interagency operations to include peace operations, counterinsurgency, stability operations, and counterterrorism operations.

Understand the strategic and operational effects of emerging science and technology and support defense innovation and acquisition reform.

**NDU Core Values, Guiding Principles, and Strategic Goals**

The NDU research plan is focused on conducting relevant, comprehensive, rigorous, forward-looking, creative, and objective research in support of JPME and the broader policy/strategy community. In line with guidance from the CJCS, its guiding principle is to help
Strategic Plan for Research
2017–2021

Strategic Plan for Research components will support the goals of the NDU Strategic Plan by attracting world-class research faculty, maintaining an environment of open discourse and academic freedom, and promoting timely and relevant research projects within the NDU community. NDU research goals are nested within broader University Core Values, Guiding Principles, and Strategic Goals:

**Academic Excellence:** National Defense University shall always foster and promote scholarly distinction.

**Academic Freedom:** National Defense University shall always foster and protect free expression, rigorous analysis, and open intellectual exchange based on professionalism and respect for others.

**Collaboration:** National Defense University shall always foster transparent, inclusive, and complementary processes and decisionmaking activities.

**Diversity:** National Defense University shall always embrace a mixture of people, culture, and ideas.

**Holistic Development:** National Defense University shall always foster and promote an environment that nurtures intellectual development and total well-being and resilience, and encourages life-long learning.

**Integrity:** National Defense University shall always foster and promote a culture of trust, openness, honesty, and ethical conduct.

**NDU Research Goals for AY 2017–2021**

NDU Research is focused on developing and refining expert knowledge to support the University’s educational mission and senior military and defense officials in national security decisionmaking. It is an inherent and integral part of the University’s educational mission.

NDU Research goals are nested with the strategic goals identified in the NDU Strategic Plan, as shown below.

**NDU Strategic Goal One: Education and Leader Development**

National Defense University educates, develops, and inspires national security leaders of wisdom, character, and strength who are ready to meet the needs of the Nation.

**NDU Sub-goal 1.1—NDU’s academic programs enable graduates to lead effectively in a rapidly changing global security environment.**
NDU Objective 1.1.1—Academic programs and curricula meet current and future requirements of all stakeholders.

Research Goal: Research components will work with national security stakeholders and NDU teaching faculty to identify and analyze significant, emerging developments in the international security environment in order to inform and support NDU academic programs to better develop leaders with “the ability to operate and creatively think in an unpredictable and complex world.” Research faculty will remain abreast of changes to the [Officer Professional Military Education Policy] Learning Areas and the CJCS Special Areas of Emphasis.

NDU Objective 1.1.2—Academic programs are relevant and provide the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for understanding and leading in the rapidly changing global security environment.

Research Goal: NDU research will remain relevant and address the knowledge, skills and dispositions for understanding and leading in a rapidly changing global security environment. Research faculty will engage closely with teaching faculty, offering research and expertise through papers, presentations, colloquia, seminars, and conferences that bring together top experts in national security studies from around the world. These events will be open to NDU teaching faculty and students.

NDU Sub-goal 1.2—NDU graduates employ innovative, critical, open, and systems thinking.

Research Goal: NDU research will strive to model the same innovative, critical, open, and systems thinking in its research programs that NDU embodies in its academic programs and expects of its graduates. Leading change and transition through improved organizational performance represents a critical focus area. Key to this goal is advancing the current state of knowledge in the field through systematic academic inquiry and scholarship.

NDU Strategic Goal Two: Scholarship
National Defense University creates, preserves, and disseminates knowledge intrinsic to advanced joint education and leader development.

NDU Sub-goal 2.1—The University culture values and promotes scholarship to drive leader development for national and international security.

NDU Objective 2.1.1—Increase the faculty’s ability to develop and update curriculum to reflect significant and relevant changes in security studies.
Research Goal: Research components will support NDU Academic Affairs and teaching faculty to help update coursework or create new material specifically for NDU courses. Research faculty work at the cutting edge of their respective fields and are eager to collaborate with the faculty of NDU's colleges to keep the University's JPME curricula the best in the world.

NDU Sub-goal 2.2—The University fosters a reputation for excellence in scholarship that attracts and retains a highly effective faculty and staff of national and international prominence in their disciplines.

NDU Objective 2.2.1—Increase faculty’s access to opportunities to improve scholarship skills and practices.

Research Goal: Research faculty will continue to produce relevant, accessible materials that explain developments in the international security environment and illustrate their significance for U.S. national security. These materials, which can include tailored teaching materials at the request of the colleges, will be readily applicable to NDU academic programs and designed to be immediately usable in the professional military education curriculum.

NDU Sub-goal 2.3—The University develops and maintains an open, inclusive, and transparent educational environment of enterprise-wide collaboration, academic freedom, and academic diversity that supports the pursuit of excellence in scholarship.

NDU Objective 2.3.1—Increase faculty governance, participation, collaboration and involvement in decision making related to creation and dissemination of knowledge.

Research Goal: NDU research will embrace the “One University” framework to integrate faculty participation, collaboration, and involvement in decisionmaking related to creation and dissemination of knowledge. The Research Council will be the primary vehicle to link research faculty and teaching faculty and students in this enterprise.

NDU Sub-goal 2.4—NDU promotes awareness of, and access to, NDU scholarship and expertise across the institution and key stakeholders.

NDU Objective 2.4.1—NDU scholarship is relevant, shared, and disseminated to the institution, students, alumni, the joint warfighter, joint combatant commands, national security professionals and other key stakeholders.

Research Goal: Research faculty will ensure widest dissemination of research products across the teaching colleges to all NDU stakeholders and to the broader joint and academic
communities in social, print, and electronic media, as well as through conferences, workshops, and symposia. Stakeholders will receive monthly detailed updates reporting all relevant NDU research products.

**NDU Strategic Goal Three: Institutional Enablers**

National Defense University creates integrated solutions and services that support advanced joint education and focus on customer service, collaboration, effectiveness, efficiency, innovation, and fiscal responsibility.

**NDU Sub-goal 3.1—National Defense University’s workforce is recognized for excellence in thought leadership and their professions.**

**NDU Objective 3.1.1—NDU recruits, employs, develops, and retains a workforce of professionals and respected practitioners to support the academic priorities and mission of NDU.**

*Research Goal: The Research components will strive to remain on the cutting edge of research across a broad range of functional and regional issue areas, with the research faculty continually consulted as world-renowned experts in their respective fields. Research faculty will be recruited, developed, and retained with special emphasis on a balanced mix of expert practitioners and recognized scholars holding the Ph.D. in relevant disciplines. Professional development through active participation in field research, conferences, and symposia are an essential and inherent part of attracting and retaining quality research faculty.*

**NDU Strategic Goal Four: University Improvement**

National Defense University evolves and reforms the processes, practices, structures, organization, and culture to foster institutional collaboration and integration.

**NDU Sub-goal 4.1—National Defense University will lead in the transformation/evolution of professional military education for 2020 and beyond.**

**NDU Objective 4.1.1—NDU leads innovation in professional military education.**

*Research Goal: Research faculty will conduct research and offer actionable plans on the potential paths of innovation for professional military education. NDU research, in close consultation with the teaching colleges, will work closely with Joint Staff JPME experts and staff leads to ensure seamless integration with and support for the educational mission.*
NDU Sub-goal 4.2—NDU will value and promote an institutional environment and culture of trust and openness.

NDU Objective 4.2.2—NDU integrates across the enterprise through a culture of collaboration, cooperation, and communication.

*Research Goal:* Research faculty will collaborate continuously with teaching faculty and other components of NDU to develop initiatives to facilitate broader internal collaboration and teamwork among the faculty of the colleges, research centers, principal stakeholders, and the broader national and international security community. NDU research will develop and periodically update an NDU-wide subject matter experts list and increase the number of research/teaching faculty involved in collaborative research projects and communities of interest, linking NDU faculty to research publications by participation in peer review of journal articles and research products.

NDU Sub-goal 4.3—NDU will continually pursue institutional and academic excellence via institutional improvement and renewal.

*Research Goal:* NDU research is committed to the NDU JPME mission as the University’s top priority. We will strive to synergize our efforts and to create an environment of collaboration, inclusiveness, and collegiality. Research faculty and staff will actively participate and contribute to NDU governance bodies and councils. The Research Council represents the entirety of the NDU research community and will serve as a venue for exchanging views, promoting a more effective and collaborative research climate, and contributing to transparency in the enterprise.
Implementing Guidance

NDU Research will develop an annual research work plan that incorporates and balances current issues as well as future cutting-edge research topics. The plan will be reviewed quarterly to reflect progress and updated to include emerging issues. Additionally, D/RSS will produce a monthly research activities report documenting completed and ongoing research products for dissemination to all concerned stakeholders. This NDU Strategic Research Plan will be reviewed as required and updated when necessary to ensure relevance to JPME programs and emerging research themes of interest to key stakeholders.

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Annex: NDU Research Components

NDU Research Council

The Research Council is chartered by the NDU President to promote, integrate, and coordinate all research capacities and activities across the University enterprise in support of JPME. Its first priority is to link research to teaching as synergistically as possible as an integral part of the educational mission. The council meets monthly and is composed of senior representatives from INSS research centers, NDU Press, and the teaching colleges. It is chaired by the D/RSS and co-chaired by a senior faculty member from one of the teaching colleges.

Institute for National Strategic Studies

INSS is NDU’s dedicated research arm and includes the following centers: Center for Complex Operations, Center for Strategic Research, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, Conflict Records Research Center, and Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction. The military and civilian analysts and staff who comprise INSS and its subcomponent centers execute their missions by performing the following functions: research and analysis, publication, policy analysis and assessments, and teaching support.

Center for Complex Operations

- provides for effective coordination in the preparation of DOD and other U.S. Government personnel for complex operations
- fosters unity of effort among the departments and agencies of the U.S. Government, foreign governments and militaries, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations
- conducts research; collects, analyzes, and distributes lessons learned; and compiles best practices in matters relating to complex operations
- identifies gaps in the education and training of DOD personnel and other relevant U.S. Government personnel relating to complex operations and facilitates efforts to fill such gaps.
Center for Strategic Research

◆ provides advice to the Secretary of Defense, CJCS, and combatant commands through studies, reports, briefings, and memorandums; conducts directed research and analysis in the areas of strategic and regional studies; and engages in independent and leading-edge research and analysis in related areas

1. Strategic studies encompass national security and military strategy, to include defense policy, defense organization, deterrence, arms control and counterproliferation, peace operations and small-scale contingencies, transnational security problems, command and control, and future warfare.

2. Regional studies encompass national security strategy, defense policy, and military strategy issues as they relate to significant countries or geographic areas of the world.

◆ applies appropriate and cost-effective methodologies to include technology, agreements, and personnel exchanges to initiate and maintain regular contact and appropriate collaboration with important governmental and nongovernmental institutions in the United States and abroad.

Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs

◆ serves as a national focal point and resource center for multidisciplinary research and analytic exchanges on the national goals and strategic posture of the People’s Republic of China

◆ focuses on China’s ability to develop, field, and deploy an effective military instrument in support of its national strategic objectives.

Center for Technology and National Security Policy

◆ conducts research and analysis on trends in science and technology and their implications for national security policy and defense strategy

◆ accelerates the discovery of emerging technology opportunities and threats through collaboration with subject matter experts from government, industry, and academia

◆ advises senior DOD officials, publishes the results of its research, and teaches as part of the NDU JPME mission.
Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction

- serves as the DOD focal point for countering WMD in JPME. The center works with JPME schools and other academic institutions to enhance teaching and understanding of countering WMD issues; directly supports NDU through teaching elective courses, providing subject matter expertise, lectures, and pedagogical tools at NDU colleges and other components as well as supporting the development and execution of core education requirements
- provides independent reviews, timely initiatives, and special projects dealing with countering WMD for DOD, including OSD, CJCS, combatant commands, and other components of the DOD and other Federal departments and agencies
- maintains a body of expertise on countering WMD for the benefit of DOD, including the Secretary of Defense, CJCS, combatant commands, and other components of DOD, the constituent colleges and institutes of NDU, other JPME institutions, and other Federal departments and agencies
- sponsors conferences, workshops, and seminars on issues relating to the policy, intelligence, operations, and technology dimensions of U.S. responses to nuclear, biological, and chemical proliferation.

NDU Press

NDU Press is the University’s cross-component, professional military and academic publishing house. Its mission is to support the advancement of JPME, national security policy, and international security issues for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the form of accessible, balanced, and thoroughly researched professional publications. NDU Press:

- produces timely, balanced, and authoritative publications on a range of defense and international security issues within a number of approved, consolidated product lines, including, but not limited to: Joint Force Quarterly, occasional papers, policy briefs (Strategic Forum, Defense Horizons), McNair Papers/monographs, e-publishing, social media, and select books
- supports OSD and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in advancement of JPME and national security policy analysis
- promulgates JPME, policy analysis, and related research products through aggressive outreach in print and electronic media
- disseminates publications in various media to audiences including joint, interagency, international organizations, industry, private sector, academic security professionals, and students, while informing the broader public debate.