ACADEMIC DEAN AND PROVOST NOTICE 5420.1

From: Academic Dean and Provost

Subj: PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW/VISITING COMMITTEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Purpose. In support of ACDEANINST 5420.29J, this notice provides additional information that departments and programs should provide to visiting committee members and, as appropriate, address within the self-study.

2. Background. Information visiting committee members need to be aware of regarding the United States Naval Academy (USNA) Program.

   a. As the undergraduate college of our country's naval service, the Naval Academy prepares young men and women to become professional officers and leaders of sailors and Marines. Naval Academy students are midshipmen on active duty in the U.S. Navy. They attend the Academy for four years, graduating with Bachelor of Science degrees and commissions as ensigns in the Navy or second lieutenants in the Marine Corps.

   b. Through an act of Congress, the USNA program is 47 months (8 semesters) of study, no more. Summer school courses are offered as needed primarily for midshipmen who are behind in their studies or for midshipmen taking additional courses to facilitate study abroad or participation, during their senior (1/C) year, in the Voluntary Graduate Education Program (VGEP). It is not permissible to add an additional year or even an additional semester.

   c. For most midshipmen the entirety of the freshman (4/C) year is devoted to the “core” (general education) curriculum. The core is the centerpiece of a Naval Academy education, and provides the basis for a sound general education and strong professional development. It is the core program that allows any midshipman, regardless of major, to prepare for any warfare community in the Naval Service. Modification of the core is very difficult to accomplish and therefore any curricular changes need to be within a department’s ability to effect.

   d. Additionally, majors are selected in the spring of the 4/C year and midshipmen begin their majors in their sophomore (3/C) year at the Academy. As a result, there are only 6 semesters to begin and complete a major.

   e. The balance of moral, mental, and physical is important for the development of each midshipman. Majors are approximately 140 credit hours (~3/4 devoted to the core) and midshipmen typically take 18-19 credits each semester. Additionally, midshipmen participate in a non-credit bearing physical education course each semester in addition to many other
professional requirements. Summers are largely devoted to professional training for the Naval Service.

3. **Visiting Committee Charge.** Within each self-study document departments should include a charge to the members of the visiting committee with a list of items guided by ACDEANINST 5420.29J and section 4 of this notice.
   
   a. **Example charge:**

   The program of periodic review and visiting committees was established by the Office of the Academic Dean and Provost to improve the quality of academic experiences provided to midshipmen. Visiting committee members include experts from academic institutions, and as appropriate government and military professionals, who are asked to independently to propose non-binding suggestions regarding the focal areas and questions put forward by the department. Members of the visiting committee provide an out-brief at the conclusion of the visit followed by a written report to the Academic Dean and Provost and the department. The out-brief and corresponding written report provides independent, external observations and non-binding suggestions. While committee members are encouraged to share their perspectives, a consensus perspective is neither required nor sought; hence, the visiting committee is not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

   Through your evaluation of the self-study and visit with the department, it is anticipated that members of the committee will provide their best, independent feedback regarding:

   b. Departments should list the focal points for visiting committee feedback as guided by the Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges and Questions for the Committee sections of the self-study and paragraph 4 of this notice.

4. **General areas of cognizance.** General issues for the team preparing the self-study and the visiting committee to be cognizant of include:

   a. How close to the state of the art is our curriculum among undergraduate programs nationwide? Are we missing essential elements of the discipline? Does our program contain dated content that should be refreshed or removed?

   b. As a teaching institution, are we following the best pedagogical practices in the discipline with regard to teaching strategies, classroom technology, and interdisciplinary approaches?

   c. Are we as effective as possible in recruiting and retaining a diverse (including underrepresented minorities and women) faculty and promoting an environment of inclusive excellence?

   d. Are we effective in promoting an environment of inclusive excellence to all midshipmen including those from underrepresented groups? Is mentoring and support sufficient to retain students within their chosen majors?
e. Every program has ways in which it can use additional resources (positions, funds, facilities, etc.). In the absence of additional resources, what is the best advice for focusing/prioritizing existing resources?

5. This notice is in effect until it is superseded by another notice.

Distribution:
All Non-Mids (electronically)