

# **U.S. Department of Education**

## **Site Team Review**

### **Petition for Degree-Granting Authority**

**By the**

**National Intelligence University,**

**Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence**

### **Introduction**

On April 3, 2012, a site team from the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) and the U.S. Department of Education conducted a visit to the Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence (School of S&TI) within the National Intelligence University (NIU or the University). The purpose of the visit was to verify the contents of the University's application for the authority to grant a Master of Science and Technology Intelligence degree that the University has developed in response to the Department of Defense Instruction DODI-3305.01 dated December 22, 2006, incorporating change 1 of February 9, 2011 to "Prepare intelligence professionals, both military and civilian, through education and research, to work with skill and dedication in identifying and effectively integrating foreign, military, and domestic intelligence in defense of the homeland and of U.S. interests abroad." and to "Continue the expansion of degree-program offerings..."

The Department of Education's authority to conduct this review is contained in a policy statement entitled "Federal Policy Governing the Granting of Academic Degrees by Federal Agencies and Institutions," which specifies that the Secretary of Education appoint a Review Committee to examine applicant federal programs and determine compliance with four criteria. The National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (National Advisory Committee) serves as the Review Committee designated in the policy statement.

The site team that conducted the visit consisted of the following three NACIQI members:

Mr. Cameron C. Staples, Team Chair  
President and CEO  
New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Dr. Arthur Keiser,  
Chancellor, Keiser University

Dr. Carolyn Williams  
President Emeritus, Bronx Community College/CUNY

Chuck Mula, Accreditation Group staff accompanied the team.

**Special Request:** If the NACIQI concurs with the site team's recommendation and if the Secretary, in turn, concurs with the NACIQI's recommendation, then the members of the site team strongly urge the Secretary, and all those upon whom the resulting process relies, to expedite matters to the extent possible. It is our intent that the current class and the 2011 graduating class be eligible to receive their degrees if degree-granting authority is granted, even though Congress may not act before this current class completes the GIL program.

### Background

The University, then the Defense Intelligence School (DIS), first sought authorization to grant a Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence degree in September 1973. At that time, as an advisory committee to the Commissioner of Education, and predecessor of the NACIQI, the National Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility (NACAIE) evaluated the educational program and recommended to the Commissioner that authorization be granted. As a result, the legislation authorizing the DIS to grant the requested degree was approved in 1980.

From assessing the capability of known and potential adversaries, to the study of developments in science and technology intelligence, to the constitutional and legal issues surrounding homeland security, the University is a strategic and critical resource to the entire intelligence community (IC). Its student body reflects that mission; with a strong presence of all military Services, including the U.S. Coast Guard, and increasing representation from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Defense (DOD), Director of National Intelligence (DNI), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Security Agency (NSA), National Geospatial Agency (NGA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of State (DOS), Congress, and other agencies, the University represents a cross section of the entire IC. It is one of the few environments where students from multiple agencies of the IC can collectively study, reflect, and discuss the issues confronting the IC and U.S. national security.

The educational enterprise within the IC continues to grow and expand. On November 1, 2010, the Director of the DIA and the President of the NDIC formally chartered the Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence to address compelling technological issues facing the intelligence community today. And on December 16, 2010, the Director of National Intelligence requested that the Secretary

of Defense re-designate the National Defense Intelligence College as the National Intelligence University (NIU) under the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). University programs were reorganized into the College of Strategic Intelligence and the Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Review Committee received and reviewed evidence submitted by the Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence (School of S&TI) within the National Intelligence University (NIU) that the following four criteria have been met:

**(1) That the conferring of the authority to grant the graduate degree in question is essential to the accomplishment of the program's objectives of the applying agency.**

The National Intelligence University (NIU) asserts that degree-granting authority is needed so that the University, through the Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence, will be able to achieve its goals of providing a professional, fully integrated and seamless educational enterprise to the nation's intelligence community. As the only Federal degree-granting, regionally accredited institution of higher education that focuses on intelligence, the University recognizes its leadership responsibility within the intelligence community and the DOD. It is the only academic program within a federal degree granting institution that must utilize highly classified intelligence materials for teaching and research.

Within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the intelligence community assigns a unique set of standards for Science and Technology Intelligence Officers that is not addressed by either the current degree offerings at NIU or in the non-federal educational community. These standards form the foundation for the S&TI curriculum. Because this standard is classified it can only be fully offered within the programmatic environment of NIU.

Finally, in pragmatic terms, with the award of a degree upon completion of the program, it is expected that intelligence and military officers will be able to advance more quickly in their respective roles and responsibilities, allowing them greater opportunities to cooperate with their counterparts in the fight against global terror, further advancing the goals of the program and the security of the nation.

### **Site Visit Team Analysis:**

*Team members concurred that the award of the master's degree is commensurate with the achievements of program graduates and essential to the goals and objectives of The National Intelligence University and the National Intelligence Community.*

**(2) That the graduate program in question and/or graduate degrees proposed cannot be obtained on satisfactory terms through the facilities of existing non-Federal institutions of higher education.**

Throughout its self-study, the NIU asserts that there is no extant counterpart to the School of S&TI's program in a non-federal institution of higher education. As the only Federal degree-granting, regionally accredited institution of higher education that focuses on intelligence, it is the only academic program that must utilize highly classified intelligence materials for teaching and research. The degrees offered within the NIU are unique to both federal and private sector institutions of higher education because of the necessity for both instructors and students to maintain the highest security clearances for the educational mission.

Unlike most of the other federal government degree-granting institutions, the NIU is not dominated by a single military service and it does not focus on a single environment of warfare or intelligence. Instead, it is a program that is supported, attended and utilized by all IC agencies and military services including the CIA, DIA, NSA, NGA, NRO, DOE, DOS, and DHS. The faculty includes representation by all of the military Services, United States Coast Guard, and nominated Chairs from CIA, DIA, FBI, State Department, NGA, and NSA.

The pool from which the student body is drawn is atypical in that it consists exclusively of U.S. citizens who are members of the U.S. Armed Forces or federal government employees. Additionally, students must possess and maintain the highest security clearances. Because the pool is drawn from mid-career professionals across the federal government, students serve as prime resources for one another in the educational process. It is not possible to assemble and maintain a similar student body in a non-Federal institution of higher education.

Finally, the extensive classified materials and library resources available to the University and School of Science and Technology Intelligence students, which are crucial to their success, are unavailable outside of the University's protected environment.

**Site Visit Team Analysis:**

Team members concurred that because the faculty and students must utilize highly classified intelligence materials for teaching, learning and research, the degrees offered within the NIU are unique to both federal and private sector institutions of higher education. Due to the necessity for both instructors and students to maintain the highest security clearances for the educational mission, *the program cannot be satisfactorily obtained through any non-Federal institution of higher education.*

**(3) That the graduate programs conducted by the applying agency meet the standards for the degree or degrees in question which are met by similar programs in non-Federal institutions of higher education.**

The Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986 required that any of DOD's professional educational institutions that attained degree-granting authority must pursue civilian accreditation. This was mandated so that the DOD degree-granting institutions would be subject to the same review process that assures the quality of mainstream American higher education. The NIU sought and was granted the authorization to grant the Master of Science in Strategic Intelligence in 1973. This program became codified with Public Law 96-450 in 1980 and was signed by President Jimmy Carter. The University's offerings increased in 1997 with the authorization of the Bachelor of Science in Intelligence degree. This is a fourth year only (senior year) program in which the students must have a minimum of eighty credit hours to enroll. This 57-credit hour program enables students to obtain a bachelors degree and advance their professional careers within the intelligence community.

The University received initial accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Middle States) in February 1983. On June 26, 2008, a reaffirmation visit was conducted and Middle States subsequently granted reaccreditation in 2008 for a ten-year period. The University is a member of the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

In academic year 2011 – 2012, the School of S&TI offered 44 graduate-level courses through course offerings related to the Performance Elements and Core Competencies for Science and Technology Intelligence established by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). The Masters of Science and Technology Intelligence (MSTI) curriculum was developed by integrating the ODNI's published competencies based on coordinated knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) for S&T intelligence officers with the already effective core construct of the Masters of Science in Strategic Intelligence (MSSI).

The S&TI program is typical of other graduate degree programs in that it consists of 43 graduate credit hours and includes completion of a Master's thesis. The thesis itself must demonstrate student competence in graduate-level research.

All faculty members hold either a Ph.D. in a relevant field, or a Master's degree coupled with extensive professional experience. Furthermore, the curriculum is updated annually following a review of student and faculty surveys, as well as evaluations of student accomplishment of learning objectives. Full-time resident students are expected to complete degree requirements within the academic year while part-time students typically need a minimum of two and a half years to complete the degree.

The newly developed school complements the capabilities of the existing College of Strategic Intelligence by providing additional opportunities for effective science-based research, focused education and interagency outreach within a science based educational paradigm. The degree program shares all of the academic requirements as that of the NIU MSSSI.

**Site Visit Team Analysis:**

*Team members concurred that the Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence (School of S&TI) within the National Intelligence University met or exceeded the standards for a master's degree that are found in a similar program offered at a non-Federal institution of higher education.*

**(4) That the administration of the graduate program is such that the faculty and students are free to conduct their research activities as objectively, as freely, and in as unbiased a manner as that found in other non-Federal institutions of higher education.**

**The existence of an advisory committee of educators from regularly constituted institutions shall be regarded as some evidence of the safeguarding of freedom of inquiry. Accreditation by an appropriate accrediting body, if such exists, shall be regarded as another safeguard.**

NIU adheres to the "1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure" as put forth by the American Association of University Professors and of the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities) and subsequently modified. Academic freedom at NIU is understood as the pursuit of truth and knowledge regardless of where it leads. All faculty and students at NIU are entitled to full freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful to avoid controversial issues and opinions that have no relation to their subject.

As officers within the intelligence community, NIU personnel must balance academic freedom with responsible handling and protection of sensitive or classified information. NIU faculty and staff members are learned professionals, members of an accredited academic institution, officers of an intelligence agency, and citizens. When they speak or write they should be free from institutional censorship but their position in the intelligence community imposes certain obligations. Official statements guide and define our nation's diplomacy and security. Because of this, federal employees and representatives of the DIA and NIU must have their research findings cleared by the agency prior to publication or presentation to an outside audience. Research findings are cleared for classification and security purposes only. NIU issues no institutional, federal agency or intelligence positions on issues and topics.

NIU faculty and students are encouraged to participate in the broader discourse on intelligence and national security through the publication of articles, books and book reviews as well as public appearances in professional and academic forums. When speaking and/or writing, NIU faculty and staff must always strive for accuracy, show objectivity, remember their responsibilities in safeguarding classified information, and while they do not speak for the University or the government, they still represent the University and the IC. The public may judge the University and the IC based on the member's actions and statements.

Intellectual products (class work, presentations, theses, graded assignments, research) completed at the NIU by students, faculty, staff, and research fellows become the property of the federal government and thus public domain. Any effort to publish these materials must be approved by the NIU and DIA public affairs and should have the documented concurrence of all NIU individuals involved. Collaborative and joint works between NIU members and outside agencies or offices are coordinated through the Center for Strategic Intelligence Research and, if necessary for projects done with non-government entities, the DIA General Counsel. All such efforts must be approved by DIA Public Affairs.

An important aspect of the academic freedom that characterizes NIU is the explicit policy of non-attribution. Throughout the year, the NIU hosts a variety of senior government officials, academic experts, and IC practitioners from inside and outside the IC in forums for faculty and students. There are also numerous guest speakers brought into the NIU classroom by instructors in an effort to broaden student perspective and awareness on a given topic. These presentations are crucial to the NIU learning process as they provide students insight on leadership, decision-making and policy execution. Since many of these presentations involve sensitive and/or controversial information and views the NIU has a strict and long-standing policy of non-attribution. The NIU assures its Distinguished Speakers, guest lecturers, panelists, students, etc. that nothing they say will be attributed to them without their expressed permission. Non-attribution is essential if students, faculty and associated scholars at the NIU are to feel encouraged to pursue truth and knowledge regardless of where it leads in the intelligence environment.

**Site Visit Team Analysis:**

Team members verified the implementation of the institution's academic freedom policies and the active role of its Board of Visitors and concur that the University is administered with regard for the freedom of inquiry. Faculty attested to the freedom they feel in teaching and writing. Students were observed in discussions attesting to the freedom they feel in commenting on issues. In further support of the team's conclusion, the University's accreditation by Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education is regarded as another safeguard of academic freedom.

## **THE PROCESS OUTLINED**

The process to obtain degree-granting authority entails a recommendation from the National Advisory Committee to the Secretary. After considering the recommendation of the National Advisory Committee, the Secretary can send a positive recommendation to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In turn, OMB recommends the same to Congress where the authorization is granted.

## **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Team members reviewed the self-study and conducted a site visit to the National Intelligence University's Anthony G. Oettinger School of Science and Technology Intelligence (School of S&TI). After meeting with administrators, faculty and students, and reviewing additional materials on-site, the site team is satisfied that the proposed graduate degree program meets the requirements of the "Federal Policy Governing the Granting of Academic Degrees by Federal Agencies and Institutions." Based on the extremely high quality of the program, the site team unanimously recommends that the Committee recommend to the Secretary that he recommend that the University be granted degree-granting authority, as requested for Master of Science and Technology Intelligence degree.

The site team wishes to make it clear that it is their intent that the academic years 2011 and 2012 graduating class be eligible to receive degrees if degree authority is granted even though Congress may not act before the current class completes the course.