

# UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES

## STRATEGIC PLAN



**2019-2023**

**August 2019**



Ask anyone on the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) campus why they are here and you'll get the same answers: because they believe in the mission, because they want to be a part of something bigger, and because they want to serve our nation's military members, retirees and their families. At USU, we understand it is that our sacred responsibility to care for those who defend us. We owe them all our very best.

USU is an exceptional institution, distinctive in our mission of graduating individuals who have learned to care for those in harm's way, whether that is through patient care, research, health policy or health professions education. Our learning environment encourages our students to sharpen the values that will shape their lifelong contributions to their fellow man and they leave USU with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful immediately in their careers.

Our faculty, staff and alumni have made remarkable achievements that advance military medicine around the globe. Their extraordinary efforts have saved lives in our military treatment facilities, VA hospitals, forward-deployed locations and throughout the world.

We continue to make strides to advance military readiness. Our field training exercises are a model for the nation and for our international partners and our dive medicine, wilderness medicine and cold weather medicine operational readiness training continues to draw praise from top military leadership.

To continue meeting the growing challenges and opportunities presented the University, it is imperative that we periodically reassess the relevance and viability of our mission, vision, assumptions and strategic goals and objectives in alignment with the Military Health and the National Defense Strategies. Take a few moments to study our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan for moving forward our three domains of Education; Research and Scholarship; and Leadership and Leader Development.

We are very proud of what we have done in our short 47-year history and the many ways we help our students and alumni develop their skills and ability to support the warfighter and their families.

Richard W. Thomas, MD, DDS, FACS  
President  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

Approved: 12 August 2019

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the USU Strategic Plan is to serve as a roadmap guiding all Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences elements – Schools, Colleges, Centers, Institutes, and Administrative Functions – to jointly accomplish the University’s mission and achieve our vision.
  
2. **References:**
  - a. *The National Security Strategy of the United States* – December 2017
  - b. *The National Defense Strategy of the United States* – January 2018
  - c. *The National Defense Strategy of the United States* – 2020 (Draft)
  - d. *The Military Health System Strategy* – May 2019 (Draft)
  - e. *10 USC 104 Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences*
  - f. *DoD Instruction 5104.45*, May 2019
  - g. Defense Health Board's 2017 report on improving research processes
  - h. *CJCSI 3170.011*, Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Process
  - i. Middle States Directives on Accreditation and the schedule for USU’s review
  - j. National Defense Authorization Act 2019
  - k. DHA-IPM 18-012, “Defense Health Agency-Interim Procedure Memorandum”
  - l. CJCSI 3405.01, “Chairman’s Total Force Fitness Framework”
  
3. **Background:** The environment in which USU operates has changed significantly since 2017, requiring a pragmatic, ambitious Strategic Plan that positions the University to respond to the challenges of today and tomorrow. Salient features of that environment include:
  - a. The rise of near-peer revisionist powers: Russia and China, and the concomitant increase in the threat environment in which U.S. military power may be required.
  - b. The growing demand for the employment of soft power elements such as health engagements as key components of advancing and protecting US vital national interests.
  - c. Ongoing and expanding momentum to achieve greater efficiencies through realignments within the Military Health System (MHS) education and training enterprise and in medical research, as evidenced by the NDAA19 requirements (Ref 2j above).
  - d. Changing requirements, including the possibility of downsizing, within MHS health professionals force and the impact on the MHS education and training and research enterprises.
  - e. Increasing demand within DoD, the Services and the Combatant Commands (COCOMs) for support and services that can be provided by USU’s centers (e.g. Global Health Engagement, Human Performance Optimization).
  - f. Specific requirements and changes emerging from accreditation agencies, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), DoD, the Services, and other departments and agencies that impact on USU. Among these are:
    - i. The rapid growth of medical and associated information technologies (IT), affecting USU’s education and research functions, presenting both significant opportunities and substantial challenges.

- ii. DoD IT policy requirements, including consolidation, that constrain solutions to the requirement for a single, integrated USU-wide IT management systems that make education possible at remote sites.
- iii. The need for improved academic support and Registrar capabilities, policies, and processes in order to meet the needs of our student populations and to ensure compliance with accreditation requirements.
- iv. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directives on enterprise risk management.
- v. On-going movements of organizations, units and activities within the Services that impact the administration of our education functions.

**4. Assumptions:** For planning purposes, assumptions are suppositions about the future that should be considered before USU makes key decisions on strategic objectives, specific initiatives and associated courses of action. Assumptions should be both likely to be true and necessary for the execution of the plan.

- a. USU will confront a constrained resource "zero growth" environment, with the real potential for modest reductions in programmed funding. As such, new funding for strategic opportunities will most likely require offsets and internal USU sourcing.
- b. USU will maintain a direct reporting relationship to the ASD (Health Affairs).
- c. USU will be assigned additional MHS education and training enterprise responsibilities, necessitating a continuous review of internal structures and processes.
- d. Significant manpower reductions will be imposed on the Services' military medical organizations, reducing or eliminating selected health-related military occupational specialties and changing associated USU education requirements.
- e. USU and DoD will not adequately resolve IT policy issues that impact USU education and training, and research operations
- f. The Office of Academic Support will be functional, and the Registrar Concept of Operations (ConOps) will be completed by the end of 2019. Associated Registrar ConOps initiatives will reach Full Operational Capability (FOC) by the end of 2020.
- g. There will be continued Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff and Congressional interest in MHS research relevant to warfighter preparedness and operational readiness.
- h. The student population at USU will expand significantly over the planning period, and course offerings will evolve alongside changes in MHS health care requirements, requiring USU to successfully overcome resource constraints.
- i. Building "F" will be funded, constructed and fully operational by FY 26.

- j. USU and all DoD organizations will be required to continually find ways to become internally more efficient and effective.
5. **Mission**: The mission of USU is to support the readiness of America’s Warfighter and the health and well-being of the military community by educating and developing uniformed health professionals, scientists and leaders; by conducting cutting-edge, military-relevant research, and by providing operational support to units around the world.
6. **Vision**: By the end of Calendar Year 2023, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences will be internationally recognized as DoD’s leading educational institution that a) creates and develops career Uniformed Services leaders in the health sciences and b) conducts, develops and disseminates innovative warfighter-relevant health research and technology that directly impacts the survivability and lethality of the US Warfighter and improved health for the DoD community.
7. **Values**:
- a. **Compassion and Caring**. We foster an atmosphere of compassion, caring, mutual respect, courtesy, and pride in all our activities.
  - b. **Ethics and Integrity**. USU and all our people are uncompromising in our adherence to the system of moral and professional principles that govern the conduct of health professionals and health organizations.
  - c. **Excellence in Scholarship**. We are committed to rigorous standards of scholarship and to academic freedom as fundamental to the advancement of knowledge throughout a lifetime of learning.
  - d. **Innovation**. Our faculty, students, and staff contribute to, and creatively employ, ground-breaking knowledge in areas crucial to the health and readiness of the uniformed services and to national security.
  - e. **Selfless Service**. USU faculty, staff, and students provide leadership and selfless service to the global community in support of the health of Uniformed Service members, veterans and families, and of U.S. interests worldwide.
8. **Mission Domains**. USU’s Mission Domains are our strategic themes and reflect the major vectors that the University will follow throughout the period of this strategic plan. While listed separately, these domains are interwoven and mutually supporting.
- a. **Education**. USU educates outstanding health professionals, leaders, scientists and administrators to meet the needs of the DoD, the MHS, the Public Health Service (PHS) and the Warfighter in support of operational readiness worldwide. We design, sustain, and modify curricula, both on campus and at military training locations, which are:
    - i. **Integrated**, enhancing course work that facilitates a rigorous exchange in and among the four primary academic schools: the School of Medicine, the Graduate School of

- Nursing, the Postgraduate Dental College, and the College of Allied Health Sciences.
- ii. State-of-the-art, leveraging and developing advanced educational methodologies – including distributed-learning, integrated teaching, simulations and simulators – blended with proven health education systems.
  - iii. Competitive and stimulating, drawing the best and brightest to USU to prepare for a health career in the service of our nation.
  - iv. Warfighter-focused, educating and developing outstanding leaders who are competent health professionals in the Uniformed Services.
  - v. Lifelong, delivering full lifecycle learning.
- b. Research and Scholarship. Our research and scholarship are requirements-driven, innovative and directly relevant to DoD, the American Warfighter and the Uniformed Services community. Our research focuses on:
- i. Basic Research, developing new knowledge.
  - ii. Translational/Applied Research, applying basic sciences to practical applications of interest to the DoD and PHS.
  - iii. Clinical Research, generating and applying new knowledge to populations and individuals.
  - iv. Systems and Operations Research, generating and applying new knowledge to the MHS, the PHS and to the warfighter worldwide.
  - v. Population Health Research, focusing on improving the overall health and health outcomes of service members, their families and other priority populations.
  - vi. Health Policy Research, the development, application and evaluation of knowledge around which effective policy can be based.
  - vii. Radiobiology and related fields research, addressing the individual and collective performance of service members operating in radiological and nuclear environments.
  - viii. Support to military readiness and operations, bringing selected research initiatives directly to the Combatant Commands (COCOMs), component commands and units in the field.
- c. Leadership and Leader Development. USU faculty, scientists, staff, and students are health and research professionals, providing sought-after leadership throughout the Uniformed Services and across the U.S. Government in support of National Security.
- i. Leadership. USU provides thoughtful and objective leadership and support in the shaping of DoD and MHS policies, processes and procedures. USU leaders are

active participants in discussions, fora and analyses that shape the ability of the MHS to enhance the readiness of the force and support the health of the American Warfighter.

- ii. Leader Development. USU graduates are developed to serve as leaders in the MHS and PHS. USU is unique among health sciences educational institutions by integrating leadership responsibilities so that our students develop necessary skills and abilities to become outstanding leaders at all levels of our nation's Uniformed Services. Moreover, USU is the incubator for comprehensive military health professional development that is continuous, sequential and progressive.

9. **Strategic Objectives**: To realize our vision and accomplish our mission, USU must meet crucial objectives in each of our mission domains/themes. Our strategic objectives focus on a 3-5 year horizon, can be measured and generate specific near-term initiatives.

- a. Education: Overall, we seek to maintain the highest level of education for all USU faculty and students, ensuring support for DoD and PHS health professional manpower requirements and satisfying all Academic Accreditation Standards. To do so, our Education strategic objectives include the following:
  - i. Establish and sustain the USU Office of Academic Support. Publish a comprehensive handbook outlining USU policies, processes and procedures that govern academic support. Publish and continuously update the USU Registrar ConOps. Publish and continuously update a comprehensive USU-level course catalog.
  - ii. Develop and implement a framework and methodology for the rapid review and integration of new or modified education and training competencies and requirements generated by OSD, DHA or the Services.
  - iii. Develop and implement documented systems and processes that efficiently and effectively support attaining, sustaining or exceeding accreditations at the University, schools and program levels.
  - iv. Expand the use of innovative distributed learning educational methodologies and teaching technology to ensure integration of educational and training programs across the MHS and DoD, and throughout the learning lifecycle.
  - v. Sustain and expand USU's leadership role in Health Professions Education (HPE).
  - vi. Through the College of Allied Health Sciences and the Postgraduate Dental College, ensure that Service-developed curricula and faculty meet accreditation standards and Service training and education requirements.
- b. Research and Scholarship: Our research and scholarship are invariably requirements-driven, focusing directly on operational medical readiness and the needs of the warfighter. Our Research and Scholarship objectives include the following:

- i. Develop, publish and implement a USU Research five-year Strategic Plan that will guide USU's research throughout the period of this strategic plan.
  - ii. Reengineer, publish and implement USU's research administration system and infrastructure to ensure effective life-cycle management of the USU research portfolio.
  - iii. Align the academic USU research and scholarship portfolio with DoD medical requirements, priorities, and gaps and create feedback loops to ensure such alignment and facilitate collaboration and sustained responsiveness to military health and readiness challenges.
  - iv. Advance collaboration in research with Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs), service labs, DoD labs, and other federal activities, all in support of Warfighter readiness.
  - v. Enhance USU's thought leadership role within DoD across a range of current and emerging discovery and cutting-edge research.
  - vi. Expand USU's research support to the Uniformed Services and operational forces around the world, including enhancing USU's relevance to the Joint Staff, COCOMs, component commands and other elements of the Uniformed Services by providing health and scientific advice, products and subject matter experts (SMEs) to units in the field, including, *inter alia*:
    - 1. Leading, integrating and synchronizing USU's global health engagement contributions.
    - 2. Enhancing warfighter readiness by supporting Human Performance Optimization (HPO) and Total Force Fitness (TFF).
    - 3. Ensuring that AFRRRI's annual research plan, required by ref 2e above, is oriented on optimizing the medical readiness of our Warfighters, units and leaders for nuclear operations or radiologically contaminated environments.
- c. Leadership and Leader Development: USU provides expertise and leadership across the MHS and throughout the USG on key medical and health policies and programs. Moreover, USU develops leaders who are competent in the health sciences, responsible for themselves and the people they lead and committed to selfless service. Our Leadership and Leader Development objectives include the following:
- i. Provide health professional leadership throughout the Uniformed Services, and across U.S. Government in support of warfighter readiness and national security.
  - ii. Establish and grow the General Ronald H. Griffith Institute for Military Medical Professionalism as DoD's hub for subject matter expertise and support in military medical ethics, health professional leader development and military medical history.



**10. Key Enabling Tasks: Cross-Cutting Objectives.** To achieve our mission, realize our vision and accomplish our objectives in each of our three strategic themes, USU must accomplish a set of enabling tasks/objectives that span across USU.

- a. Develop and Expand Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration. USU faculty, staff and students must form collaborative partnerships that are demonstrably relevant to USU strategic priorities and enhance health-related services to support warfighter readiness and the health and well-being of the military community. Specific objectives are as follows:
  - i. Expand and formalize USU’s collaborative relationships throughout the MHS, DoD and the USG.
  - ii. Continue to develop and expand the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between USU and the National Defense University (NDU) that supports the development and administration of a Health Security Strategy elective in which USU is identified as the formal “medical reach back” in academics and research for the formal joint education at NDU of leaders from all branches and services.
  - iii. Continue to develop and expand the National Capital Region (NCR) Academic Health System (AHS).
  - iv. Increase collaboration with the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the NCR, the MHS’ network of clinics and hospitals worldwide, and the individuals, units and leaders that comprise our Uniformed Services.
  - v. Expand collaboration and partnerships with non-DoD health organizations and agencies such as the National Institutes of Health.
  - vi. Establish a network of MOAs and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Veteran’s Administration.
  - vii. Ensure that each MOA/MOU that is submitted for approval contains language that demonstrates its relevance to the USU strategic plan and to the American Warfighter.
- b. Improve Strategic Communications. The University must formalize and expand our ability to communicate USU’s vital contribution to national security to engender widespread understanding and garner support from all audiences and key stakeholders.
  - i. Refresh, publish and implement a formal strategic communications plan that includes social media and is tailored for both internal and external stakeholders.
  - ii. Integrate existing and projected strategic communications programs that reside within the University’s various Responsibility Centers.
- c. Improve the Effectiveness of Internal Processes. USU must continuously design, refine and implement disciplined and regular staff procedures to ensure organizational objectives are achieved, information is shared and strategy-based decision-making is supported at every level.

- i. Develop an internal planning process, led by the Office of Strategic Management and Integration, to anticipate and prepare for changes in the scope of USU responsibilities within the MHS education and training and the MHS medical research enterprises.
  - ii. Develop and ensure compliance with a USU-wide risk assessment management systems and internal control programs that conform to expanding USG requirements.
  - iii. Develop and implement a USU-wide document tracking/document flow system.
  - iv. Leverage information technology to re-engineer internal processes to achieve greater efficiencies and reduce time to completion.
- d. Recruit, Retain and Develop Effective Educators, Scientists, Role Models and Leaders. USU must continue to compete successfully with other institutions to recruit and retain a top-quality and diverse talent pool of students, faculty and staff.
  - i. Develop and implement a USU-wide integrated civilian hiring strategy that controls and prioritizes workforce growth. Ensure the appropriate use of Administrative Determined (AD) authority by reinforcing proper resourcing and fostering continuous and transparent engagement with the University's strategic priorities.
  - ii. Enhance and expand the uniformed presence within USU, including combat arms officers. Engage with the Military Services on proposed adjustments to military manpower requirements supportive of USU. Develop and implement a USU-wide integrated military staff recruitment and assignment strategy that leverages appropriate Service personnel processes, both Active Component and Reserve, to achieve transparent, competitive officer and enlisted placements.
  - iii. Clarify roles and strengthen accountability for supervision and career development between the military and civilian components of the workforce.
- e. Strategically Grow and Allocate Physical and IT Infrastructure. As we expand the contributions that USU makes to the Uniformed Services and to the nation, we must ensure our internal infrastructure meets both current and future requirements.
  - i. Develop, publish and implement a five-year USU Facilities Strategic Plan that is requirements-driven and will guide USU in the management of construction, renovation and allocation of physical resources.
  - ii. Ensure that the construction of Building "F" meets all required milestones.
  - iii. Develop, publish and implement a five-year USU Information Technologies Strategic Plan.
- f. Strategically Grow and Allocate Financial Resources. USU must continue to generate funding through multiple sources that support USU's mission, vision and objectives, and

ensure that we align our funding requirements with strategic priorities. In light of the probability of a “zero-growth” resourcing environment, USU leaders must refine a strategy-based priority list that can help govern resource allocation.

- g. Measure Our Objectives. Across our three mission domains, USU must provide rigorous, standards-based, outcomes-oriented performance assessments. These assessments undergird the measures by which USU must continuously evaluate its programs and, in turn, form the basis upon which we will improve, sustain, and adapt our programs in the future. Metrics of performance will be developed and implemented in Phase II of this strategic plan.

## **11. Strategic Planning within USU.**

Each school, college, center, and institute within USU will have a strategic plan that is consistent with the USU Strategic Plan. Each organization’s strategic plan should indicate how it contributes to USU’s mission and vision and associated strategic objectives. While each plan will be different, all plans should include:

- Background
- References
- Assumptions
- Mission
- Vision
- Mission Domains/Strategic Themes
- Domain Critical Tasks/Objectives
- Measures of Performance
- Resource requirements

## Glossary and Abbreviations

**AFRRI – Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute:** is a tri-service laboratory chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1961. Aligned under USU, it conducts research in the field of radiobiology and related matters which are essential to the operational and medical support of the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. military services.

**CCDRs - Combatant Commanders:** Senior military flag officers; four-star general or admirals who exercise nontransferable command authority and control over combatant commands (COCOM), organizations and forces assigned, regardless of branch of service.

**ConOps – Concept of Operations:** a document describing the characteristics of a proposed system from the viewpoint of an individual who will use that system. It is used to communicate the quantitative and qualitative system characteristics to all stakeholders.

**COCOMs - Combatant Commands:** are the 10 Unified combatant commands (specified combatant command) within the U.S. Department of Defense, each with a geographic or functional mission that provides command and control of military forces in peace and war. (Africa Command, Central Command, Cyber Command, European Command, Indo-Pacific Command, Northern Command, Southern Command, Special Operations Command, Transportation Command).

**Core Values:** are the beliefs and principles that are representative of the culture embodied university-wide.

**Cross-Cutting Objectives:** are objectives that cut across all themes and are integral to the outcomes of organization's goals, priority areas and strategic objectives.

**DHA – Defense Health Agency:** is a joint, integrated Combat Support Agency that enables the Army, Navy, and Air Force medical services to provide a medically ready force and ready medical force to Combatant Commands in both peacetime and wartime. The DHA supports the delivery of integrated, affordable, and high quality health services to Military Health System (MHS) beneficiaries and is responsible for driving greater integration of clinical and business processes across the MHS.

**HA – Health Affairs (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs):** is the principal staff element for all DoD health and force health protection policies, programs, and activities, and for the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. The OASD(HA) is responsible for the effective execution of the DoD medical mission, providing and maintaining readiness for medical services and support to members of the Military Services, including during military operations; their families; those held in the control of the Military Services; and others entitled to or eligible for DoD medical care and benefits, including those under TRICARE.

**HPE - Health Professions Education:** is the education and training of health professionals, including physicians, nurses, dentists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and other health care professionals and scientists. The focus of HPE is on developing educational leaders (educating the educators) to support the MHS.

**HPO - Human Performance Optimization:** is the process of applying knowledge, skills and emerging technologies to improve and preserve the capabilities of military members, families and organization to

execute essential tasks (CJCSI 3405.01 September 2011).

**MHS – Military Health System:** is the enterprise within the United States Department of Defense that provides health care to active duty and retired U.S. Military personnel and their dependents. Its mission is to provide health support for the full range of military operations and sustain the health of all who are entrusted to MHS care.

**MTF – Military Treatment Facility:** is a military hospital or clinic located in the U.S. or around the world.

### **NCR – National Capital Region**

**OMB - Office of Management and Budget:** is located within the Executive Office of the President and is responsible for overseeing the performance of federal agencies, and administers the federal budget.

**NCR AHS – National Capital Region Academic Health System:** is an integrated academic health system that combines the Military Health System (MHS) capabilities of the National Capital Region Enhanced Multi-Service Market (NCR eMSM), the Uniformed Services University (USU), and Federal Partnerships to establish an AHS that integrates education, research, clinical care and business practices across the National Capital Region to support a “ready medical force and a medically ready force.”

**NDAA - National Defense Authorization Act:** The series of legislations that are passed each fiscal year by the U.S. Congress and authorizes the budgets and expenditure of the U.S. Department of Defense

**PHS – Public Health Service:** is a division of the Department of Health and Human Services concerned with public health. It contains eight out of the department's eleven operating divisions. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (PHSCC) is the federal uniformed service of the USPHS, and is one of the seven uniformed services of the United States.

**Readiness:** (Warfighter Readiness, Operational Readiness, Medical Readiness). The ability of military forces and organizations to fight and meet the demands of assigned missions.

**TFF - Total Force Fitness:** is the state in which the individual, family and organization can sustain optimal well-being and performance under all condition.

**Uniformed Services:** are the armed forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard), the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps

**Uniformed Services University (USU) Center:** A USU Center is a funded, multi-disciplinary organization within USU designed to generate knowledge and/or materiel products through the conduct of research, training or educational activities.

### **USG – the United States Government**

**Warfighters:** are the men and women who comprise the Armed Forces of the United States.