

USU Newsletter

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Happy New Year USU





**USU Newsletter
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Letter from the USU President



Dr. Charles L. Rice

My best wishes to all the USU community for a happy, healthy and productive New Year.

It is an extraordinarily challenging and exciting time for health professions education and research and especially in the uniformed services. We stand at the forefront of advances in health care as we learn more about caring for our wounded troops and learning how to prevent

both injury and disease. The new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center will be transformative for the Military Health System it will create new and critical opportunities for us to collaborate with other federal agencies and especially the NI; and this 21st century health care facility will position USU as a new model of academic health center for the nation. I look forward to working with all of you to tell our story to the nation and the world. It is both a privilege and an obligation to let others know about this remarkable university: its people and its mission.

In December I had the extraordinary opportunity to travel to Germany and Afghanistan with one of our alumni, BG Byron C. Hepburn, Command Surgeon, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, a 1987 graduate of the university's School of Medicine and Col Carl B. Funke, CENTAF Surgeon, a 1985 USU graduate.

I spent a few days in Germany meeting with alumni and others stationed at Ramstein Air Base and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center before proceeding to Afghanistan. We toured several U.S. medical facilities and visited an Afghan provincial hospital at Charikar where, among other things, we discussed local needs and how the university could best provide assistance. I also used this occasion to give university sweatshirts to graduates, including two alumni from USU's Graduate School of Nursing, and to recruit prospective students from among U.S. military personnel. I suspect USU is the only U.S. academic health center to hold an alumni

reunion in an active combat zone.

While at Bagram Air Base I was also able to visit a number of the patients, both U.S. and Afghani, who have been treated by USU alumni, including a three year old girl who almost lost her life from injuries suffered during a bomb blast. Four graduates at the Craig Joint Theater Hospital there - Col Gary Arishita ('86), Lt Col Randy McCafferty ('93), Maj Chetan Kharod ('96), and Maj Charles Reilly ('97) - were responsible for performing the lifesaving surgery.

I was so impressed with the energy and leadership of the Task Force Medical Commander at Bagram, Col Bart Iddins, that I assumed he was a USU alum. It turns out he's a Texas Aggie - so I made him an honorary USU alum.

I was deeply moved by the dedication of our troops and the work of all our nation's deployed personnel and was also struck by their own view of their mission: the motto of one of the air evacuation squadrons is, "We're not heroes—we just bring them home."

I returned home with a profound appreciation of our medical personnel and am especially proud of the service of USU alumni in-theater. It is extraordinary to witness the courage and commitment of these men and women as they use the skills and knowledge they have accumulated to care for those in harm's way.

*Charles L. Rice
USU President*



Courtesy Photo

Dr. Charles L. Rice, USU President (far right), and BG Byron Hepburn, USAF, MC, Command Surgeon, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, ('87) (second from the right), visit Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. They were joined by Col Becky Brown, USAF (far left), Col Bryan Funke, USAF, MC, ('85) and Col Gary Walker, USAF, MC ('84).

NSPS Applies to USU's General Schedule Employees

By MCSN Jeff Hopkins
Assistant Editor

General Schedule (GS) personnel at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences will switch over to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) Feb. 3, 2008.

The NSPS was designed to provide a more performance based system of hiring, pay and evaluation; it places more emphasis on pay for noteworthy performance and less on seniority. One of its main tenets is to promote and reward employees who show their value to the organization and the mission.

Under the NSPS classification system, every GS position within the Department will be assigned to a career group, pay schedule, and pay band. Many of the factors used to classify positions under NSPS are the same as those contained in the old system, such as complexity and level of work. There are four career groups: Standard Career Group; Scientific & Engineering Career Group; Investigative & Protective Services Career Group; and Medical Career Group. There are typically four pay schedules: Professional/Analytical; Technician/support; Supervisor/Manager; and Student.

There are typically three pay bands for each pay schedule: Expert; Journey; and Entry/Development.

The NSPS operates on three "core concepts": 1) accountability, whereby an employee is responsible for their career and performance, and contributions will be directly compensated through salary increases and bonuses; 2) flexibility, by which employees are no longer bound by narrow job descriptions tied to discrete grade levels; and 3) results, an employee's contributions and perfor-

mance directly link to organizational and DOD goals.

The NSPS eliminates the GS "step" system, which provides incremental raises within pay grade for time in service. However, it offers several means of earning an increase in salary; employees are eligible to receive a performance-based increase if they have a rating of record of Level 3 (Valued Performer) or higher. A reassignment occurs when an employee moves, voluntarily or involuntarily, to a different position or set of duties within his/her pay band or to a position in a comparable pay band. A reassignment may result in a pay increase up to five per cent. A rate range adjustment is an increase to the minimum and/or maximum of the pay band that is adjusted based on market drivers. Employees are eligible to receive a rate range adjustment if they have a rating of record of Level 2 (Fair) or higher.

The NSPS will not affect certain benefits under the GS system; NSPS does not affect rules governing retirement benefits and eligibility, health and life insurance, leave, attendance, and other similar benefits. Similarly, employees will not lose any salary during conversion.

Currently, the pay system switch will only affect GS personnel. USU administratively determined personnel, Henry M. Jackson Foundation employees, and other contract employees are exempt.

The information printed in the December 2007 USU Newsletter pertaining to the January 2008 Government-wide pay increase does not affect USU employees.

For more information regarding NSPS, please visit www.cpmosd.mil/nsps.

USU-Tube Contest Winners Announced

The university launched its first "USU-Tube" Video Contest in October 2007. The purpose was to find the most meaningful, creative, descriptive, humorous, and/or innovative entries to showcase and increase knowledge about the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences to the general public, and especially potential USU applicants.

The winners of this first contest are:

ENS John De Geus,
USN and MAJ William
Kelly, USA.

Another contest will be held in the near future and all USU members are invited to submit ideas. The winning videos will be able for viewing on the USU Web site shortly.



USU Briefs

Command Climate Survey: All military personnel will receive an e-mail notice from the Equal Opportunity Officer during the week of Jan. 7-11 regarding the Command Climate Survey. Directions on how to complete the survey will be given at that time, and all personnel are encouraged to complete the survey as soon as possible. For more info on this important command requirement, please contact CPT Carrier, USA (AFRR1) at carrier@afrr1.usuhs.mil or at (301) 295-9140.

Equal Opportunity Officer: The USU Brigade is currently seeking an O-3/O-4 from any service to volunteer for the position of Brigade Equal Opportunity Officer. Those interested in volunteering for this important collateral duty may contact the Brigade Executive Officer, CDR Trotter, USN (BDE) for info.

Officer's Professional Development (OPD): There will be an OPD for staff and faculty military officers on Feb. 7 from 6:30 am - 7:45am in Sanford Auditorium. "In this session, I will focus on my

leadership philosophy, and how we as officers can best support the MEM operational mission of the University. I look forward to seeing you there." – COL John M. Wempe, MC, USA, USU Brigade Commander

Color Guard: The USU Color Guard is currently seeking new members. Color guard practices are held at 10:30 a.m. every Thursday in the Bldg B Lobby. If you would like to participate, please contact HM2 Charles, USN (EHS) at ccharles@usuhs.mil.

Military Awards Program: Nominations for the January Military Awards Panel must be routed through the chain of command to HM1 Hassan, USN (BDE) by Jan. 18. Award recommendations for officer and enlisted personnel must include routing slips with the appropriate signatures.

A Day in USU: Everyone has a job in The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and we want to know what you do. Please submit photos with brief descriptions for an opportunity to have them published in a special edition of the USU Newsletter called, "A Day at USU." USU wants you to show the world what the university is all about.



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