

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 5, 2013

The Honorable John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0101

Dear Secretary McHugh,

Recently, we learned that the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Army ROTC program is among thirteen units selected for disestablishment by the Department of the Army. Since 1951, USM has produced more than 1,500 diverse and superbly-qualified Army officers for service to our nation, sixteen of whom have achieved flag rank. Given the significant contributions the graduates of this program have made to the Army, we are convinced that terminating USM's Army ROTC program would be a disservice to the state of Mississippi and our nation.

Attached is a letter from USM President Dr. Rodney Bennett that requests you make available Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Karl Schneider, and other senior Army leaders, to discuss the methodology that was used to determine which units were selected for closure. Given the significant impact that the closure of the Army ROTC unit will have on USM, we believe such a meeting is appropriate and warranted, and we urge you to grant Dr. Bennett's request. Additionally, we request that you provide us with copies of your written responses to Dr. Bennett's requests for information.

Your attention to this important matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Senator Thad Cochran



Senator Roger F. Wicker



Congressman Steven M. Palazzo



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November 1, 2013

The Honorable John M. McHugh
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

Dear Secretary McHugh:

I have received, with great shock and disappointment, the Department of the Army's letter informing us of its decision to close The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program at the end of School Year 2014/2015. Army ROTC was established at USM in 1951 and since then has proudly commissioned more than 1550 graduates through the program. I strongly believe a case can be made to justify the Department of the Army's investment to sustain the USM ROTC program and would appreciate the near term opportunity to present it to the Army leadership.

In his letter dated September 19, 2013, informing USM of the decision to close the Army ROTC program, Mr. Thomas Lamont indicated that the United States Army Cadet Command (USACC) followed the program viability standards outlined in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1215.08 and used a production-based model to evaluate and measure program efficiency. Mr. Lamont defined the methodology for this decision based on "considerations for market potential, the Army's academic discipline needs, the program's historical production and proximity to other Army ROTC units." I am surprised that the first communication we received from the Army regarding our program's production and viability was the decision to disestablish the program.

My team and I have reviewed DoDI 1215.08 and Army Regulation 145-1, and I believe that the USM program has been and can remain a viable program. In order to clarify our understanding of what factors shaped this decision it is essential that we better understand the modeling, methodology, and criteria employed in evaluating the program. I respectfully request the following information:

- Request explanation of how the program viability standards, outlined in DoDI 1215.08 (paragraph 6.2.1.1-5), were defined, valued and assessed in evaluating USM and other institutions' Army ROTC programs considered in the closure decision.
- Request clarification and a detailed description of the production-based model (as addressed by Mr. Lamont) that was applied in evaluating institutional Army ROTC

programs and measuring overall program efficiency. What measures and evaluation criteria were used in determining what Mr. Lamont describes as “program efficiency?”

- Request clarification of the methodology utilized for the decision to close the USM Army ROTC program. Specifically, what were the results of the methodology-based analysis with respect to: program market potential, historical production, proximity to other Army ROTC units and Army academic discipline needs?
- Request record of any pre-decision efforts by the Army to advise and work closely with USM to restore officer production to acceptable levels (in accordance with DoDI 1215.08 paragraph 6.2.2). I am not aware of any such pre-decisional efforts by the Army and if such is the case, request explanation as to why the DoD Instruction was not followed.
- Request reasoning as to why USM Army ROTC was not placed on the Army Regulation 145-1 Effective Management Program to provide appropriate assistance via USACC to increase program viability.

I will be in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, November 12, 2013, and will gladly make my calendar available to meet with Mr. Karl Schneider, and other senior Army leaders you determine, to address our questions and concerns over this recent decision to disestablish the USM Army ROTC program.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this urgent matter and your provision of the requested information. I would like to continue our partnership in accomplishing our collective mission of preparing selected students for appointment as commissioned officers, and I look forward to working together to support the Army and The University of Southern Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Rodney D. Bennett
President