

A new frontier



CALEB GILBERT | THE JOURNAL

Clemson University president Jim Clements, left, and U.S. Space Force Vice Chief of Space Operations Gen. David Thompson inked a memorandum of understanding for the University Partnership Program on Monday. The partnership will create internship and research opportunities between the school and the newest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Clemson, Space Force sign partnership agreement

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Clemson University is now one of just 14 schools in the country to enter an exclusive strategic partnership with the newest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces — the U.S. Space Force.

School president Jim Clements and other school officials welcomed a delegation from Space Force and signed a memorandum of understanding in its University Partnership Program (UPP) on Monday with Vice Chief of Space Operations Gen. David Thompson. Clemson is the 13th university to join the partnership and the next to last to be allowed in on the initial initiative. Thompson

told The Journal other schools included in the partnership include the Georgia Institute of Technology, Howard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of South Carolina and the University of Texas at Austin.

In a special ceremony, Clements said Clemson was founded in 1889 as a land grant university and opened as a military school in 1893, highlighting the school's historic military service ties.

"We carry a legacy of leadership and service to the state, the country and world," Clements said. "Partnering with the Space Force will provide our students with the opportunity to engage in a new frontier of military service

and give our students, faculty and staff the ability to develop and be part of cutting-edge research and advancements that are critical to the Space Force in meeting their core mission requirements."

Thompson said Clemson's work in optics and engineered light, space physics, atomic physics and photonics were critical in the sixth and newest military branch selecting the school.

"We need to continue to develop space leaders," Thompson said. "This nation has a long history of providing opportunity, and all of its citizens in many different ways. It doesn't matter where you came from, where you grew up,

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what your background was, whether you're native born to this country, or an immigrant, whether you're part of partner nation, your race, your ethnicity, or gender, none of those are required."

Officials said the UPP will create scholarship, internship and mentorship opportunities for university students and ROTC cadets, allow chances to participate in world-class research and enroll in advanced academic degrees. Schools were chosen based on their STEM degree offerings, ROTC programs, student diversity populations and space-related research labs and initiatives.

SPACE FORCE CONNECTION

In December 2019, President Donald Trump signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act creating the Space Force — America's first new military service in more than 70 years. In doing so, Trump also made Clemson graduate Gen. John W. "Jay" Raymond the school's highest-ranking alumnus as the branch's first chief of space operations. Thompson shared on Monday that of the 21 general officers leading Space Force, three have graduated from Clemson's ROTC program.

"It was obvious as to why Clemson University was part of this program," Thompson said. "Clemson is a world-renowned research university."