

# Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the U.S. Army



By LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANTHONY D. REYES



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# **Strategic Options for Managing Diversity in the U.S. Army**

**Lieutenant Colonel Anthony D. Reyes**

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## PREFACE

The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies began providing a venue for military officers to conduct research and discuss policy issues with civilians in 1984. This arrangement was formalized through a memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Army, through which the Joint Center hosts senior Army officers who have demonstrated the potential to serve at the highest levels of military service. They volunteer to accept a fellowship in lieu of the resident course at the U.S. Army War College (USAWC).

The year-long fellowship at the Joint Center is designed for the professional development of the military officer assigned to participate. The goal is to provide the military fellow with an opportunity to expand his/her knowledge and understanding of public policy issues of particular concern to black Americans or other minority groups. Central to this opportunity is the cultivation of the ability to inform and illuminate the minority policy development process through research, analysis, and information dissemination.

This fellowship is a “win-win” arrangement for the individual and for the Joint Center. Each fellow is able to draw on the Joint Center’s expertise in order to research issues such as diversity, minority business development, and public opinion as they relate to strategic issues in the U.S. Army. It also provides them with an opportunity to view critical national issues from a civilian perspective. At the same time, the Joint Center benefits from the presence of individuals who are knowledgeable about national security issues and able to articulate federal government goals in this area. Consequently, each year our knowledge grows and our network of military fellows expands.

Lieutenant Colonel Anthony D. Reyes, who was promoted to Colonel soon after completing his assignment at the Joint Center, was our 21<sup>st</sup> military fellow. His interest in managing diversity in the Army was triggered by the Army’s establishment of the Army Diversity Office in 2005. Presented with the prospect of working in that office, he decided that a research paper on this issue would be ideal preparation for his next assignment. His efforts to identify key issues, investigate model programs and promising practices, and outline possible approaches for the Army have given him an excellent grounding for his post-fellowship assignment. The key findings of the report were presented at a background briefing held at the Joint Center on May 22, 2006. The importance of the research was reflected in the number of high-ranking members of the Army who attended the briefing, including those involved in human resources and the development of diversity policies.

The recommendations are directed primarily toward the U.S. Army itself. However, the issues raised about the Army’s efforts to become a more inclusive institution that maximizes opportunity for young people make this research paper of interest to a broader audience across the private and public sectors.

Dr. Margaret C. Simms  
Interim President & CEO  
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This product would not have been possible without the support of various individuals and agencies. I want to first express my sincere thanks to the U.S. Army and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies for giving me this great opportunity.

I want to express my appreciation to the former president of the Joint Center, Secretary Togo D. West, Jr., for his continued support for the military fellows program and his guidance. The entire Joint Center Staff welcomed me with open arms and I could not have asked for better support throughout the year. My heartfelt thanks go to my civilian mentor, Dr. Margaret Simms, interim president and CEO of the Joint Center. Her natural ability to enable fellows to achieve the very best from their efforts is well documented and I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with her. Without her guidance and advice this product could not have been successfully completed. I would like to specifically thank Susanna Dilliplane, the Joint Center's editor. I can't say enough about her tireless efforts during this endeavor.

This study involved visiting and interviewing a number of people. I would like to first thank MG (ret.) Fred Leigh and his wife Dr. Karyn Trader-Leigh for taking the time up front to help me focus my topic area. I would next like to thank LTG Robert L. Van Antwerp, MG Abraham J. Turner, and BG Dennis E. Rogers for providing their helpful insights.

Throughout this study, I interacted with three officers who have consistently worked in the area of diversity: COL Andre Sayles, COL David Glover, and LTC Tracy Smith. Their consistent support and commitment to this effort has helped immeasurably and is deeply appreciated.

I would also like to thank Dr. Heidi Connolle, my mentor at the U.S. Army War College, for her outstanding guidance and assistance, and SGT Charles Herzog, the student personnel non-commissioned officer, who provided top-notch support not only to me but to all the senior service college fellows.

Special thanks to my wife Corean, son Anthony Jr., and daughter Blair who have been my inspiration not only throughout this year but my entire military career.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States Army is a vast organization with a global presence. One of its central sources of strength is the diversity of its workforce, which encompasses 1.5 million personnel across the active, reserve, civilian, and contractor components. While the Army was at the forefront of racial integration in the 1950s and today is one of the most diverse organizations in the U.S., further progress needs to be made on the diversity front.

While the term “diversity” can be defined along many dimensions, this paper focuses on racial diversity because of the unique and historically significant role that race plays in issues of diversity in the Army. As recognized by former Chief of Staff of the Army General (ret.) Eric K. Shinseki in April 2003 internal communications about representative leadership across the force, the Army draws strength from its cultural and ethnic diversity. Specifically, this paper aims to create a foundation for both understanding the problem of black underrepresentation in the field grade and senior officer ranks and identifying solutions to help the Army achieve greater workforce diversity at this critical level and beyond.

It should be noted that this paper intentionally focuses on black male officers rather than other minority groups. If we develop solutions to improve the situation for the largest minority group within the Army (blacks), those solutions will also benefit other minorities, including the second-largest minority group, Hispanics. Also, an emphasis is placed on the combat arms branches because they serve as the predominant pipeline to the senior ranks of the Army. However, it is important to recognize that Congress restricts service in the combat arms to men; all women—including black women—are not permitted to serve in these branches. Therefore, women currently cannot access this pipeline. Given that the restriction is in place at this point, this paper’s recommendations regarding increasing black officer representation in the senior ranks through accessions are limited to black male officers. If Congress lifted the gender restriction on combat arms service, the Army would be able to progress even further toward workforce diversity by boosting both the number of women officers and the number of black officers (both men and women), particularly in the senior ranks.

Diversity is critical to the organizational effectiveness of the Army. While the Army has taken good first steps in addressing areas of minority underrepresentation, additional steps are needed in order to achieve a fully diverse workforce and capitalize on the strength of this diversity. This paper highlights some of the current ongoing issues pertaining to diversity and strategies for addressing these issues that the Army needs to consider in order to ensure its success as an organization.

### **Equal Opportunity Versus Diversity**

An important distinction made early in this paper is the difference between equal opportunity (EO) and diversity. Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, each has a distinct primary purpose, methodology, and process of implementation. As explained by Colonel Sayles of the Diversity Working Group at West Point, some of the key differences are as follows:

- Diversity is broader than equal opportunity, as it addresses any difference that can affect organizational effectiveness, not just differences included in Army Regulation 600-20.

- Diversity assumes that differences can add organizational value and enhance mission accomplishment, while EO does not assume that improved organizational effectiveness is a primary outcome. Diversity also focuses on the organization and its people, while EO focuses on individuals and groups of individuals.
- Diversity is a top-down effort, while equal opportunity is a bottom-up program.

These critical distinctions are used as a basis for understanding and considering the issues of diversity that are discussed throughout this paper.

### **The Underrepresentation of Black Officers**

The paper examines underrepresentation of black officers at the field grade level and senior ranks of the Army in particular because these two areas show a marked drop-off in racial diversity. While blacks make up 22 percent of the Army overall, they comprise only 12.3 percent of the officer corps and between seven and eight percent of the combat arms officers. The combat arms branches are of particular importance because they represent the predominant pipeline to the senior ranks of the Army. Of the 318 current general officers, 59 percent are from combat arms branches, 13 percent are from combat support, 12 percent are from combat service support, and the remaining 16 percent are divided among other branches.

Given that increasing black accessions into the combat arms is an important step toward improving diversity at the senior ranks, this paper examines the Army's current efforts with regard to accessions. The Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement (CODA) developed a number of recommendations that outline a plan for the Army to address diversity issues relating to accessions. According to the 2005 progress report on CODA prepared by Colonel David Glover of the U.S. Army Accessions Command, these recommendations are as follows:

1. Examine the Order of Merit List (OML) process of all commissioning sources to confirm its effect on the branching process and placement of officers in the Army.
2. Refine the existing officer branching model with the goal of providing a greater spread of quality and diversity across all branches.
3. Cadet Command should continue to engage in an aggressive minority marketing campaign designed to influence individual branch preference for the combat arms.
4. Establish alternatives to bring additional Student Athlete Leaders (SALs) into ROTC programs on campus.
5. Work closely with Human Resources Command to meet requests by Historically Black Colleges and Universities for combat arms officers and non-commissioned officers to provide the desired mentorship.

## **Success Factors for Achieving Greater Workforce Diversity Overall**

This paper also discusses diversity on a broader level. Success factors critical to achieving workforce diversity were drawn from a benchmarking study produced by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, entitled *Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity*. This study identified 65 public and private organizations and companies whose practices in achieving workforce diversity were deemed exemplary. This paper analyzes the best practices employed by a range of public and private companies and organizations (including the Army's sister organizations), using success factors derived from the study. These factors are as follows:

1. Leadership Commitment — Leadership commitment refers to the degree to which leaders of organizations take ownership of a vision for diversity and communicate it to the workforce and those outside the organization.
2. Strategic Planning — Strategic planning focuses on creating measurable ways in which diversity can support the strategic direction, goals, and objectives of organizations.
3. Accountability, Assessment, and Evaluation — Accountability is achieved when leaders are made responsible for diversity through the linking of performance evaluation elements and compensation to the successful implementation and progress of initiatives. Periodic assessment and evaluation of the status and accomplishments of the diversity program are an important component of accountability.
4. Employment Involvement — Employee involvement is the key to achieving the three core organizational goals all best practice organizations found essential for success: 1) maximizing workplace satisfaction for all employees; 2) retaining a world class workforce; and 3) maintaining an environment of lifetime learning.
5. Mentoring — Mentors serve two purposes: 1) to assimilate new employees into the organizational culture; and 2) to accept protégées and introduce them to new and more challenging aspects of the organization.

## **The Army's Current Efforts to Increase Diversity**

After examining the best practices of private and public companies and organizations, this paper uses the same framework of success factors to 1) analyze the steps that the Army has taken and the efforts it is currently undertaking to improve diversity, and 2) identify areas for potential improvement. The Army's efforts include the following:

### **Leadership Commitment**

On October 28, 2004, the recommendation from the Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement to establish the Army Diversity Office (ADO) was approved, with an official operating date scheduled for June 1, 2005.

## **Strategic Planning**

According to a briefing given by Lieutenant Colonel Tracy Smith, Chief of the Army Diversity Office, the strategic plan for overall Army Workforce Diversity will encompass the following goals: (1) leverage diverse experiences, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes, problem-solving capabilities, and effective teamwork to meet the challenges of today and the future; (2) capture performance progress and/or value-added through qualitative and quantitative performance measures; (3) clearly link diversity efforts to tangible results; and (4) access a workforce that mirrors America.

## **Accountability, Assessment, and Evaluation**

According to Lieutenant Colonel Smith, the Army Diversity Working Group (ADWG) will support the assessment and evaluation process with formal updates to the senior leadership of the Army.

## **Employee Involvement**

In terms of the three organizational goals used in this study, the Army has mixed results. It has an established environment focused on a lifetime of learning for both military and civilian personnel (e.g., continuous education programs, both job related and personal, for all personnel). However, data on retention rates for officers show that the Army is experiencing an officer retention problem from the rank of captain to the rank of colonel. Many factors, including continuous and long deployments resulting in time away from home and family, play a key role in these retention rates, as well as in issues concerning workplace satisfaction.

## **Mentoring Employees**

On July 14, 2005, the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Mentorship Community was established. This website includes over 125 tailored mentorship forums and a self-administered, searchable mentorship profile server.

## **Recommendations for Improving the Army's Workforce Diversity**

### **Near-Term Strategies**

- Establish a baseline for diversity, which will allow the organization to measure progress in the upcoming years.
- Boost the number of black males recruited by the ROTC and accessed into the Army, using CODA's recommendations and examples such as those strategies provided by the U.S. Navy.
- Ensure quality of officers through the provision of quality education.
- Increase black officer representation in the high-profile career-enhancing jobs (e.g., line unit commander, operations officer, executive officer, aide-de-camps, etc).

- 
- Require participation in a formal mentorship program.
  - Disseminate the message that diversity is a critical component of a strong military force.

### **Long-Term Strategies**

- Engage the African American community as part of a long-term strategy to boost the number of blacks recruited by commissioning sources.
- Require commissioning sources to establish a system that ensures that black cadets receive training that reflects the evaluation tools used to determine the Order of Merit List.
- Increase the number of black males who select the combat arms as their branch choice in the selection process.



## INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Army workforce consists of over 1.5 million personnel across the active, reserve, civilian, and contractor components. The statement above by the former Chief of Staff of the Army speaks directly to the positive outcomes of a diverse Army, and significant steps have been taken by the Army that signal its renewed focus on improving diversity. For example, an Army Diversity Office (ADO) was established in 2005 and the senior leadership of the Army has made comments supporting the view that the Army needs to immediately improve diversity.<sup>2</sup> Change will not take place, however, until we as an Army create change by taking specific action.

While one could make a strong case that the U.S. Army is one of the most diverse organizations in the United States, its efforts to achieve diversity over the years have produced little progress in two key areas. Black officers are still underrepresented in the combat arms branches and in the field grade and senior officer ranks. It is important to examine ways to increase the numbers of blacks in the combat arms and in the field grade and senior officer ranks because addressing underrepresentation in these two areas is critical to achieving racial diversity throughout the Army.

Diversity is important at all levels of the Army. The field grade level is of particular concern in this paper because a stark decrease in the representation of black officers occurs at this level. In an essay entitled *Why Black Officers Fail* (1998), Brigadier General (retired) Remo Butler, then a U.S. Army War College student, found that black officers constituted about 12 percent of the officer corps up to the rank of major; but in the higher ranks, the percentage decreased by nearly half.<sup>3</sup> Butler found that the opposite was true of white officers; as rank increased, the percentage of white officers also increased by about 10 percent. Today, the data continue to reflect this pattern.

One of the primary concerns of this paper is to examine black officer representation in the active component of the Army, especially the combat arms. While African Americans comprise about 22 percent of the U.S. Army, they make up only 12.3 percent of the U.S. Army officer corps and between seven and eight percent of combat arms officers.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, they represent only 8.18 percent of the general officers currently in the Army (26 out of 318 total).<sup>5</sup>

**//The belief of our soldiers in scrupulously equal treatment and the opportunity to achieve based solely on their skill and effort is essential in our Army. Like the Nation it supports, the U.S. Army is extremely diverse and draws its strength from the contributions of that ethnic and cultural diversity."**

**— General (retired) Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army, 2001-03.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> General Erik K. Shinseki, e-mail message to General Kevin P. Byrnes, subject: Representative Leadership Across the Force, April 30, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Transcripts for House Armed Services Committee Hearing, comments made by General Peter Schoomaker (February 15, 2006), 32.

<sup>3</sup> Remo Butler, *Why Black Officers Fail*, (senior research paper for the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle PA, May 1998).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Army Demographics Office and U.S. Army Human Resources Command (data as of April 2006).

<sup>5</sup> General Officer Management Office Minority Report (January 3, 2006).

The number of black combat arms officers is directly correlated with underrepresentation of black officers at the senior levels of the U.S. Army. Given that the majority of general officers today are products of one of the combat arms branches, it is logical to conclude that greater opportunities for advancement exist in the combat arms as opposed to the other branches. Out of the 318 current general officers, 59 percent are from combat arms branches, 13 percent are from combat support, and 12 percent are from combat service support. The remaining 16 percent are divided among Special branches (three percent), U.S. Army Medical Department (four percent), Acquisition (six percent), and Reserve Components serving on active duty (three percent).<sup>6</sup> This pipeline to the senior ranks—i.e., the combat arms—is discussed later in the paper as a critical element in improving racial diversity in the senior ranks of the Army. It should be acknowledged that the assessment of this pipeline is based on analysis of current promotion patterns. As noted further on in this paper, this pipeline may change depending on the direction that the U.S. Army takes with regard to the skill sets required of all officers in the future.

It should be noted that this paper intentionally focuses on black male officers rather than other minority groups. The reasoning behind this decision is as follows: I believe that if we develop solutions to improve the situation for the largest minority group within the Army (blacks), those solutions will also benefit other minorities, including the second-largest minority group, Hispanics. Also, an emphasis is placed on the combat arms branches because they serve as the predominant pipeline to the senior ranks of the Army. However, it is important to recognize that Congress restricts service in the combat arms to men; all women—including black women—are not permitted to serve in these branches. Therefore, women currently cannot access this pipeline. Given that the restriction is in place at this point, this paper's recommendations regarding increasing black officer representation in the senior ranks through accessions are limited to black *male* officers. If Congress lifted the gender restriction on combat arms service, the Army would be able to progress even further toward workforce diversity by boosting both the number of women officers *and* the number of black officers (both men and women), particularly in the senior ranks. While this emphasis is placed on the combat arms, other strategies for increasing diversity are discussed in detail throughout the paper (see especially Sections V and VI). These strategies are not gender-specific and would therefore help address underrepresentation of black women—and all women—in the Army, as well as groups of minority men.

This paper aims to create a foundation for both understanding the problem of black underrepresentation in the field grade and senior officer ranks and identifying solutions to help the Army achieve greater workforce diversity at this critical level—and beyond. First, in Section I, a definition of the term “diversity” is established, since there is great variation in opinions about what the definition is or should be. Background information on issues of equal opportunity and diversity is then provided in Section II, followed by an overview of the historical context and key issues that have contributed to the current state of the U.S. Army with regard to diversity. Sections III and IV examine underrepresentation of black officers, particularly in the combat arms and senior ranks, and discuss a central approach to addressing underrepresentation: diversification of the force through accessions. The next two sections widen the focus to success factors and best practices for achieving workforce diversity, drawing on a benchmarking study conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the

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<sup>6</sup> General Officer Management Office (January 26, 2006).



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National Partnership for Reinventing Government.<sup>7</sup> In Section V, best practices used by companies and organizations (private and nonprofit), the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force, and government organizations are examined within the framework of the success factors. In Section VI, the Army's current efforts to increase diversity are discussed within the same framework of success factors. The paper concludes with recommended near-term and long-term strategies for the U.S. Army to use as possible strategic options for managing diversity in the Army.

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, *Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity* (Washington, DC: GPO, n.d.), <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/initiati/benchmk/workforce-diversity.pdf>.

## I. DIVERSITY DEFINED

For the purposes of this paper, I use the definition of diversity from the Leading Diversity Process Model (LDPM). This definition was developed by the Leading Diversity Working Group at the United States Military Academy. The LDPM definition was chosen for this paper because it defines diversity without committing to a specific outcome. Colonel Andre Sayles, co-founder of the Leading Diversity Working Group, explains that the LDPM definition of diversity refers to the differences in people that can have an impact—positive or negative—on the effectiveness of an organization: “The impact [of diversity] can be either positive or negative, depending on the organization, the nature of the difference, and how the difference is perceived.”<sup>8</sup>

A common misperception is that only certain persons or groups are included under the umbrella term “diversity.” In fact, exactly the opposite is true. While the dimension of race is often the sole focus when the topic of diversity is addressed, diversity includes the entire spectrum of an individual’s primary dimensions, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. The term also encompasses secondary dimensions, including communication style, work style, organizational role/level, economic status, and geographic origin.<sup>9</sup>

This paper could focus on any one of the primary or secondary dimensions listed above. I focus on racial demographics because, as noted by retired General Shinseki above, racial diversity is a source of strength for the Army. It is my belief that race—and in particular, the dynamics between blacks and whites—plays a unique and historically significant role in issues of diversity in the Army. Techniques found to be useful in the dimension of racial diversity will be applicable in other dimensions, such as gender.

<sup>8</sup> Andre H. Sayles, *Diversity: An Engineering Process*, United States Military Academy (West Point, NY: 2004).

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d.

## II. BACKGROUND

This section begins with an examination of equal opportunity and diversity, as the two terms are often used interchangeably. The differences between equal opportunity and diversity must be understood if we are to use both effectively. Next, a brief historical review provides context for the Army's efforts in this area and is followed by an overview of the Army's management of diversity issues over the past 20 years. Finally, the last four sub-sections discuss key issues—mentorship, quality of instructors at commissioning sources, discrimination, and assignments—that help to explain how the Army arrived at its current status with regard to diversity.

### **Equal Opportunity Versus Diversity**

The distinction between equal opportunity (EO) and diversity is often blurred or overlooked. Many even use the terms interchangeably. These two terms are more precisely defined here in order to prevent confusion in later sections of this paper. As Colonel Sayles explains, "One argument is that the Equal Opportunity program is part of a more broadly defined diversity program."<sup>10</sup> He continues, "This thought process would support the notion that EO is a subset of diversity, but a disqualifier is that activities such as compliance and complaint management would likely serve as distractions if included in a diversity program." In his analysis of diversity and equal opportunity, Colonel Sayles concludes the following:

- a. Diversity is a broader or more global concept than EO. It addresses differences beyond those targeted by the EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] or EO/EEO [Equal Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity] programs. Specifically, Diversity covers any difference that can have an impact on mission effectiveness, including those not specifically addressed in [Army Regulation] AR600-20.
- b. Diversity simultaneously focuses on the organization and its people, with the assumption that differences can bring value to the organization and may enhance mission accomplishment. EO pursues fairness and equal opportunities for individuals and groups of individuals, with enhanced organizational effectiveness not being the [assumed] primary outcome.
- c. EO is inherently a bottom-up program in terms of execution and outcomes. Although command emphasis is required, execution is often left to the NCO [Non-Commissioned Officers] serving as Equal Opportunity Advisors [EOA]. Outcomes are driven by EOA responsibilities such as assessments and reports, supplemented by chain-of-command interest that varies according to the leadership. Program results are expected to enhance mission accomplishment; however, specific organizational goals and outcomes are not always established up front.
- d. Diversity is a top-down effort that starts with organizational needs. Consideration may be given to expectations of the customer to whom products or services are to be delivered. A diverse organization can often best serve a diverse customer. In other words, we might ask what the customer would want to see in an organization in order to have full confidence in the

<sup>10</sup> Colonel Andre H. Sayles (co-founder of the Leading Diversity Working Group, USMA, and professor and head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, USMA), interview by author, September 10, 2005.

product or service being delivered, as well as confidence in those involved in providing and delivering those products or services. For example, if an organization provides hair products for a wide range of ethnic groups, those ethnic groups will likely have more confidence in the product if the manufacturing and sales staffs reflect the demographics of the customers. EO programs cannot be expected to pursue this level and depth of analysis.<sup>11</sup>

Colonel Sayles uses the following table to illustrate his comparison of equal opportunity and diversity. This table provides a summary of the critical distinctions between the two terms, which is useful to have as a basis for understanding and considering the issues of diversity that are discussed in the following sections of this paper.

| <b>Table 1. Comparison of Equal Opportunity and Diversity</b> |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Parameter</b>  | <b>Equal Opportunity</b>  | <b>Diversity</b>  |
| <b>Methodology</b>  | Bottom-up, legally based  | Top-down, voluntary-based   |
| <b>Primary Purpose</b>  | Equal opportunities for individuals or groups of individuals, fair treatment                              | Enhanced organizational effectiveness   |
| <b>Ownership</b>  | Commander, EO Program Managers, EO Advisors   | Leaders at all levels, potentially entire organization  |
| <b>Training</b>   | Based on EOA expertise and preferences, AR600-20 mandates   | Derived from strategic planning, organizational Diversity needs   |
| <b>Outcomes</b>   | Compliance, human relations maintenance, incremental organizational improvements over previous conditions | Systematic growth through purpose and understanding, differences valued and sought after as mission enhancement tool                                  |
| <b>Timeline</b>   | Short-term planning and execution driven by regulatory requirements                                       | Long-term planning, systematic study, analysis, assessment, and improvement   |
| <b>Compliance</b>   | Purpose for some actions  | By-product of the right actions   |
| <b>Theme</b>  | Elimination of discrimination, prevention of discrimination   | Take advantage of the power of Diversity  |
| <b>Complaints</b>   | A primary focus, major investment   | Not part of the program, left to EO and chain-of-command, prevents complaints   |
| <b>Monitoring</b>   | Quarterly, annual reports   | Continuous monitoring of impact of all aspects of Diversity on organizational effectiveness, progress of different groups tracked and planned for     |
| <b>Recruiting</b>   | No plan, left to those who recruit  | Critical to effectiveness, part of strategic Diversity plan, continuous assessment, study, and projection of generational and cultural changes        |
| <b>Retention</b>  | No plan, potential by-product of fair treatment   | Critical to effectiveness, part of strategic Diversity plan, continuous assessment  |
| <b>Assignments</b>  | No plan, left to personnel staff and commanders   | Critical to effectiveness, part of strategic Diversity plan, continuous education of leaders, assessment, analysis                                    |
| <b>Promotions</b>   | No plan, no impact  | Critical to effectiveness, diverse leadership important, plan fails without promotions across cultural boundaries, continuous monitoring and analysis |
| <b>Structure</b>  | Programs at all levels linked by regulatory requirements  | Diversity programs linked at all levels with higher levels staffed with experts, planned implementation   |
| <b>Philosophy</b>   | What to do, what not to do  | What to do  |

*Source: Andre H. Sayles, "Equal Opportunity Versus Diversity: An Opinion" (draft, December 2003).*

<sup>11</sup> Andre H. Sayles, "Equal Opportunity Versus Diversity: An Opinion" (draft, December 2003).

## **Historical Overview**

On July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed an executive order declaring that “there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.”<sup>12</sup> According to Moskos and Butler, the armed forces were integrated in two phases. In the first phase during the 1950s, *organizational integration* put an end to any formal discrimination in recruitment, training, retention, and on-base living arrangements. The second phase, *leadership integration*, did not occur for another quarter of a century. Truman’s executive order had brought blacks only part of the way into the military mainstream.<sup>13</sup>

To some, the end of the Vietnam War marked change and improvement in the Army with regard to race relations.<sup>14</sup> Members of the military began to treat one another with more respect across racial lines. To others, however, racial conflict did not disappear in 1973 with the end of the draft and withdrawal from Vietnam. In many ways, it grew worse. Moskos and Butler state, “Fights between black and white soldiers were endemic in the 1970s, an era now remembered as the ‘time of troubles.’”<sup>15</sup>

Yet, for those who viewed this period as the beginning of positive change, the replacement of the Selective Service System, commonly known as the draft, with an all-volunteer military represented an important step in improving race relations. Voluntary service produced and perpetuated a new feeling among those who became members of the American military. Military personnel no longer saw themselves as victims of the draft system; they could now choose the military as a career as opposed to being forced into military service by the government. In *The Military: More Than Just a Job?* Frank Wood writes, “Those who worked against the (military) system were mustered out and replaced by those who chose the military as a career move.”<sup>16</sup> He continues, “the morale among soldiers improved and race relations became less and less a point of contention.”<sup>17</sup>

Although the all-volunteer system offered significant benefits, the establishment of an all-volunteer force resulted in a higher rate of enlistment among blacks than among other groups, which raised concerns among senior leaders in the government that too many blacks would be serving in the military.<sup>18</sup> The Thomas S. Gates Committee was formed to study the issue. The committee’s findings were intended to reassure the President of the United States that the number of blacks in the volunteer Army would remain close to the percentage at that point in time (i.e., the percentage would not continue to rise). However, the committee’s projections were inaccurate; the percentage of blacks in the U.S. Army in 1968 (12 percent) rose to 32 percent by 1979.<sup>19</sup>

After the Vietnam War, many whites felt animosity toward military service and the fact that significant enlistments of blacks helped maintain the Army at prescribed numbers in strength. Many whites no longer looked at the military as the status symbol it once had been and opted to seek opportunities

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<sup>12</sup> Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, *All that We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), 30.

<sup>13</sup> Moskos and Butler 1996, 31.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy/Equal Opportunity, *Black Americans in Defense of Our Nation* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1991), 87.

<sup>15</sup> Moskos and Butler 1996, 33.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Defense 1991, 87.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

available to them in civilian life.<sup>20</sup> For blacks, on the other hand, it is probable that the military offered more for them than most other career choices during this period following the Vietnam War. Blacks had an opportunity to provide for their families, live in good housing in racially integrated neighborhoods, and send their children to integrated schools. They also had the opportunity to travel to foreign countries and live all over the world.

Although blacks enlisted in large numbers, however, they continued to serve in the lower-rated and lower-paying positions. Black high school graduates were more likely to enter the Army than white high school graduates, but whites were more likely to receive advancements in rank and pay. In 1964, black officers accounted for only 3.3 percent of the Army's officers; by 1979, the number had only increased to 10.1 percent.<sup>21</sup> With such large racial disparities persisting between the enlisted ranks and the officer corps, blacks began to question whether equal opportunity truly existed at all.

### ***Managing Diversity in the Past***

Over the past 20 years, efforts to increase diversity have been largely managed through the Army's Equal Opportunity (EO) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs. Although these programs have served the U.S. Army well, it is not clear that they represent the appropriate tools for managing diversity and achieving the highest level of organizational effectiveness. As illustrated earlier in Table 1, the primary purpose of the equal opportunity program is to achieve fair treatment and equal opportunity for individuals or groups of individuals, while the primary purpose of the diversity program is enhanced unit effectiveness.

The Army's EO policy, as stated in Army Regulation 600-20 (AR600-20), paragraph 6-3, is as follows: "the U.S. Army will provide equal opportunity and fair treatment for military personnel, family members and DA [Department of the Army] civilians without regard to race, color, gender, religion, or national origin, and provide an environment free [from] unlawful discrimination and offensive behavior." As described in AR600-20, paragraph 6-1, sustained readiness and unit effectiveness are the desired outcomes of an efficient EO policy:

The Equal Opportunity (EO) program formulates, directs, and sustains a comprehensive effort to maximize human potential and to ensure fair treatment for all persons based solely on merit, fitness, and capability in support of readiness. The EO philosophy is based on fairness, justice, and equity. Commanders are responsible for sustaining a positive EO climate within their units. Specifically, the goals of the EO program are to a) provide EO for military personnel, and family members, both on and off post and within the limits of the laws of the localities, states, and host nations; and b) create and sustain effective units by eliminating discriminatory behaviors or practices that undermine teamwork, mutual respect, loyalty, and shared sacrifice of the men and women of America's Army.

Although this policy's stated goal is to sustain readiness and unit effectiveness, the Army's EO methodology is a "bottom-up" legally based effort focused on ensuring fair and equal opportunities, preventing discrimination, and establishing procedures for investigations of policy violations. The commander, EO program managers, and EO advisors are primarily responsible for ensuring the policy's enforcement. In contrast, diversity policies use a "top-down" voluntary-based methodology requiring leadership at all

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Defense 1991, 88.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



levels to take ownership of the diversity vision and drive the program. The EO program is designed to maintain compliance with Department of Defense and federal program mandates, assist commanders with tracking command climates, and provide training for the force regarding the spectrum of primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. However, quarterly and annual reports serve as the monitoring system under EO, while diversity programs continuously monitor the impact of *all* aspects of diversity on organizational effectiveness. Ultimately, a successful EO program is designed to bring about inspired individual and unit performances as products of a positive work environment and trusted leadership. As shown in Table 1, however, in the areas of recruiting, retention, assignments, and promotions, the Army's EO policy offers no guidance. Diversity programs, on the other hand, address these areas as critical to organizational effectiveness.

The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) is the Department of Defense's center for EO/EEO training and research. The Army draws upon DEOMI as a resource for proper implementation of the Army's EO program. AR600-20 outlines the selection and training process for EO experts and guidelines for EO programs. Each EO program is measured by a set of specific tools, including unit climate assessments, ethnic and gender group statistics, EO staff training, quarterly organizational training, and tracking of the number and types of complaints. These data assist the Army leadership in assessing overall unit effectiveness. Again, as shown in Table 1, the structure of the Army's EO program is linked to regulatory requirements, with a philosophy based on both "what to do" and "what not to do." Diversity programs, guided by the philosophy of "what to do," are linked to all levels and include specific implementation plans.

### **Mentorship**

Prior to 2005, mentoring in the Army was informal; no clear mentorship process had been established. Kathy Kram, professor of organizational behavior at the Boston University School of Management, defines a mentor as "a trusted counselor who accepts a guiding role in the development of a younger or less-experienced member of the organization."<sup>22</sup> According to Kram, "mentoring functions can be defined as: sponsorship, exposure-and-visibility, coaching, protection, [and] challenging assignments."<sup>23</sup> Interviews conducted with a number of officers who were on active duty during the mid-1970s reveal that informal mentoring at that time ranged from non-existent to more than adequate.<sup>24</sup> According to those interviewed, most officers who did not have mentors had shorter military careers, while those with strong mentors ascended to the higher levels of the field grade ranks and, in many cases, even achieved the rank of general officer.

A survey conducted by retired Colonel Carrie Kendrick reveals that most black officers did not begin their careers with mentors (Table 2).<sup>25</sup> One of her recommendations was to formalize mentoring in the U.S. Army. According to Colonel Kendrick, the level of discussion that occurs during efficiency report counseling sessions is not a substitute for mentoring. She goes on to state that mentoring should be taught in some type of forum or official setting.

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<sup>22</sup> Kathy Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1985), 23.

<sup>23</sup> Kram 1985, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Interviews conducted by author, September 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Carrie Kendrick, *African American Officers' Role in the Future Army* (Senior research paper for the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, May 1998). Kendrick is a former military fellow at the Joint Center.

| <b>Table 2. African American Officer Response to Survey, 1998.</b> |               |                |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Q. Did you have a mentor as a lieutenant?</b>                   |               |                |
|  | <b>Male %</b> | <b>Female%</b> |
| <b>Yes</b>   | 23.3          | 41.2           |
| <b>No</b>  | 75.6          | 58.8           |
| <b>n/a</b>   | 1.2           | 0.0            |
| <b>N =</b>   | 86            | 17             |

*Source: Kendrick 1998.*

The fact that there are still a substantial number of officers who do not believe that mentoring is necessary reinforces Colonel Kendrick’s opinion that “mentoring is not universally understood—its effectiveness is only as good as the individual providing the counsel.”<sup>26</sup> Her research suggested that “Many African Americans lacked an understanding of the term mentor or “godfather” since they were outside the sphere where establishing a mentor/protégé relationship was possible. By contrast, white officers for well over a decade have come to expect mentorship as routine.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, she found that more than 45 percent of African American officers in her survey population reported that they had never had a mentor.

### **Quality of Instructors at Commissioning Sources**

Many black officers serving during the early 1980s felt that officers commissioned by the United States Military Academy (USMA), as opposed to the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) or the Officer Candidates School (OCS), had an overwhelming advantage.<sup>28</sup> These officers felt that, if they had to compete with an officer from USMA (West Point) for a job or a promotion, they would lose more often than not. While there are a number of reasons that could account for this feeling among black officers, this paper focuses on one in particular: the quality of instructors at West Point and the ROTC.

Many officers—not just black officers—regarded the position of ROTC instructor as a career-ender, while a position as a West Point instructor was viewed as a career-enhancer. This was not only true in the past but also has some merit today. According to Colonel Kendrick, officers assigned as instructors at West Point and selected for Command and Staff College (a prerequisite for selection for battalion command in most cases) received promotions more often than those who were assigned as instructors at HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) ROTC programs.<sup>29</sup>

As explained by Colonel Kendrick, in 1998 when an officer was assigned to West Point as an instructor or tactical officer, an advanced degree was a requirement.<sup>30</sup> If a selected officer did not already hold a master’s degree or lacked a specific degree required by West Point, the Army paid full tuition for the officer’s graduate education.<sup>31</sup> Officers assigned as instructors in ROTC programs, including at HBCUs, had neither an advanced degree requirement nor an offer from the Army to pay for graduate education. Only the professor of military science had to meet the requirement of an advanced degree

<sup>26</sup> Kendrick 1998, 53.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>28</sup> This observation is based on numerous interviews conducted by the author, as well as the author’s personal experience.

<sup>29</sup> Kendrick 1998, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.



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in the ROTC programs. Thus, West Point was perceived as having higher quality officers as instructors, even though instructor quality is not determined solely by level of degree attained.

At this time, these differing requirements still stand, although with minor adjustments. Tactical officers, not all instructors, who teach military science at West Point are still required to possess advanced degrees. These tactical officers play a central role in teaching the cadets. The practices at ROTC programs are different. Officers desiring to serve as professors of military science for ROTC programs must apply if they want to be considered for these positions and must have an advanced degree. They are selected by a central select board. In most cases, however, ROTC professors of military science do not teach the cadets; they oversee the program. The ROTC instructors who actually teach the cadets are still not required to have an advanced degree.

To date, no system has been put in place to ensure the quality of instructors across all commissioning sources. The Army's official position is that the selection criteria for ROTC instructors rest with each university. As a result, standards for instructor quality vary widely from one institution to the next and the ROTC remains associated with lower standards in this respect compared to West Point. In addition to the lower degree requirement for ROTC instructors, cadets at HBCUs are generally not taught by a racially diverse set of instructors due to the underrepresentation of white officers assigned to HBCU ROTC programs. As data from Colonel Kendrick's 1998 study reveal, out of twenty-one HBCU ROTC programs, only six had a white officer at the grade of captain assigned as an instructor.<sup>32</sup>

Racial diversity among instructors at *all* commissioning sources is important to ensuring a thorough education for cadets. In the early 1980s, one of the elements most critical to the success of Hampton University's ROTC program was the diversity of the instructor pool. Through their exposure to both white and black officers and senior non-commissioned officers, black cadets at Hampton were able to learn about the expectations of the Army from more diverse vantage points, which gave them a broader understanding of how to pursue a successful career in the military.

Ensuring the quality of instructorship, both in reputation and in reality, is one of the first major steps in addressing black officer representation at the senior ranks. If black officers are perceived to be receiving a lower standard of education from the ROTC, whether that education is from an HBCU ROTC program or a non-HBCU ROTC program, commanders in the field may shape their opinion of the quality of these officers accordingly. We begin to see a snowball effect, as perceptions of the quality of an officer directly affect decisions about assignment to a career-enhancing job. In turn, a strong performance in a career-enhancing job affects decisions about promotion. It is therefore clear that perceptions of officer quality based on commissioning source can have a negative effect, depending on which academic institution an officer chooses to attend.

One important way to combat the perception that ROTC programs have lower standards of instructor quality is to apply the same advanced degree requirements for ROTC instructors as those demanded of West Point tactical officers, as recommended by Colonel Kendrick.<sup>33</sup> As noted above, ensuring racial diversity among instructors is also a key step in improving the quality of educational experience at commissioning sources.

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<sup>32</sup> Kendrick 1998, 32.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## **Discrimination**

Does discrimination still exist in the Army? In 1995, a Defense Equal Opportunity Council Task Force reviewed discrimination and sexual harassment in the Army. The task force noted that the Army had progressed at a faster rate than society overall in terms of racial integration. In the 1950s, the Army worked hard to find off-base housing free of discriminatory practices for military families and desegregated schools for dependents in military families. However, in 1964, black officers constituted only 3.3 percent of the Army's officers. Fifteen years later, that figure had only grown to 10.1 percent. Considering the large number of black enlisted personnel in the Army, this low percentage revealed that problems still existed in the concept of equal opportunity and the treatment of blacks.<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, according to the task force, by the 1980s many people (particularly politicians) believed that racial problems no longer existed within the Army. As a result, equal opportunity programs were deemphasized. However, after visits to many U.S. military bases in 1991, the United States Commission on Civil Rights undermined that view when it found that discrimination still existed in the Army. The commission's conclusions were based on findings of low promotion rates among blacks and apparent problems in the administration of justice. The task force concluded that "discrimination against black military personnel has not gone away."<sup>35</sup>

In 2003, Chief of Staff of the Army General Eric Shinseki wrote a memorandum on the Army to the Training and Doctrine (TRADOC) Commander, stating that, "While we have been leaders in equal treatment of our people, and serve as a standard for society, one area in which we continue to experience disturbing and potentially dysfunctional trends is in the representation of minorities in our officer corps."<sup>36</sup> He continued:

While the aggregate numbers and per capita representation appear acceptable, closer examination of our demographics indicate further work is needed. For example, minorities continue to be distributed across the branches in a disproportionate manner, with CSS [Combat Service Support] drawing far more than combat arms or combat support. Proportional differences also continue in the field grade and more senior ranks. Selection rates for CGSC [Command and General Staff College] and Senior Service College also bear review.<sup>37</sup>

Both institutional processes and individual biases and prejudices can lead to discrimination and have an impact on workforce diversity. Biases and prejudices at the individual level can hinder career opportunities for blacks—or members of any race—as effectively as institutional discrimination. They can also have an impact on accession and retention rates, job satisfaction, and professional development. In sum, it appears that discrimination, whether on an institutional or individual level, may still be working to undercut efforts to increase racial diversity.

<sup>34</sup> Department of Defense 1991, 88.

<sup>35</sup> Defense Equal Opportunity Council (DEOC) Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, *Report of the Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment*, Volume I (Washington, DC: the Pentagon, 1995), 6.

<sup>36</sup> Shinseki 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

## **Assignments**

Assignments have a clear bearing on an officer's progression through the ranks and ultimately may contribute to black underrepresentation at the field grade and senior ranks. Because assignments are so crucial to achieving higher rank, every officer receives guidance from the Human Resources Command (HRC) on this subject. According to a former Combat Arms Branch Chief, officers are briefed on career planning during their respective basic courses.<sup>38</sup> In most cases, this briefing occurs immediately after officers are commissioned. Included in this briefing is a timeline that explains what jobs an officer should strive for at specific points during his/her career to increase chances for promotion. The briefing also includes an overarching branch brief and a one-on-one conference with the branch assignment officer. Officers receive similar briefs when they attend the advanced course, when they attend Command and General Staff College (CGSC), prior to assuming battalion command, and prior to attending Senior Service College (SSC). The Human Resources Command also ensures that branch visits to all commands are conducted annually. These visits include briefings and one-on-one interviews as well.

In general, all officers are to follow a professional development model that includes a mix of command and staff positions in both tactical and non-tactical units, followed by staff time on the Army and Joint Staff. For junior officers, the initial focus is troop time or time with soldiers as a platoon leader, followed by battalion staff and then company command time. Most officers are instructed from the beginning of their careers to play an active role in the management of their careers and to never place this responsibility solely in the hands of their assignment officer. However, officers' knowledge of the type of job they should pursue and the specific time period in which they should have attained that job does not guarantee the assignment.

Whether or not an officer secures a specific job is dependent on a number of actions at different levels. First, an assignment officer at HRC must assign the officer to the location at which the job exists. In most instances, for junior officers this location would be an installation that houses a Division or Separate Brigade. The next step requires the personnel unit at the installation housing the division or brigade to assign the officer to the specific unit that affords him/her the desired leadership position with troops. This step is critical because other positions are available at the installation that do not offer the experience or the challenge of leading troops in Combat Arms (CA), Combat Service (CS), or Combat Service Support (CSS) units. For example, while a lieutenant finishing the basic course could be assigned as a training officer for the school detachment, a more career-enhancing job for that officer would be to serve as a platoon leader in a line unit.

The final step rests with the battalion commander at the unit of assignment. Even within the Division units, there are still positions that are less desirable than others. In combat arms units, the line command positions are more career-enhancing than the logistical or support command positions. Examples of racial disparities at this final step have led many black officers to question whether their progress through the ranks would ever be at a rate comparable to that of their white counterparts. In my personal observations during the mid- to late 1980s, for example, black officers in one combat arms organization were eligible to command, but were assigned to be logistic commanders on a recurring basis—the most undesirable of the command positions in this particular combat arms battalion, primarily because of its support function. For the most part, their white counterparts were assigned to the more career-enhancing line command positions.

<sup>38</sup> Colonel Ray Bingham, telephone interview by the author, December 2, 2005.

### III. THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF BLACK OFFICERS

In 1990, blacks composed 29.1 percent of the Army, but only 11 percent of the officer corps. By 1998, those statistics had not changed significantly; blacks accounted for 26.6 percent of the Army and 11.1 percent of the officer strength. In 2006, the figures continue to show that blacks are underrepresented among officers.<sup>39</sup> As illustrated in Table 3, up to the rank of major, black officers still only constitute about 13 percent of the officer corps. Furthermore, in the higher ranks, the percentage of black officers on active duty *decreases* as rank *increases*. In contrast, the percentage of white officers on active duty *increases* as rank *increases*. Across the board, the data in Table 3 show that the number of black officers at the senior field grade levels significantly lags behind that of their white counterparts. The data also indicate that the percentages of black officers in the highest ranks—colonel and general officer—do not even reach parity with the percentage of blacks (male and female) in the total U.S. population (approximately 12.3 percent), much less parity with the percentage of blacks in the U.S. Army as a whole (22 percent).

| Rank               | White non-Hispanic |         | Black non-Hispanic |         |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
|                    | Number             | Percent | Number             | Percent |
| General Officer    | 267                | 88      | 26                 | 8.1     |
| Colonel            | 2,619              | 84      | 315                | 10      |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 5,562              | 80      | 854                | 12.3    |
| Major              | 7,748              | 76.1    | 1,385              | 13.6    |
| Captain            | 12,524             | 72.2    | 2,379              | 13.7    |
| Lieutenant         | 9,788              | 72      | 1,651              | 12      |

*Note: Percents do not sum to 100 due to comparison of only two out of six racial categories.  
Source: U.S. Army Human Resources Command.*

As noted earlier in this paper, the combat arms branches appear to serve as the predominant pipeline to the senior ranks of the Army. Given that the combat arms branches represent by far the single largest source for general officers, the racial diversity of these branches affects that of the senior ranks. As Table 4 reveals, however, the percentage of black officers in the combat arms is strikingly lower than their representation in other branches.

| Rank               | White non-Hispanic |         | Black non-Hispanic |         |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
|                    | Number             | Percent | Number             | Percent |
| Lieutenant Colonel | 1,896              | 86      | 178                | 8       |
| Major              | 2,818              | 82      | 268                | 7       |
| Captain            | 6,150              | 80      | 619                | 8       |
| Lieutenant         | 5,119              | 78      | 512                | 7       |

*Note: Percents do not sum to 100 due to comparison of only two out of six racial categories.  
Source: U.S. Army Human Resources Command.*

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Army Human Resources Command.

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Since the combat arms branches function as the predominant pipeline to the senior ranks, underrepresentation of blacks in these branches indicates that black officers cannot fairly compete with white officers for promotion to those ranks. There may be a variety of reasons for the low number of black officers in the combat arms branches that require a range of strategies. In the following section, this paper presents a primary approach to addressing black officer underrepresentation in the combat arms: diversification through accessions.

## IV. DIVERSIFICATION THROUGH ACCESSIONS

### ***Black Accession Rates and Representation in Branches***

Given that the combat arms branches represent the predominant road to more opportunities for promotion—perhaps even to the rank of general officer—the Army must work harder to move black officers into those branches. Efforts have been made to do this. In April 2003, former Chief of Staff of the Army General Eric Shinseki directed the Commanding General (CG) of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to analyze the apparent minority underrepresentation in the senior Army leadership, determine the causes, and implement short-, mid-, and long-term courses of action, as warranted, to promote diversity throughout the Army. The Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement (CODA) was established to perform this task.

By March 2005, CODA had examined minority officer representation in the Army for a period of eighteen months. Issues examined by the commission included officer accessions, assignments, promotions, Professional Military Education (PME), and retention. CODA's analysis showed that an array of complex factors contributed to the situation in the U.S. Army regarding minority officer representation. The analysis also indicated that, if addressed at all levels of Army leadership by direct intervention, this situation could be ameliorated.

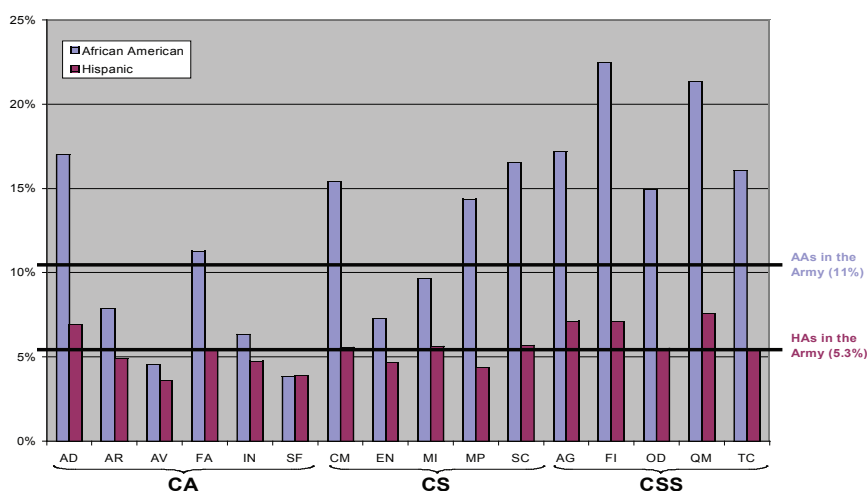
According to the 2005 progress report prepared by Colonel David Glover of the U.S. Army Accessions Command, the following points represent CODA's key findings.<sup>40</sup> Although black males enrolled in college at higher rates during the 1990s (1990–2001), data reveal a decline across all commissioning sources in recent years (2002–2004) in the percentage of black males accessed into the Army (Table 5). Between 2000 and 2005, ROTC programs—the commissioning source with the largest number of black accessions—showed a net drop in the number of black males accessed into the Army. The numbers for OCS, the second-largest commissioning source for black accessions, climbed to a high in 2002 and then declined again by 2004 (the most recent year available). USMA, which produces the fewest blacks accessed into the Army, showed a slight net increase in numbers between 2000 and 2005. Given the drop in the overall percentage of black males accessed from commissioning sources, it is likely that the combat arms—as well as the future leadership of the Army, since the majority of general officers come from these branches—will not reflect the diversity of the entire Army.

| <b>Table 5. Black Male Accessions</b> |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                       | <b>2000</b> | <b>2001</b> | <b>2002</b> | <b>2003</b> | <b>2004</b> | <b>2005</b> |
| <b>USMA</b>                           | 51          | 50          | 55          | 47          | 63          | 54          |
| <b>ROTC</b>                           | 227         | 266         | 237         | 241         | 229         | 199         |
| <b>OCS</b>                            | 94          | 95          | 159         | 121         | 95          | TBD         |
| <b>Total Black</b>                    | 372         | 411         | 451         | 409         | 387         | TBD         |
| <b>Total Accessions</b>               | 4,150       | 4,262       | 4,590       | 4,562       | 4,435       | TBD         |
| <b>% Black Male Accessions</b>        | 9.0%        | 9.6%        | 9.8%        | 9.0%        | 8.7%        | TBD         |

*Source: U.S. Army Accessions Command.*

<sup>40</sup> Colonel David Glover, "Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement (CODA)," progress report on CODA (March 7, 2005).

**Figure 1. All Male Officers  
(Percent of control branch that is black or Hispanic)**



Combat Arms (CA): AD – Air Defense Artillery; AR – Armor; AV – Aviation; IN – Infantry; SF – Special Forces

Combat Support (CS): CM – Chemical; EN – Engineer; MI – Military Intelligence; MP – Military Police; SC – Signal Corps

Combat Service Support (CSS): AG – Adjutant General; FI – Finance; OD – Ordnance; QM – Quartermaster;  
TC – Transportation Corps

In addition to a drop in the number of black accessions, data show that blacks select and are selected for combat support and combat service support branches at much higher rates than for the combat arms branches (Figure 1). This is partly the result of individual choice and established trends at HBCUs in particular (blacks attending HBCUs tend to select CSS at higher rates). Another factor, however, is that minorities continue to end up in the bottom half of the Order of Merit List (OML). Cadets at the bottom of the OML have little chance of being selected for a combat arms branch—regardless of race—even if they desire it.<sup>41</sup> In the system of occupational assignment, certain unpopular branches receive (or at least have received in the past) a disproportionately large share of cadets from the lower half of the OML. Since blacks tend to cluster at the lower reaches of the OML at both USMA and in the ROTC, there may be a relationship between the OML (and the way that the OML is calculated) and the racial disparities in the branch selection process. It is important to note that if such a relationship does exist between the OML and branch selection, as some have suggested, that relationship is not a simple one and is not the only factor contributing to black underrepresentation in the combat arms, as there remains the issue of propensity to serve in the combat arms.<sup>42</sup>

### **Current Efforts to Increase Black Accessions into the Combat Arms**

The Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement (CODA) developed a number of recommendations that outline a plan for the Army to address diversity issues relating to accessions.

1. Examine the OML process from all commissioning sources to confirm its effect on the branching process and placement of officers in the Army.

<sup>41</sup> Arthur T. Coumbe, *From the Fulda Gap to Desert Storm: The ROTC and African American Representation in the U.S. Army's Officer Corps, A Historical Perspective*, paper presented at the 2004 Conference of Army Historians (Washington, DC, July 13-15, 2004), 19.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



2. Refine the existing officer branching model to provide a greater spread of quality and diversity across all the branches. The DA G1 is working with the Office of the Judge Advocate General (OTJAG) to incorporate changes to the model in preparation for the next officer Branching cycle.
3. Cadet Command [should continue to engage] in an aggressive minority marketing campaign designed to influence individual branch preference for the combat arms. USACC identified six senior ROTC schools with the highest concentration of African American males and has executed two of six on-campus combat arms briefings at senior ROTC schools to date. Additional briefings will follow the initial pilot. A Hispanic Access Initiative/Hispanic Serving Institution (HAI/HSI) school follow-on effort is also underway.
4. Establish alternatives to bring additional Student Athlete Leaders (SALs) into ROTC programs on campus. Oftentimes this desired type of student we are trying to attract is unable to balance academics, sports and ROTC and opts instead not to enter or continue ROTC.
5. Work closely with Human Resources Command to meet HBCU requests for combat arms officers and NCOs to provide the desired mentorship.<sup>43</sup>

These recommendations represent a good first step toward increasing the number of black accessions into the combat arms. The concluding section of this paper provides recommendations for further steps that may be taken in order to address the black underrepresentation in these branches and boost the number of black officers who enter the predominant pipeline to the senior ranks of the Army.

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<sup>43</sup> Glover 2005, 2.



## V. PROVEN SUCCESS FACTORS TO ACHIEVE WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

**A**lthough the military is given credit for leading American society with regard to desegregation in 1948, the business community has led the way in establishing practices that capitalize on workforce diversity. The changing demographics of our nation affect the nation's businesses, which, in turn, affect the economy. If the demographic characteristics of large groups of consumers change, businesses must change as well in order to keep up with the market. Success is achieved by maintaining a competitive advantage and that advantage comes from what is considered the most important resource by both the military and the business community: the diverse skills of the workforce. It logically follows that, in order to capitalize on diverse skill sets, it is necessary to achieve workforce diversity.

A benchmarking study by the U.S. Department of Commerce and Vice President Al Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government, entitled *Best Practices in Achieving Workforce Diversity*, used critical success factors to identify 65 organizations and companies, both public and private, whose exemplary practices in achieving workforce diversity were considered to be "world class."<sup>45</sup> Those factors were as follows:

1. Leadership and management commitment
2. Employee involvement
3. Strategic planning
4. Sustained investment
5. Diversity indicators
6. Accountability, measurement, and evaluation
7. Linkage to organizational goals and objectives

In creating this benchmarking study, the Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government felt that the federal civilian sector—which employs over 1.6 million individuals—had an opportunity to learn more about diversity from these successful companies and organizations. The study team also believed that the federal civilian sector should view diversity as a process that influences work climates, organizational effectiveness, customer service, and ultimately the way that this nation does business.

**// Our success as a global company is a direct result of our diverse and talented workforce. Our ability to develop new consumer insights and ideas and to execute in a superior way across the world is the best possible testimony to the power of diversity any organization could ever have."**

**— John Pepper, CEO,  
Proctor and Gamble <sup>44</sup>**

<sup>44</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., executive summary.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

It is my belief that the military community could derive equal value from taking a similar approach to diversity. Focusing on success factors derived from those used in the benchmarking study, interviews and teleconferences were conducted with corporate and non-corporate representatives. The success factors used for this paper are as follows:

- 1) Leadership commitment
- 2) Strategic planning
- 3) Accountability, assessment, and evaluation
- 4) Employment involvement
- 5) Mentoring<sup>46</sup>

Data from a number of corporations—including some of the Top 50 Companies for Diversity, as identified by *Diversity Inc.* magazine in 2005—were collected, as was information from companies with less desirable track records for comparison (names of companies and organizations are not provided with the examples). The purpose was to determine key principles and practices that lead to first achieving workforce diversity and then capitalizing on that diverse workforce.

In the following sections, this paper examines some of the best practices used by companies and organizations both public and private, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force, and government agencies (specifically, the National Institutes of Health, which has been recognized for its exemplary diversity efforts). Best practices used by companies and organizations were identified by the benchmarking study. Best practices used by the government and military organizations were identified by the author. It should be noted that there is overlap among these organizations in terms of the best practices they employ. For the sake of brevity, this paper does not repeat best practices that are described under the heading of one type of organization and used (perhaps with slight variations) by other organizations.

**We must be  
the change  
we wish to see  
in the world.**

— *Mahatma Gandhi*

### **Leadership Commitment**

Leadership commitment refers to the need for leaders of organizations to take ownership of a vision for diversity and communicate it to the workforce and those outside the organization. Leadership commitment is also reflected in the degree to which leaders are actively involved in setting and implementing initiatives to achieve greater diversity.

### **Public and Private Organizations and Companies**

As articulated in the benchmarking study, managers manage change, but best-in-class leaders *create* change by inspiring their employees.<sup>47</sup> The leaders in corporate examples of leadership commitment champion diversity by infusing it into all organizational processes, including business strategies and decisions. They also place the responsibility of achieving diversity with top-level and senior executives, rather than only with human resources departments or diversity offices.

- One chief executive stated that the diversity vision, mission, and strategic direction need to be conveyed by leaders “clearly, concisely, and *repeatedly*” to enhance awareness, promote open dialogue, and remove barriers.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Mentoring fell under the broader category of Employee Involvement in the benchmarking study. In this paper, it is treated separately.

<sup>47</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., chapter 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

- The president/CEO of another organization personally leads the diversity efforts. He holds town hall meetings and regularly goes to the employee cafeteria to listen to employees and talk about diversity.
- One company's ten core commitments include the following: "We are committed to foster a diverse workforce and recognize and value every individual's unique skills and perspectives."<sup>49</sup> These commitments are shared and enforced on a daily basis.

**M**y intentions are to take big steps each year, for four years. I believe we need to take more risk in this area than we have in the past. I believe from my heart that diversity strengthens the very fabric of who we are.

— *Admiral Michael T. Mullin, Chief of Naval Operations*<sup>50</sup>

## U.S. Navy

The Navy is selected as an example in leadership commitment because of its top-down approach to diversity. Its Diversity Directorate was established on August 2, 2004. The mission of the directorate is to provide Navy leadership with the tools and resources necessary to create and sustain cultural awareness and an environment in which diversity is valued and every individual prospers and contributes to the Navy's mission. The Diversity Directorate answers directly to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). It began as a centralized operation but is now transitioning into a decentralized framework. Decentralization in this context should not be taken as contradicting the engagement of senior leadership; here it serves as a mechanism to ensure that the principles of the Diversity Directorate reach and are practiced by the entire force. In other words, leaders at all levels are responsible for diversity. In a large organization with as

global a presence as military organizations, decentralization should take place as soon as practical after the establishment of the Diversity Directorate or office. The Navy is currently drafting a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) document that will outline education and training requirements regarding the diversity of the force.

The Navy defines diversity as all of the different characteristics and attributes of individual sailors and civilians, which enhance the mission readiness of the Navy. With its approach to diversity, the goals of the Navy are to increase mission readiness through measured and communicated improvements in the quality of its recruits, growth and development processes, and organizational climate, and to increase retention rates of the highest quality personnel. It is drafting a Human Capital Strategy designed to improve diversity in officer accessions, development, promotions, assignments, and retention. Diversity is number one among the six focus areas in the commander's overall strategy.

## Government Agencies

One government agency that is at the forefront of managing diversity is the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH uses a top-down strategy with a vision of diversity that includes building an inclusive workforce, fostering an environ-

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., chapter 2.

<sup>50</sup> Admiral Michael T. Mullin, Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy, Annual National Naval Officers Association, August 12, 2005, Riverside Hilton, New Orleans, Louisiana.

ment that respects the individual, and offering an opportunity for each person to develop to his or her full potential. Included in NIH's vision is an all-inclusive definition of diversity that extends beyond race and gender. In addition to the more common examples of age, geographic location, and personality, this definition encompasses differences in pay classifications, personnel systems, and tenure issues. In 2003, NIH Director Elias A. Zerhouni received a CEO Leadership Award from Diversity Best Practices in recognition of the agency's efforts to ensure workforce diversity.<sup>51</sup>

### **Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning to address workforce diversity focuses on creating measurable ways in which diversity can support the strategic direction, goals, and objectives of organizations.<sup>52</sup> One example is an all-encompassing Balanced Workforce Strategy (BWF), which includes the tracking of employee populations and the establishment of long-term goals and annual targets. The BWF makes managers accountable for upward mobility and, when layoffs occur, ensures that members of one group are not disproportionately affected compared to other groups.

### **Public and Private Organizations and Companies**

- One corporate leader uses six strategic business planks. The planks are as follows: baseline growth, incremental growth, product quality, distributor service, productivity gains, and people. The "People Plank" involves continuously improving the business by engaging and developing employees.
- Another corporation's operating management and human resources department developed a five-year diversity plan. This plan includes a monitoring system to measure diversity representation at all levels. This monitoring system is designed to (1) ensure a balanced workforce, and (2) strengthen the organization's ability to attract, hire, retain, and develop the most highly qualified employees.<sup>54</sup>

**When aligned with organizational objectives, diversity can be a powerful contributor to the organization's competitive advantage.**

— Dr. Edward E. Hubbard<sup>53</sup>

### **U.S. Navy**

The Navy is selected as an example of strong strategic planning because of its exemplary efforts regarding this success factor. The Navy is implementing its strategic diversity plan in four areas: Recruiting, Growth and Development, Organizational Alignment, and Communication. These four areas are known as the Diversity Implementation Pillars. An example of the Navy's successful strategic planning is its diversity communications plan, which seeks to educate senior leadership about the organization's efforts regarding diversity. As the result, the leadership is able to guide the overall diversity effort. (There is overlap among success factors; in this case, leadership commitment grows out of strategic planning.) The communications plan will also help to increase visibility of the Navy's commitment to diversity, both internally among sailors and externally among members of the public.

<sup>51</sup> See <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/oct2003/od-15.htm>.

<sup>52</sup> Edward E. Hubbard, *Measuring Diversity Results* (Petaluma, CA: Global Insights Publishing, 1997), chapter 7, quoted in U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., chapter 3.

In addition, within its Recruit Command, the Navy has increased diversity applications/quality goals. The numbers of promotions for minorities and females are improving and organizational climate assessments continue to improve. Female retention does remain a challenge, however. On an individual basis, each Navy community is assessing diversity plans within the scope of its Human Capital Strategy.

## **Government Agencies**

The National Institutes of Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is highlighted again because its strategic planning produces the results that, in my view, the U.S. Army would expect. NIH staff developed the Workplace Diversity Initiative (WDI), a long-term strategy to manage the differences and similarities of its employees in order to promote productivity, quality, and fairness in the workplace.<sup>55</sup> The initiative assists managers in learning how to capitalize on diversity and increase employee morale through a culture of respect. The WDI includes internships for minority students interested in a career in biomedical research, including a scholarship program for talented undergraduate students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some of the measurable benefits of this strategy are:

- Multiple options for addressing issues linked to workplace diversity;
- Fewer complaints and grievances; and
- Multiple perspectives on problem solving.

## **Accountability, Assessment, and Evaluation**

It is widely believed that accountability is critical to the success of any diversity initiative. Accountability is achieved when leaders are made responsible for diversity through the linking of performance evaluation elements and compensation to the successful implementation and progress of initiatives.<sup>56</sup>

## **Public and Private Organizations and Companies**

- One CEO ensures managerial accountability by reducing the operating budget of a business unit by \$1000 for each manager and \$500 for each employee who fails to attend scheduled diversity training without providing 48 hours prior notice.
- Another corporate leader includes the ability to manage a diverse group of employees as a measurement for evaluating management performance. This evaluative component is called “Consequence Management” and is based on the view that poor diversity management adversely affects a manager’s ability to manage.

Many representatives of organizations agreed that a successful diversity program could not exist without the periodic assessment and evaluation of the status and accomplishments of the diversity program.

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<sup>55</sup> See <http://oeo.od.nih.gov/diversitymgmt/index.html> for more information about the WDI.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., chapter 3.

- The diversity measures for many of the companies cited for best practices include the following: employee attrition rates, workforce satisfaction, market share within new customer bases, external awards and recognition for diversity efforts, and workplace climate satisfaction.
- One CEO regularly meets with each department head to discuss “promotability” of current employees and what is being done throughout the organization to develop the talent of the organization’s employees overall.<sup>57</sup>

## **U.S. Navy**

The Navy provides a useful example with regard to this success factor because it uses a system of assessment and evaluation focused on councils established at the senior levels. The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) provides guidance on diversity goals and objectives, which are reviewed on a quarterly basis. The Navy also has established two Diversity Councils. One of the councils, the Diversity Senior Advisory Group, provides the Navy with information on trends, best practices, and issues concerning diversity. It consists of active and retired flag officers and civilians with a vested interest. Included among the civilians who sit on this council are subject matter experts in the field of diversity, such as the president and co-founder of *Diversity Inc.* magazine. The council is chaired by the Vice Chief of Naval Operations.

The second council is the CNO Fleet Diversity Council – Employee/ Fleet Feedback. This council is chartered to serve as a forum for providing feedback and recommendations to the CNO and senior Navy leadership on past, current, and future diversity initiatives. The Navy also uses a series of surveys to gain feedback. A Navy Officer Survey was conducted in May 2004 to assess diversity in the Navy, using direct and indirect measures. In March 2005, a first-ever Diversity Quick Poll (survey) was conducted to determine sailors’ perceptions of diversity in the Navy. Command-level feedback is an ongoing process; surveys and forums will continue to be conducted in order to keep a log of feedback.

## **U.S. Air Force**

The Air Force is cited in the area of assessment and evaluation because of its efforts to utilize metrics. The metrics allow the Air Force to gauge their status in the areas of recruitment, retention, and development of officer pipelines. By measuring results in these areas, the organization ensures accountability. The Air Force is currently engaged in research to better understand how the various aspects of diversity affect mission readiness and capability in order to maximize its competitive edge.

## **Government Agencies**

The National Institutes of Health is cited once more because of its focus on the level of individual manager. Accountability at NIH is achieved through each manager’s Performance Plan, which outlines his/her objectives, including those pertaining to diversity initiatives. By including diversity in the

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<sup>57</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., chapter 3.



manager's performance plan, NIH ensures that meeting these objectives becomes just as important as any other measurable objective upon which managers are evaluated. Other components of evaluation, such as recognizing specific employees for the Champion of Diversity Award, also contribute to efforts to ensure accountability.

### **Employee Involvement**

Employee involvement and feedback are both necessary for achieving three core goals: an environment of lifetime learning, a strong workforce, and employee satisfaction (described below). In many instances, employee involvement and feedback are instituted with the establishment of employee groups (affinity groups), although involvement may take different forms, names, and structures. Common types include diversity councils, task teams, focus groups, affinity councils, issue study groups, and networking groups. These groups provide a forum to both articulate and understand the varied needs and interests of employees.

### **Public and Private Organizations and Companies**

In terms of employee involvement, all of the companies and organizations had common practices and goals. Three core organizational goals are of particular interest to this paper:

1. Maintaining an environment of lifetime learning;
  2. Retaining a world class workforce; and
  3. Maximizing workplace satisfaction for all employees.
- At one organization, the CEO conducts roundtable sessions with randomly selected employees. This method guards against filtering of information about what is actually happening at the ground level.
  - Another CEO organized a diversity summit with managers and employees from all levels and geographic regions. The summit increased awareness of diversity and enabled the sharing of organizational best practices. The purpose of the summit was to assess the status of diversity within the organization by holding constructive dialogue sessions during which participants could speak openly and honestly about differences in a non-attributive atmosphere.<sup>58</sup>

### **Mentoring Employees**

### **Public and Private Organizations and Companies**

Most of the organizations in the benchmarking study have a formal mentoring program. Mentors serve two purposes: 1) to assimilate new employees into the organizational culture; and 2) to accept protégées and introduce them to new and more challenging aspects of the organization.

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<sup>58</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Partnership for Reinventing Government n.d., chapter 4.

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- One organization worked with a local academic institution to develop a scholars program to attract outstanding undergraduate students and recognize academic excellence among students from diverse backgrounds.
  - The mentoring process in another corporate organization involves tracking, monitoring, and mentoring candidates from underrepresented groups positioned for senior assignments. Participants are expected to maximize their promotional potential within the company by capitalizing on their training.



## VI. ACHIEVING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY IN THE U.S. ARMY

**It is not enough to identify differences; there must be a willingness to make our diversity our strength.**

— *Lieutenant General F. L. Hagenbeck, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, U.S. Army*<sup>59</sup>

With this overview of best practices used by companies, organizations, government agencies, and the U.S. Navy and Air Force, we now turn to an examination of the Army's practices regarding the five success factors identified earlier. Given that the Army Diversity Office was established less than a year ago, a strict comparison between the Army and the companies and organizations discussed above is the wrong approach. A more useful approach is to: 1) analyze the steps that the Army has taken and the efforts it is currently undertaking to improve diversity, and 2) identify areas for potential improvement. The concluding section of this paper brings into focus all of the recommendations made throughout this paper, dividing them into short- and long-term strategies.

### **Leadership Commitment**

On October 28, 2004, the recommendation from the Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement to establish the Army Diversity Office (ADO) was approved, with an official operating date scheduled for June 1, 2005. On January 26, 2006, the Army leadership (Secretary of the Army, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Command Sergeant Major of the Army) signed and published a joint statement on Army workforce diversity. In essence, the document commits the Army to a Diversity Vision, which affirms that "Each member of the Army workforce is valued and able to achieve his/her full potential while executing the Army's mission."<sup>60</sup> The statement emphasizes the importance of capitalizing on the diverse contributions of the Army workforce by requiring leaders to build inclusive teams at every level of the organization.

It is clear from the statement that the senior leaders support the establishment of inclusive teams at all levels of the Army. However, the success of the program is contingent upon leadership commitment to the Army's diversity principles, which have not been established as of this writing. While it is too early to judge the success of the program, the message on workforce diversity conveyed by the Army's senior leadership is an important first step. If we use the Navy's example as a measure for this success factor, such engagement of the Army's senior leadership should be ongoing.

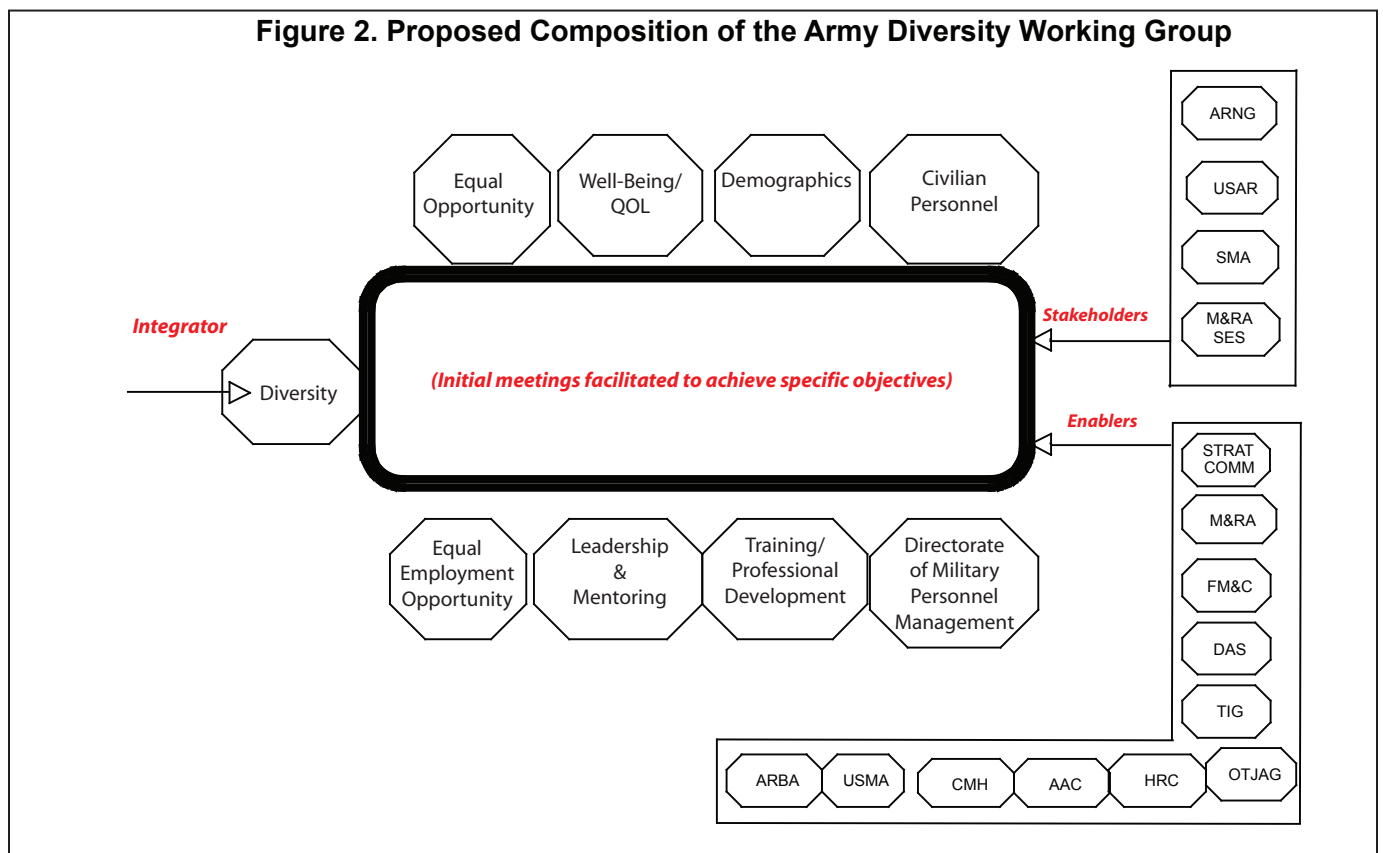
### **Strategic Planning**

The Army's strategic plan to achieve diversity within a workforce of over 1.5 million individuals is currently under development. In the interim, it is critical for the leadership at all levels of the Army to articulate and take action on diversity best practices, once they are published by the Army Diversity Working Group (see below).

<sup>59</sup> Colonel Robert H. Woods, "Army Diversity Office," briefing (January 28, 2005), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Department of the Army, "Army Workforce Diversity," memorandum (January 26, 2006).

The General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) of the Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement concluded that the Army Diversity Office had to be institutionalized in order to establish and maintain appropriate visibility.<sup>61</sup> The GOSC also determined that the ADO should be supported by a comprehensive action plan that extends to 2007. The ADO would also provide progress reports of its activities on a routine basis. The final directive from the GOSC called for metrics to be established to assess the Army's diversity program. On November 15, 2005, the ADO requested approval to establish an Army Diversity Working Group (ADWG) and resources for interim manning of the ADO. Figure 2 shows the proposed composition of the Army Diversity Working Group. Each of the offices shown in the diagram would be represented at working group meetings. In addition to the nine offices at the center of the diagram, the enablers and stakeholders represent full participants in the ADWG; stakeholders represent all components of the Army, while enablers use their subject matter expertise to ensure that diversity practices are efficient and look beyond demographics. The proposed composition was accepted and the ADWG was established on March 23, 2006.



**Stakeholders:** ARNG – Army National Guard; USAR – U.S. Army Reserve; SMA – Sergeant Major of the Army; M&RA SES – Manpower and Reserve Affairs Senior Executive

**Enablers:** STRAT COMM – Strategic Communications; M&RA – Manpower & Reserve Affairs; FM&C – Financial Management and Comptroller; DAS – Director of the Army Staff; TIG – The Inspector General; OTJAG – Office of the Judge Advocate General; HRC – Human Resources Command; AAC – Army Acquisition Corps; CMH – Center for Military History; USMA – U.S. Military Academy; ARBA – Army Review Boards Agency.

<sup>61</sup> Woods 2005, 8.

According to a briefing given by Lieutenant Colonel Tracy Smith, Chief of the Army Diversity Office, the strategic plan for overall Army Workforce Diversity will encompass the following goals: (1) leverage diverse experiences, knowledge, skills, aptitudes, attitudes, problem-solving capabilities, and effective teamwork to meet the challenges of today and the future; (2) capture performance progress and/or value-added through qualitative and quantitative performance measures; (3) clearly link diversity efforts to tangible results; and (4) access a workforce that mirrors America.<sup>62</sup>

### **Accountability, Assessment, and Evaluation**

The Army's senior leadership has taken the first step toward ensuring accountability in its diversity efforts by jointly signing the Army workforce diversity statement described above. The establishment of the ADWG also indicates movement in the right direction. According to Lieutenant Colonel Smith, the working group will support the assessment and evaluation process with formal updates to the senior leadership of the Army.<sup>63</sup> However, as stated above, we must immediately look at qualitative and quantitative performance measures and clearly link diversity efforts to tangible results. Only then will the ADWG be able to follow up with assessment and evaluation.

### **Employee Involvement**

The three core organizational goals outlined earlier—maintaining an environment of lifetime learning, retaining a world class workforce, and maximizing workplace satisfaction for all employees—could be as valuable to the Army as they are to private companies. As noted above, employee involvement is critical to achieving these goals. The Army's efforts are perhaps the strongest with regard to the first goal—an environment of lifetime learning. The Army has an established environment focused on a lifetime of learning for both military and civilian personnel. For example, the Army has continuous education programs (both job related and personal) for all personnel.

In terms of retention rates and workplace satisfaction, however, the Army needs to draw upon best practices for employee involvement identified earlier in order to improve in these areas. Data collected from October 2002 to June 2003 indicate that the Army was at 106 percent of its target goal for retaining *enlisted* soldiers. However, data on retention rates for *officers* show that the Army is experiencing an officer retention problem from the rank of captain to the rank of colonel. Many factors, including continuous and long deployments resulting in time away from home and family, play a key role in these retention rates, as well as in issues concerning workplace satisfaction.

As described earlier, one CEO organized a diversity summit to increase awareness and enable the sharing of best practices. This could prove a useful example for the Army to follow in order to enhance employee involvement. To date, the Army has not conducted such a summit, although the ADO is participating in a diversity summit at the level of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), scheduled for September 2006. The Army should take a further step in the right direction by hosting its own diversity summit. Feedback forums and focus/affinity groups would also prove useful. It should be noted that, due to current perceptions within the Army of the overuse of surveys, it is perhaps advisable to avoid heavy use of this employee involvement tool, at least at the present time.

<sup>62</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Tracy Smith, "Army Workforce Diversity Mission Area: Overview for the Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel," February 10, 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Tracy Smith (Chief of the Army Diversity Office), interview by author, December 17, 2005.

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## **Mentoring Employees**

On July 14, 2005, the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Mentorship Community was established. This website includes over 125 tailored mentorship forums and a self-administered, searchable mentorship profile server. As of August 16, 2005, data showed 351 registered users and 145 profiles entered. This system is available to active component/reserve component soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, retirees, veterans, disabled soldiers/veterans, family members, cadets, and contractors. It is a voluntary but structured initiative, with a focus on mentorship beyond the chain of command. It re-emphasizes Army-wide mentorship as opposed to a strategic campaign plan (i.e., mentoring programs that are executed on a level-by-level basis). The website also provides online resources, guidance, tools, and references. While the development of the mentorship community required extensive planning and effort, it appears that, without mandatory participation, the results will be marginal at best.

## CONCLUSION

The U.S. Army took a significant step toward achieving greater diversity when it formed the Commission on Officer Diversity and Advancement and established the Army Diversity Office. In the joint statement on Army workforce diversity signed by the Army leadership, the final paragraph reads as follows:

We expect unwavering commitment to the Vision. The Institutional Army will become stronger and even more effective over time by capitalizing on the diverse contributions of our workforce. Our leaders must build inclusive teams at every level of the organization. The Army's success is contingent upon leader commitment to Army Diversity principles.<sup>64</sup>

These words are invaluable to the Army as an expression of its commitment to achieving greater diversity. However, it is crucial that we take specific actions in the near term and in the long term in order to make the commitment expressed in this document a reality. This concluding section focuses on what steps need to be taken from here. Long-term strategies are distinguished from near-term strategies only insofar as they may take longer to produce desired results. Both near- and long-term strategies may be considered for immediate implementation.

### **Near-Term Strategies**

The Army must first establish a baseline for diversity, which will allow the organization to measure progress in the upcoming years. It is important to think of this baseline in terms of goals as opposed to quotas. The use of quotas should be avoided because of the adverse impact it could have on the organization (e.g., reverse discrimination). The Balanced Workforce Strategy mentioned earlier is a good example of this goal-oriented approach. The Army should look to the ADWG as a resource for developing this baseline.

The next step is to boost the number of black males recruited by the ROTC and accessed into the Army. In the near term, the recommendations made by CODA (described earlier) serve as a good starting point in this area. We may also look to the U.S. Navy for examples of ways to improve black accession rates. In recruitment and accessions, the Navy has increased its budget for implementing strategies designed to increase diversity. The Navy has established a Navy Office of Community Outreach (NAVCO), which is already coordinating activities with the NAACP and HENAAC (the Hispanic Engineers National Achievement Awards Corporation). A Diversity "Recruiters of the Year" award has been established. The Navy has increased enlisted diversity recruit quality five years in a row and quarterly updates on the diversity of officer recruitment are provided to the leadership. In addition, the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) has established a Minority Outreach Coordinator.

Numbers alone will not stand the test of time, however. In addition to boosting the number of black officers recruited by commissioning sources and accessed into the Army, the Army must take action to

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<sup>64</sup> Department of the Army, "Army Workforce Diversity," memorandum (January 26, 2006).

ensure the quality of officers. This is critical to increasing the number of black officers at the field grade and senior officer level, as only the best qualified will endure normal attrition and the many obstacles and hurdles that exist in the career path of an officer. To that end, recommendations for ensuring that black officers receive a thorough education and opportunities for advancement have been mentioned earlier (e.g., instructor quality and diversity). Additional recommendations are offered below and in the section on long-term strategies.

An important action for the Army to take is to increase black officer representation in the high-profile career-enhancing jobs (e.g., line unit commander, operations officer, executive officer, aide-de-camps, etc). Leaders must ensure that opportunities to work in these career-enhancing positions exist for black officers as these jobs become available. This leadership responsibility is important because it addresses a situation in which many black officers find themselves. For example, a field artillery battalion commander might say to an officer, "I would like to give you a firing battery command, but you are better suited for a Service or Headquarters battery because you never served in a firing battery as a lieutenant." Such reasoning was pretty common in artillery battalions during the late 1980s and still makes sense today. However, if an officer does not get one of the critical firing battery positions as a lieutenant and then misses the opportunity to command a firing battery as a captain, his career is set on a path that almost guarantees that he will not command an artillery battalion as a lieutenant colonel. Placement on such a career path could easily be the difference between a career in the Army and short-term service in the Army, followed by separation. For most combat arms officers who serve in the operational career field, battalion command marks the culmination of a successful twenty-year career or places the officer in a competitive position to continue his career on active duty.

Mentoring plays a vital role in the effort to help more black officers attain career-enhancing jobs. The guidance of a mentor is important to ensuring that officers stay focused on pursuing the critical and challenging jobs. While doing well on any assignment is important, a strong performance in a job that is understood to be challenging and critical sets an officer apart and distinguishes him/her as potential material for service in the senior ranks. In many cases, if an officer fails to receive this kind of mentoring early in his/her career, that officer strives for a job where success is more easily attained, rather than a demanding and career-enhancing job that could lead to greater responsibility in the future and clear opportunities for promotion.

As discussed in the previous section of this paper, the Army is making an effort to provide mentorship in some capacity. However, it is my belief that a formal mentorship program is required. Senior officers should be required to have protégées and young officers should be expected to seek out senior officers as mentors. The optimum scenario would be for each officer to have multiple mentors from different cultural backgrounds over the course of his/her career. This would allow officers to gain a wealth of knowledge from the diverse experiences and cultural perspectives of their mentors.

A final important near-term strategy is wider dissemination of the message that diversity is a critical component of a strong military force. A strategic communications plan is required to focus the U.S. Army—and those it is trying to reach—on the importance of this message. In the near term, leaders at all levels of the Army, especially at the top, must begin weaving in the message about diversity at every opportunity—in speeches, during public appearances, and at meetings and conferences. Our Army Values and Warrior Ethos are a part of almost every speech given by the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and the Command Sergeant Major of the Army—and so they should be.



Likewise, if we truly believe that the value of workforce diversity can be best achieved by removing any identified obstacles or bias in the Army, the workplace, or organizational practices that may compromise diversity, then our soldiers need to hear that message on a constant basis from leaders at all levels of the Army.

### **Long-Term Strategies**

Long-term strategies for achieving greater diversity in the Army encompass several actions. One critical action that the Army should take is to engage the community as part of a long-term strategy to boost the number of blacks recruited by commissioning sources. Family members, religious leaders, and local politicians can all play an influential role in supporting recruitment efforts. First, however, the Army must reach out to these communities. Our ROTC units are doing an outstanding job, but they cannot do it alone. We as an Army must return to our communities and take the lead in teaching and reinforcing the historical contributions of blacks in the military. We do an admirable job during Black History Month, but current circumstances call for an ongoing process of raising awareness.

Second, the Army must require commissioning sources to establish a system that ensures that black cadets receive training that reflects the evaluation tools used to determine the Order of Merit List. This will guarantee these cadets the opportunity to finish in the top third of the OML, which is important to their chances for selection for the combat arms. In 2004 and 2005, 70 percent and 75 percent (respectively) of all black cadets finished in the bottom half of the national OML. In addition, during those two years, over 50 percent of all black cadets were in the bottom third of the active duty OML.

It is also important to engage in long-term strategies to improve the number of black males who select the combat arms as their branch choice in the selection process. It will take more than a marketing strategy to effect change in this area. For example, to encourage more black cadets to select the combat arms, the Army also must make an effort to move more combat arms instructors into ROTC classrooms. An ROTC instructor with experience outside of one of the combat arms branches may find it difficult to convince a cadet that he should choose a combat arms branch. This change will probably take a number of years to establish due to the need to have the majority of those officers engaged in the war effort.

While this paper has focused in part on increasing the number of black officers in the combat arms specifically, transformation efforts currently taking place within the Army will move the focus toward an officer's overall expertise, quality, and versatility, rather than tying efforts to any one branch. As General Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army, said, "We will not be effective and relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century unless we become much more agile but with the capacity for a long-term, sustained level of conflict. Being relevant means having a campaign-quality Army with joint expeditionary capability. It must be an Army not trained for a single event like a track athlete, but talented across a broad spectrum like a decathlete."<sup>65</sup> Based upon my analysis of current promotion trends, I maintain that increasing the number of black officers accessed into the combat arms is a critical component of achieving a diverse—and therefore "effective and relevant"—Army. This goal, however, is not mutually exclusive with the direction that the Army is taking regarding the development of versatile officers. In fact, General Schoomaker's statement underlines one of this paper's central arguments: it is not merely a matter of building up the number of black officers, but rather of increasing the pool of *high quality* black officers.

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<sup>64</sup> Tom Philpott, "The Army's Challenge," edited interview with Gen. Peter Schoomaker, *Military Officer* (The Military Officer Association of America, November 2004), 1.

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The Army's current efforts to endow Army officers with multiple capabilities should be seen as complementary to the diversity strategies presented in this paper. In addition, an ongoing effort is needed to monitor promotion trends so that officers are not pushed into specialties that, over time, might cease to represent a predominant pipeline to the senior ranks.

A final necessary long-term strategy concerns retention rates. The Army must focus its retention efforts so that it establishes a talent pool of quality black officers and a healthy pipeline to the senior ranks. At the same time, the Army must prove itself capable of competing with a civilian sector that has successfully recruited workers from the Army's ranks. To be competitive, the Army must enhance its attractiveness in areas such as salary and quality of life. In addition, the Army must communicate the advantages of a career in the Army, including the value of military experience.

We all have biases and prejudices that can hinder our ability to capitalize on the differences and similarities that individuals or groups bring to the organization. For that reason, it will always be necessary for the Army Diversity Office to look at issues, new or old, that may undermine the long-term strength of the Army. This paper has attempted to highlight some of the current ongoing issues pertaining to diversity—specifically, black underrepresentation in the senior ranks, and more broadly, diversity of the workforce—that the Army must address in order to ensure its success as an organization.

It has been an honor to conduct the first research study since the U.S. Army senior leadership announced the establishment of the Army Diversity Office and the Army Workforce Diversity Vision. If leveraged properly, our workforce diversity program will enhance mission accomplishment while allowing each individual to achieve his or her full potential. It is my hope and belief that, once institutionalized, efforts to further the Army's commitment to diversity, such as those articulated in this paper, will benefit all U.S. Army personnel, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, or any other dimension of diversity.