

## ARMY NATIONAL GUARD: EMBRACE DIVERSITY AT ALL RANKS

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**ARMY NATIONAL GUARD: EMBRACE DIVERSITY AT ALL RANKS**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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An Army policy memorandum on diversity was signed by the Army Chief of Staff in April, 2009, calling for the Army to be the “national leader in embracing the strengths of diverse people in an inclusive environment.” The Army National Guard is successful in recruiting minority groups and females into their ranks as well as promoting the importance of diversity, but experiences difficulty retaining them. Statistics indicate that very few women and minorities are holding senior leadership positions, mainly because many leave the service before reaching 20 years. This research paper will assess Army National Guard minority and female retention rates over the past ten years; examine factors associated with minorities leaving the service before retirement; and provide recommendations for the Army National Guard with respect to the promotion and retention of minority and female Soldiers.



## ARMY NATIONAL GUARD: EMBRACE DIVERSITY AT ALL RANKS

If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

—Margaret Mead

Females and minorities have served our nation with distinction over the lifespan of our country, dating back to before the Revolutionary War and up to our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Statistics such as 216,000 African Americans serving in the Union Army and Navy during the Civil War; more than 10,000 Native Americans and 33,000 women serving during World War I; and over 120,000 Asians and 500,000 Latinos serving during World War II<sup>1</sup> further underscore this fact. Recognizing the impact minorities and females had on the effectiveness of the military, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 that enabled desegregation of the armed forces. Four decades later in 1991, congress allowed women to serve in certain combat positions (less infantry and armor branches) repealing the combat exclusion law. These watershed acts further demonstrate the degree of importance the military has placed on enabling and embracing diversity. Although the U.S. military continues to lead the way in promoting and stressing the importance of diversity through various means, the retention of women and minorities, and the associated low percentage serving in senior leadership positions and being promoted to higher ranks, is a concern.

Several publications pertaining to diversity have been circulated in recent years. The Fiscal Year 2009 National Defense Authorization Act authorized the establishment of the Department of Defense Military Leadership Diversity Commission. The publishing

of the Army Command Policy, Army Regulation 600-20, along with the establishment of the Army Diversity Office in 2006 are just a few other examples that display the importance of diversity to the military. In April 2009, an Army policy memorandum specific to diversity was signed by the Army Chief of Staff calling for the Army to be the “national leader in embracing the strengths of diverse people in an inclusive environment.”<sup>2</sup> This policy stresses the importance of educating the force on what diversity is, as well as understanding the impact of diversity, in order to better interact with other cultures and operate more effectively in complex and uncertain environments in which we serve. In accordance with the policy and in order to achieve this vision, the Army must “invest in and manage talent, value individuals, and develop culturally astute Soldiers.”<sup>3</sup> Although this policy memorandum is significant in that it addresses a crucial issue, it is broad and sometimes vague, lacks detail, and fails to articulate a realistic and satisfactory way ahead.

The Army National Guard continues to achieve success in recruiting minority groups and females and promoting the importance of diversity, however, only a small percentage of these minorities and females are promoted to the ranks beyond staff sergeant or captain. This lack of diversity at senior levels inhibits the inclusion of the broad perspectives and different points of view that are greatly needed, particularly as the National Guard expands its mission set. The Army loses credibility if it calls on Soldiers to “embrace the strength of diverse people”, when the institution’s leadership ranks are dominated by white males. The detriment of this imbalance is a demographic of leaders that are out of touch with the institution’s diverse population.

Sixty-two years after President Truman signed Executive Order 9981, diversity continues to remain a challenge for the U.S. military, specifically for women and minorities at senior ranks. This paper addresses the problem in the near and long term, and identifies possible solutions to a problem with strategic implications for the Army National Guard.

### Background

The Army defines diversity as “the different attributes, experiences, and backgrounds of our Soldiers, Civilians, and Family Members that further enhance our global capabilities and contribute to an adaptive, culturally astute Army.”<sup>4</sup> Fittingly, the Army has devoted time and resources promoting diversity by developing an informative and inter-active web site for all service members, active duty and reserve component. The Army also stresses mentorship at all levels, has conducted studies, provided issue papers and reports on various subjects of diversity. Examples include command selection outcomes, career development resources, women in combat, mentoring programs and relationships, recruitment and retention at the military service academies. The Rand Corporation and the Military Leadership Diversity Commission have also conducted countless studies on diversity for the Department of Defense (DoD) and many of those studies substantiated the lack of racial/ethnic groups and women representation in senior ranks. Fortunately, these organizations continue to conduct research, studies, surveys, interviews and focus groups in an effort to improve these disparities and recommend policy changes in order to provide additional opportunities for promoting the advancement of females and minorities.

## Underrepresentation of Women and Minorities

The following statistics indicate the current status of male and female minorities in the Army National Guard as they apply to all ranks for both enlisted and officers. The 'other' category represents those individuals who are not identified with a particular race. This information is based on Army National Guard data as of October 1, 2010, and compares fiscal years 2000 and 2010.<sup>5</sup>

<b>MALE SOLDIERS (enlisted and officer), October 2000.</b>						
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Am Indian</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>White</b>
E4 and below	1178	2432	24471	12376	2699	109905
E5-E7	788	1173	17330	8071	1706	88008
E8-E9	39	78	698	461	72	7713
<i>Enl Pct Chg</i>	97%	97%	97%	96%	97%	93%
O1-O3	73	280	1303	782	210	13663
O4-O6	24	108	516	399	78	9048
O7-O8		1	7	3	2	149
<i>Off Pct Chg</i>	77%	61%	60%	49%	63%	34%

Figure 1:

<b>MALE SOLDIERS (enlisted and officer), October 2010.</b>						
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Am Indian</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>White</b>
E4 and below	1215	3580	18311	13278	1667	112895
E5-E7	737	2022	13795	8584	2267	86070
E8-E9	40	86	882	552	147	7351
<i>Enl Pct Chg</i>	97%	98%	95%	96%	91%	93%
O1-O3	89	618	1377	961	522	15455
O4-O6	37	153	601	462	138	9143
O7-O8		2	15	9	2	180
<i>Off Pct Chg</i>	58%	75%	56%	52%	73%	40%

Figure: 2

<b>FEMALE SOLDIERS (enlisted and officer), October 2000.</b>						
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Am Indian</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>White</b>
E4 and below	296	436	7281	1626	422	15565
E5-E7	111	127	2915	615	191	6406
E8-E9	3	2	68	26	5	354
<i>Enl Pct chg</i>	99%	99%	98%	98%	99%	97%
O1-O3	13	40	314	119	26	1335
O4-06	3	17	141	50	12	942
O7-08						1
<i>Off Pct chg</i>	77%	65%	55%	58%	54%	29%

Figure 3:

<b>FEMALE SOLDIERS (enlisted and officer), October 2010.</b>						
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Am Indian</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>White</b>
E4 and below	331	777	7532	2813	431	18254
E5-E7	177	391	3694	1295	349	9447
E8-E9	6	16	213	65	21	555
<i>Enl Pct chg</i>	98%	98%	97%	98%	95%	97%
O1-O3	24	117	555	199	135	2117
O4-06	6	35	198	85	16	930
O7-08			1			12
<i>Off Pct chg</i>	75%	70%	64%	57%	88%	56%

Figure 4

The data illustrates that there is very little change in the representation of females and minorities between the years 2000 and 2010. This is reflective throughout the full ten years of data obtained. Reference the “percentage change” row indicated in each table, a lower percentage number is better, indicating that the identified race has a healthier retention rate. The percentage change for officers only reflects the comparison between the ranks of O4-O6 (major to colonel) and O1-O3 (second lieutenant to captain), since some races lacked representation at the general officer levels (O7-O8).

The figures continue to identify the under-representation of females and minorities among the senior enlisted and officer ranks.

With respect to the results of male enlisted and officer tables, in 2000, Hispanics held the best retention rate in both enlisted and officer ranks, but the numbers indicate that Blacks were most represented among both demographics. In 2010, Blacks held a better retention rate for enlisted Soldiers than other racial groups and Hispanics held a better retention rate for officers. In 2000, Native Americans stood out as having the worst retention rate for officers and a notable difference is indicated in fiscal year 2010 as Asians held the worse retention rate for both enlisted and officers. Blacks were the most represented racial group in both fiscal years for enlisted and officer ranks.

With regard to female enlisted and officer ranks, in 2000, Blacks and Hispanics held the best retention rate for enlisted Soldiers, and Blacks held the best retention rate for officers. Blacks held the largest representation among all minorities in both ranks. In 2010, Blacks held the best retention rate for enlisted Soldiers, while Hispanics held the best retention rate for officers. In both fiscal years, Native Americans had the worst retention rate in the officer and enlisted ranks and the worst overall representation. Similar to the male category above, Blacks were most represented in both fiscal years for the enlisted and officer ranks.

The data illustrates there is a drastic decline in women and minorities as they rise in rank. One may surmise it is due to lack of positions because females are precluded from serving in combat arms positions, thereby reducing the amount of slots females can serve. According to the 2010 draft report submitted by the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), career advancement opportunities are limiting women

based on not allowing them to serve in combat positions.<sup>6</sup> One can counter that argument with the fact that many positions have opened up for females in the past 20 years. In the early 1990s, the secretary of defense announced new rules and policies that opened more military jobs for women. For example, women can now fly combat aircraft and serve on combat ships. However, it is evident that it still isn't enough.

Why, then, are female retention rates so low? An array of both complex and simple assumptions emerge in an attempt to explain why women leave the military early. Some reports suggest potential causes for leaving are due to the difficulty of balancing family life with their military career, sexual assault and/or harassment, along with minimal opportunities for career advancement. However, I have not found clear and dominant set of data that explains the true cause. Most Army National Guard units do not conduct exit interviews with departing females, therefore accurate reasons have not been confirmed. The National Guard must conduct more in-depth studies and analysis in order to determine why women elect to terminate their service in order to improve female retention rates. It is also important to survey non ethnic or minority Soldiers to determine why they elect to remain in the National Guard, as this will enhance the Guard's efforts in retaining all minority groups.

Similarly, the reasons for ethnic people leaving the military can only be assumed. Superficial and perceived racism may exist in some parts of the military today, however, in accordance with policy and regulation, minorities are not restricted from holding specific jobs nor from promotion, and equality among all people has vastly improved. Institutional strategies have been enacted to combat racism and conceptually racism is

a learned behavior based on social upbringing that can only change as more diverse groups interact with each other.

The MLDC's latest draft report found a gap in retention rates between Reserve Component men and women, indicating women were leaving the military at a higher rate than their male counterpart. While examining this data further, they found that "there were gender differences in satisfaction with military life, organizational commitment, and retention intentions."<sup>7</sup> After further exploration, none of the data collected pointed to one particular reason that could explain why females were leaving. Because of this, they recommend that the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services focus on retention to identify an explanation for this gap.

Upon examination of promotion statistics covering the previous ten years between minorities and gender<sup>8</sup>, it was determined that on average female minorities had a slightly higher promotion rate than male minorities. Upon examining the pass-over rates between genders, females were passed over for promotion on average at a higher rate than males. This conflicting data confirms that further research must be conducted in order to identify specific causes of the low retention rate of females and minorities.

In light of this analysis, there is considerable concern that minority enlisted Soldiers and officers are progressing at a slower rate in certain competitive positions such as battalion and above command and staff positions in comparison to their white counterparts. Job assignments are a critical factor in determining promotion possibilities. Mentorship is important in influencing this dynamic, particularly with officers. Before a cadet decides his or her branch, a mentor can play a key role in this person's career. Research has identified a correlation between mentorship and

promotion rates. Those individuals who are mentored have a higher salary level, promotion rate, and job satisfaction<sup>9</sup>.

It is important to mentor an individual at their earliest point in their career. In the Army National Guard, choosing a branch can make or break an officer's advancement in promotion potential. For example, a cadet receives briefings and becomes familiar with the specifics of each branch in the U.S. Army. They may be attracted to a particular branch where competition is extremely high and promotion opportunities beyond the rank of major are unlikely. A mentor would be able to inform, support and guide this individual along the best path in order to provide the greatest opportunities for advancement.

In the study *African American Officers' Role in the Army's Future*<sup>10</sup>, Colonel Carrie Kendrick asserts that most people generally seek out mentors who are 'like' them, however, as minority Soldiers and officers advance in rank, these desired mentors are few and far between. As a result, minorities and women that do reach senior levels, have a tendency to feel as if they need to "prove themselves to others", and possess an increased degree of pressure to be positive role models for other minority officers. In this role they do not want to fail and this phenomenon increases in intensity as they advance further in rank causing undue stress on the officer. Although this author opines about African Americans, her assertions are applicable across the broad spectrum of minority officers.

#### Strategies for Managing, Promoting, and Retaining Diverse Leaders

There are many options to increase the representation of minorities and females in senior ranks. After reviewing the data and through research, five primary categories

and initiatives emerge as important: (1) mentorship, (2) leadership support, (3) diversity training and education, (4) strategic plans and (5) diversity council.

#### Focus on a Strong Mentorship Program, Formal or Informal

In accordance with Army Regulation 600-100, mentorship is defined as “the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect.”<sup>11</sup> A mentor is responsible for coaching, advising, and counseling other Soldiers with the goal of enhancing their knowledge and growth for further advancement in their careers or to enhance their own personal well being. This relationship should not be forced nor mandated, it should come naturally. Major General Kenneth Joleman comments that “Because mentoring is a natural interpersonal human activity, it cannot be ordered away.”<sup>12</sup> In order to improve our retention rates for minorities, it is extremely important to identify those minorities who have the greatest potential to become effective leaders. The following hypothetical vignette highlights the importance of this notion.

Picture yourself as a young Hispanic or African American male soldier or a young female, entering a new and foreign organization. You don’t know anyone and don’t have the courage to approach anyone with what you think might be a “dumb question”. You look around and there is no one that is “like you.” Although presented hypothetically, many of the Army’s young minorities face this dilemma on a daily basis.

The Center for Creative Leadership on affinity groups offered the following: “We found that African-American managers who network with other African-Americans proportionately more than their numbers in the organization would have enhanced performance...our research shows that for African American managers the additional dimension of networking with same-race individuals contributes to improved ratings...”<sup>13</sup>

As new Soldiers ease into their organization, they normally seek friends who look like them and share the same interests, because visual similarities draw people towards each other. This initial common bond can be strengthened for the good of the institution. Under representation of minorities and females at senior levels inhibits the ability of junior Soldiers to seek advice from someone who 'looks like them'.

Mentorship plays a key role in developing this common bond among minorities and females. Young officers or enlisted Soldiers initially feel more at ease approaching a senior leader who is 'like' them. Having common interests and backgrounds helps develop this relationship. Contrary to some beliefs, mentorship can exist both inside and outside the chain of command. Based on the evidence, there are few minority and female senior leaders, so those who seek "like" mentors, will most likely have to look outside their chain of command for a mentor. In the National Guard this can be difficult as most armories accommodate only one small company or detachment, and their higher headquarters may be hundreds of miles away.

It is apparent that any organization benefits from a strong mentorship program. Having a strong mentorship program, either formal or informal, creates benefits for both the mentor and the protégé. The protégé receives on the job training and professional advice from an experienced leader, while the mentor receives a different perspective and new insights from the younger officers and Soldiers.

Although the Army currently has a mentorship program, many relationships are based on an *informal* mentorship. There is nothing wrong with this type of mentoring because ideas and advice are still exchanged. This type of mentorship relationship may be long or short term, but the bottom line is junior personnel receive valuable advice.

One must be cautious because some may misconstrue this mentorship as favoritism. The disadvantage of an informal mentorship program is that minorities and women often lack the access or the opportunity to seek out high quality relationships because only limited improvement in retention for minorities and females at senior ranks has been achieved. Perhaps a more formal approach to mentorship should be enforced throughout the National Guard, outlining rules and procedures. Examples such as when mentorship should be established (before decision on career field, upon transferring into the state/component), ensure an active, open, and continuous communication, ensure clear goals objectives are established, as well as an evaluation of each state's mentorship program, and tracking the careers of those being mentored in order to assess its impact.

### Leadership Support

DoD Directive 1020.02 addresses the importance of taking care of our diverse population by developing and promoting those deserving and qualified service members. It also addresses the value of diversity in that it is a "potential force multiplier in DoD mission accomplishment."<sup>14</sup> It highlights the importance of valuing employees and helping them achieve their fullest potential. The directive also instructs Army leaders to assist those deserving personnel to "navigate career progression successfully."<sup>15</sup>

The Defense Business Board completed a consolidated report for the DoD Senior Executive Council and one of its three themes was that "Leadership and accountability are critical requirements for further success."<sup>16</sup> The report goes on to state that affirmation and commitment by Army's leaders are critical, and these leaders must be held accountable for measurable diversity objectives. Commitment must be

continuous and visible in both word and deed. When a directive is issued, senior leaders must follow-up to ensure the particular order in the directive is being met.

Senior leaders of the Army National Guard must demonstrate that diversity programs are a priority. If they don't invest their time and effort into this program by word and deed, subordinates may become apathetic. Leading by example is displaying to everyone that diversity matters. Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, recently demonstrated leadership by example during a recent speech to a group of senior leaders. During this speech, he recalled moments in his past where he made a positive difference, when he noticed an underrepresentation of racial/ethnic groups and women holding senior level positions within his organization. After some research, he determined that his assignment officers were assigning white males to "hot" career positions. He immediately diversified his assignment officers and highlighted the need to place officers in the right positions where they could excel and get promoted. He also ensured that his senior leaders were reporting to him on a regular basis the status of their diversity.<sup>17</sup> By focusing on this effort and making it a priority, he made positive things happen and influenced change. Diversity at senior levels does not occur overnight, but over time, and with the proper emphasis by senior leaders, change can take place.

DoD Instruction 2050 mandates diversity management and highlights the importance of mentorship and training. The directive states that the "Heads of DoD Components must require that support for and contribution to these policies and programs be *considered* in the annual performance plans for all supervisors, managers, commanders, and other DoD Component personnel, both military and civilian, having

program responsibilities.”<sup>18</sup> It should be annotated on every officer and non commissioned officer support form and every senior leader should be evaluated on it. This will express leadership emphasis and support, and enforce its importance.

Demonstrating leadership support and making positive change is significant. The Air National Guard has embraced the importance of diversity and recently sent a message displaying their support. After realizing their diversity program had stagnated, the director of the Air National Guard recently hired a new program director.<sup>19</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Raguindin is focused on developing and mentoring young Airmen in order to improve and ensure their future. Having a female minority at the helm is a step in a positive direction and shows young female officers that they can also succeed.

By exposing minorities and females at the forefront, it shows that we are nurturing respect and appreciation for leaders of color and gender. At a DiversityInc event in November 2010, Brigadier General Belinda Pinckney talked about the importance of diversity. She stated, “How can you face these challenges when leaders are all one gender and often one race?” She asked, “How do you develop a pipeline that ensures that we look like the nation that we'll serve some years out?”<sup>20</sup>

### Diversity Training

According to Diversity Training University International, “Diversity training has its history in peace negotiation, racial desegregation in the United States, and race relations training. Historically, the settlement of disputes between tribes and countries depended on masterful negotiations.”<sup>21</sup> With an ever increasing number of Soldiers deploying and interacting with other cultures, it is important now more than ever to train Soldiers on the importance of respecting and understanding diversity. When Soldiers learn about diverse cultures, ethnic backgrounds, human relations, and racial tensions,

they will understand why people are the way they are, and why they act as they do, thereby reducing cultural conflicts and biases. Not only will this help the Army as Soldiers deploy, it will help internally in improving minority and female retention rates.

Successful training stems from a comprehensive level of understanding that starts at the top. Diversity training and education -- with the right curriculum designed for each particular audience -- is critical for success. Teaching diversity can be a difficult task, considering the sensitivity of the topic. During the training, it is important to emphasize openness and honesty. It is also important to begin this training at the lowest level, when new recruits enter the military. Diversity training can be conducted in various ways: through handouts, PowerPoint presentations, interactive discussions using real life experiences, or simply through guidance provided to the Soldiers from commanders at all levels. Diversity training needs to be interactive, fun, and include vignettes, which would encourage and require active participation in small groups.

The train the trainer concept is also a successful method, however, selecting the right person(s) as a trainer may be difficult. Designated instructors should be someone with established criteria and are committed and passionate about the topic. The importance of ensuring training is accessible (either on line or readily available at the unit headquarters) is also vital to success. Although difficult and time consuming, training must be current and continuous. Diversity training must expand beyond traditional ethnic recognition type activities and events (for example, Hispanic Heritage month in September or National Black History month in February). It should include instruction on how to motivate and work with diverse groups, how to understand the negative impact of racism, stereotypes and prejudice; and how to respect others.

In the National Guard, time available for training is extremely limited due to current demands placed on company commanders and first sergeants. Implementing yet another mandatory training requirement in light of an already long list of mandatory training requirements will potentially result in 'check the block' type training. Junior leaders are already challenged with developing weekend training schedules that meet all mandated monthly requirements in the allotted time they have. Annual briefings tend to fall to the bottom of the priority list, which could result in less emphasis by key leaders. This is why it is critical to instill in everyone the value and importance of this issue. Leaders at all levels must understand that diversity training is here to stay, must be enforced at all levels, and "will continue to be one of the principal tools to improve interpersonal and intergroup dynamics."<sup>22</sup>

#### Strategic Plan with Diversity Goals

Every organization must have a strategic plan that involves improving diversity as one of its goals. In order to develop a strategic plan, an organization must identify where it is, where it needs to go, and how it is going to get there. One method for deriving strategic goals and objectives is through process improvement analysis. In accordance with DoD Instruction 5010.43, "all DoD Components shall implement CPI/LSS (Continuous Process Improvement/Lean Six Sigma) as an essential tool for improving the operating effectiveness of their organizations across the full range of operational, administration, science and technology, and support functions."<sup>23</sup>

Various methods for process improvements have been around for many years, and the Army National Guard must embrace this policy and use it to improve their diversity. With the strategic goal of improving diversity and the retention of diverse groups, this program will drive the state's execution. DoD Instruction 5010.43 was

published in 2009 and so far only thirty states have completely implemented this initiative.<sup>24</sup> National Guard Bureau (NGB) recently enforced this issue by executing training as well as tracking the implementation of this program by state because they realized that all states must come onboard to reap its benefits.

It is critical that NGB drives its diversity strategies. A 2008 Rand study states that strategies must be closely linked to the organization's mission, vision, and goals. Senior leaders must group their diversity strategies into two categories: process and enabling strategies. Process strategies include areas in accessions, retention, development and mentoring, assignments, and promotions, and the enabling strategies include leadership engagement, accountability, and culture.<sup>25</sup>

The Rand report on Planning for Diversity must be read and enforced at all levels. The study highlights the important fact that successful implementation starts at the top, at the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) level. This involvement by the SECDEF "provides a clear signal to the workforce that ensuring diversity is a core value of the department and that managing diversity is a top priority."<sup>26</sup> Leaders continually establish diversity missions, visions, and values that are clearly immeasurable. Without performance standards and guidelines, leaders cannot be held accountable and as a result, no one is responsible for success or failure. Leaders often believe that diversity is a personnel issue and not a program critical to national security.

Many leaders fail to believe they have any diversity issues within their organization. On the surface, they may produce posters displaying females and people of color but the underlying issue is that diversity is not represented at senior levels. If senior leaders do not believe they have a problem, then they see no need for change.

Leaders need to analyze why these groups are not represented at senior levels. Having a strategic plan is only the beginning; every state must have a diversity council in order to execute and meet their strategic goals.

### State Diversity Councils

Each state must have an effective diversity council comprised of members from diverse backgrounds and ranks. This council is responsible for determining the needs of the organization as they apply to advocating, informing, and monitoring strategic diversity management processes. They also play a significant role in communication, education, and reinforcement processes. Councils need to address tough questions such as, “what are units doing to deal with culturally different people, and how effective is their diversity training?” Senior leaders must be committed in this process and must hold subordinates accountable for addressing diversity related issues. Commitment to diversity must be incorporated into the organization’s strategy and culture. It should also be incorporated into every noncommissioned officer and officer’s evaluation reports. Supervisors must find a measureable method to evaluate the reinforcement of diversity through the recruitment, development and promotion processes.

An element of the diversity council’s duties is completing a diversity plan. Success begins with a strategic plan that includes goals designed to improve diversity. It is critical that diversity be a part of the overall strategic plan and vision. With a strategic goal, a diversity plan will emerge. A successful diversity plan should outline and identify the state’s weaknesses and strengths, to include metrics designed to enforce accountability. It should be a working document for creating plans, measures, and milestones to ensure fostering diversity remains a top priority. The diversity plan must be disseminated throughout the organization, and key topics discussed quarterly

to ensure diversity is at the forefront of the organization. Focusing on accountability and ensuring each state has a valid diversity plan starting at state level through battalion level, will yield genuine accomplishments.

Evaluation is critical in ensuring strategies and goals are implemented and tracked, and each goal must be measurable and accountable. Although diversity is difficult to measure, most states default to demographic representation through the use of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) survey, as well as unit climate surveys. The DEOMI survey is a long and tedious report that every state must complete because it paints a very detailed picture of each state's status as it applies to recruitment, retention, promotion, and schools. Although not 100% accurate, it is helpful in identifying where the state is and where it needs to go in order to improve its diversity efforts. Each state is required to submit this report annually to the National Guard Bureau Diversity Office.

### Conclusion

It is critical to improve racial and gender specific diversity among senior leaders. National Guard leaders should consider the strategies listed in this paper in order to improve our current status. In pursuit of this desired end state, each state must have a strategic plan outlining diversity goals and senior leaders must place emphasis on the execution of the plan. One of the first priorities associated with the plan is an energetic committed mentorship program that permeates every level throughout the State. Mentorship is an individual responsibility and senior leaders must be cognizant of the facts associated with the underrepresentation of race/ethnic groups and women at senior ranks. Although senior military officials recognize mentorship as an essential process in producing future leaders, not all senior leaders engage in this important

relationship. Through mentorship, minority and female Soldiers will remain in the Guard past 20 years and become senior ranking role models in the image of their mentors. It is incumbent upon leaders at all levels to focus time and energy in mentoring, training, motivating, and inspiring all Soldiers, regardless of race or gender.

Change is a process that can be challenging for many organizations. Successful implementation of change is dependent on a high degree of commitment by senior leaders. These leaders must develop and enforce a strategy that includes concepts that encourage refined behaviors and processes designed to advance females and minorities in their organizations. The consequences of not growing diverse senior leaders, underscored by continued high promotion and retention rates for white males, displays a demographic of senior leaders that are out of touch with the diversity of National Guard formations. Having personnel who think and act like their leaders does not promote or enable diversity in thought and reduces opportunities to work with Soldiers and officers who are from different races and/or different gender. This dynamic also reduces the possibility for various perspectives, backgrounds, and talents.

The Army National Guard faces many challenges and opportunities today, and must be proactive to ensure the Guard remains strong and relevant in order to best meet the needs of an ever changing national security environment. We must consider the impact that opportunity and talent have on our organization. We need to ensure we are doing all we can to provide those opportunities for all citizen Soldiers to display their talent and to excel. A minority or female role model at the senior level provides an important example of success for our junior Soldiers and officers.

## Endnotes

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