

ADDRESSING DEFICIENCIES IN ARMY CIVILIAN LEADER DEVELOPMENT

BY

MR. JONATHAN S. KELLER
Department of Army Civilian

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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by

Mr. Jonathan S. Keller
Department of Army Civilian

Dr. David Perry
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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The Army has yet to implement a robust career development framework for its civilian workforce as it has for its military officers. Although inextricably linked and complementary to the other, the Army's civilians and military officers generally spend the majority of their respective careers working separately and developing differently. Producing quality professional civilian leaders is a foundation for achieving and maintaining the critical strategic leadership competencies the Army and Nation requires. A well managed, comparable, and integrated Army leader training, education, and development framework, designed to create shared and combined developmental experiences, is essential for growing competent and effective civilian strategic leaders of tomorrow.

ADDRESSING DEFICIENCIES IN ARMY CIVILIAN LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Employee training, education, and development are the key to maximizing personal, organizational, and Army wide workforce potential, serving as critical mediums for broadening perspective, learning and practicing new skills, and improving and refining existing competencies. The knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience gained from comprehensive and targeted career development initiatives instill requisite tools not easily acquired without a concentrated effort and direction toward employee growth. A workforce education, training, and development infrastructure is the Army's only means of producing civilians who are capable of deciphering ambiguity and making effective decisions within the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment of the twenty first century. Individuals must be capable of recognizing problems, deficiencies, challenges, and opportunities, then quickly adapting to dynamic situations and contexts. From supervisory, managerial, and executive perspectives, a trained, tested, and motivated workforce is a prerequisite to enabling both individual and organizational success.

A well-planned, well-timed, and well-executed education, training, and development strategy provides both the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills needed to accomplish the current mission. It also serves to ensure that a capable cadre of employees is ready, willing, and able to think strategically, act creatively, and expand confidently into new and often uncomfortable and unexplored business areas more quickly. Ultimately, it ensures that the right individuals, teams, and organizations are in place and at the Army's disposal to work within existing or expand and venture into new areas of risk, challenge, and opportunity. An organization oriented toward learning and

development fosters an environment that welcomes new ideas, generates cross-fertilization across organizational roles, and is open to change. In any successful organization, leadership development and strategic initiatives are interwoven and inextricably linked; a development culture can provide an umbrella or framework for achieving far-reaching initiatives.¹ In addition to the aspects of training discussed above which are generally easily visible on the surface, individuals recognize their education, training, and development as an investment in their future, whereby the Army is devoting time, energy, and resources toward deepening or broadening their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Moreover, the recognition of individuals as truly valued assets to the organization, worthy of time and investment, generally produces a highly committed and strongly motivated workforce that is more likely to value loyalty and long-term service to the organization. In fact, when looking at an individual's training in the broader context of career management, there is "a direct link between the amount of attention paid to career management and staff turnover."²

In this SRP, we will look predominately at the training, education, and development needed to produce tomorrow's civilian and military leaders. The United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), in October 2007, recognized a critical need to expand the military's training and development of competent leaders, both military and civilian, especially as exemplary leadership skills in both the civilian and military domains becomes even more important as the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan persist and evolve. The U.S. Army's TRADOC commander, General William Caldwell, described Army-wide deficiencies in the development of its leaders, noting that the Army must accelerate its leader development programs, including the

educational and training elements, “across all cohorts, components, and domains in order to meet the increased leadership demands for the Long War.”³ Addressing the need for reform across the Defense and Interagency, civilian and military, GEN Caldwell said that the Army must be able to:

...evolve and implement officer, noncommissioned officer and civilian [training and] education systems that acknowledge...increased demands and conduct leader development training in ways that support our expeditionary Army, develop an offensive mindset focused on winning our Nation's wars. Our mission is to examine and analyze [opportunities for] accelerating leader development programs to grow leaders for the future strategic environment. This will revise leader development programs for the 21st Century, synchronize programs with Army Force Generation Model, and ensure policies and procedures are in place to support the recommendations of accelerating the development of leaders. At the end of the day, the mission is to implement officer, noncommissioned officer and [Civilian Education Systems] that have evolved to acknowledge those increased leader demand. By accelerating Army leader development programs in ways that support our expeditionary Army, we are integrating the complexities of full spectrum operations in an era of persistent conflict.⁴

This SRP will argue that although General Caldwell appropriately calls for an active initiative to improve the Army's performance in developing its leaders, today there is no comprehensive solution or framework for training, educating, and developing our civilian leaders. Within the Army, there exist significant differences and deficiencies with respect to the established requirements, expectations, and processes by which we train, develop, and educate our civilian vice our military leaders.

Civilian Opportunities and Career Management

Army Regulation (AR) 690–950, Civilian Personnel Career Management, last published in December 2001, disseminates the policies that govern Army civilian leader development. AR 690-950 asserts that training, education, and development are vital facets to an effective career management system and that if civilians capitalize on

opportunities in these three important areas, they will both improve performance in their current jobs and build qualifications that enhance their opportunities for future career advancement. It goes on to identify the Army Civilian Training, Education and Development System (ACTEDS) as the Army's "requirements-based system that ensures planned development of civilians through a blending of progressive and sequential work assignments, formal training, educational courses, and self-development for individuals as they progress from entry level to key positions."⁵ ACTEDS is supposed to provide an "an orderly, systematic approach to technical, professional, and leadership training, education, and development similar to the military system."⁶ This sounds great. However, in reviewing the website on which the Army's ACTEDS information is disseminated, it quickly becomes evident that the training, education, and development information, requirements, opportunities, and mandates for its civilian workforce are most aptly characterized as incomplete, inconsistent, and poorly communicated and certainly do not ensure, as AR 690-950 asserts, a well-planned and well-executed development of the Army's civilian workforce.

To delve in to some of these deficiencies, we must first look at the organization of the Army's civilian workforce, its training requirements, and policies, systems, and infrastructure in place to support the training, education, and development of a robust and high performance workforce. The Army has organized the vast majority of its civilian workforce into Career Programs (CPs), functional areas that correspond to particular job categories or position classifications. CPs are comprised of occupational series and functional fields grouped on the basis of population, occupational structure, grade range, and commonality of job and qualification characteristics and are intended

to ensure that an adequate base of qualified and trained professional, technical, and administrative personnel exists to meet the Army's current and future needs.⁷ Training, Education, and Development within the CP areas are loosely broken into five broad categories:

1. Army Civilian Leadership Training Core Curriculum
2. Senior Service College Programs
3. Functional Chief Representative (FCR), Competitive Professional Development (CPD), and Short Term Training (STT) Programs
4. Government and Non-Government Training
5. Career Field Training

Army Civilian Leadership Training Core Curriculum

In 2007, the Army Civilian Leadership Core Curriculum took a positive step in creating a pilot program for furthering the development of future civilian leaders: the Civilian Education System (CES). The CES aims to aid in the development of civilian “Pentathletes,” individuals who personify the warrior ethos, serving as experts in the crafts of statesmanship, business management, and support to warfighting.⁸ The CES distills into a multi-faceted development and training program comprised of a series of courses described as “a new, progressive, and sequential leader development program that provides enhanced leader development and education opportunities for Army civilians throughout their careers.”⁹ It does this by providing

...the Army Civilian Corps self-development and institutional training (leader development) opportunities to develop leadership attributes through distance learning (DL) and resident training. CES includes the Action Officer Development Course, the Supervisory Development Course, the Management Development Course, the Foundation Course,

the Basic Course, the Intermediate Course, the Advanced Course, and Senior Service College.¹⁰

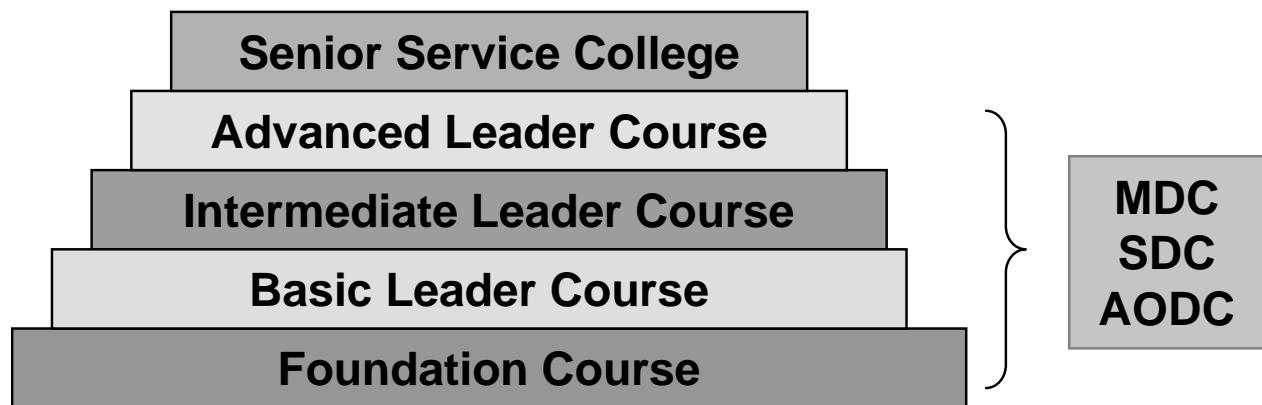


Figure 1. Civilian Education System Core Curriculum

The first three courses, the Action Officer Development Course (AODC), the Supervisor Development Course (SDC), and the Manager Development Course (MDC), comprise the basic distributed or online learning element of the CES's core curriculum. Although the Army had been offering all three courses to its Civilians for several years preceding the instantiation of the CES, they have been underutilized as the training has been neither widely mandated, strongly encouraged, nor even known to exist by many or most Army civilian employees, supervisors, and managers. The AODC trains civilians in the craft of being proficient action officers – individuals that perform work on behalf of commanders or senior staff officers. The SDC, which targets Army civilian employees who have been placed into supervisory (first level) management positions for the first time in their careers, provides new supervisors with basic skills to help them administer supervisory duties and work management. The last of the three, the MDC, imparts basic skills required to lead people and manage the work of others.¹¹

This leads into the truly novel elements of the CES. The CES's Foundational Course is a 57-hour distance-learning program that enables the Army Civilian to: gain a better understanding of the Army as it relates a civilian's current position; operate as a more effective member of the Army team, and better manage the administrative requirements of an Army civilian, including career progression elements. Graduates of the Foundational Course should have gained: 1) a general understanding of Army's leadership structure and doctrine; 2) insight into how to build effective teams and practice group dynamics; 3) an understanding of effective communication principles; 4) the ability to prioritize and better organize daily activities; 5) awareness of the opportunities and career paths available to Army civilians; and 6) an ability to apply skills needed for discovering and maintaining a high level of self awareness.¹² The goals of the Foundational Course are aggressive and perhaps too far-reaching for a curriculum delivered in a virtual environment with little or no opportunity to synthesize the skills imparted during the course of the program.

The CES's second course, the Basic Course, is a two-part hybrid program consisting of a 43-hour online learning element paired with a two-week resident component in Fort Leavenworth, KS. The Basic Course targets new supervisors and team leaders and helps the Army civilian to better understand and apply various leadership skills needed to effectively lead, develop, and nurture small teams or organizations. At the end of the course, students should have developed: 1) the ability to effectively apply communication techniques commensurate with the abilities needed to lead or manage a small organization; 2) the capacity to better communicate with, understand, and lead his or her team; 3) a more sensitive internal and external

awareness of both himself/herself and his/her team; and 4) the basic skills needed to mentor and develop teams that consistently perform a high level.¹³

Like the Basic Course, the third or Intermediate Course is a hybrid program, consisting of a 91-hour online element and a three-week classroom program at which students meet in either Fort Leavenworth, KS or Fort Belvoir, VA. The Intermediate Course targets Army civilian leaders who already reside in supervisory, management, or project management positions. Other than the Advanced Course and Senior Service College, which I will outline in a following section of this SRP, the Intermediate Course is one of the first developmental opportunities at which Army civilian leaders and their military counterparts get the opportunity to learn, interact, and study in the relatively benign environment of a classroom. As its name implies, the Intermediate Course builds upon the training offered in the Basic Course, further developing and refining the student's leadership, management, mentoring, team-building, and communication skills. It also imparts its military and civilian students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to, with a focus on the Nation's, Army's, and organization's mission, effectively: supervise and lead small organizations; develop efficient and cohesive organizations; manage complex financial and human resource challenges; plan for and implement necessary change; and exercise critical thinking skills.¹⁴

The capstone course of the CES curriculum, the Advanced Course, consists of a 67-hour distance-learning element as well as a four-week exercise at Fort Belvoir, VA. Like the Intermediate Course, the Advanced Course targets the Army's military and civilian leaders that have attained more senior positions – typically GS-13 to GS-15 (or equivalent National Security Personnel System (NSPS) pay band) Army civilians in

permanent supervisory or managerial appointments. The Advanced Course also provides its civilian and officer students the opportunity to work together in developing and refining the skills necessary to: lead complex organizations, inspire vision and creativity in subordinates, and operate within an integrated environment while maintaining a mission focus.¹⁵

Senior Service College

Senior Service College is the pinnacle of both a Department of Defense civilian's and military officer's Professional Military Education (PME). Senior PME prepares civilians for positions of greater responsibility by imparting an improved and strategic understanding of the complex policy issues and strategic challenges facing the United States. The mission of the United States Army War College (USAWC), as described in Army regulation 10-44, is:

...to prepare selected military, civilian, and international leaders for the responsibilities of strategic leadership; educate current and future leaders on the development and employment of landpower in a joint, multinational and interagency environment; conduct research and publish on national security and military strategy; and engage in activities in support of the Army's strategic communication efforts.¹⁶

The Department of Defense's Senior Services College program is composed of five institutions and six colleges. The National Defense University (NDU), set on the Grounds of Fort McNair in Washington, DC, houses two distinct Senior Service College institutions, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) and the National War College (NWC). ICAF's mission is "to prepare selected military and civilians for strategic leadership and success in developing our national security strategy and in evaluating, marshalling, and managing resources in the execution of that strategy."¹⁷ The Mission of the NWC is "to prepare future leaders of the Armed Forces, State Department, and

other civilian agencies for high-level policy, command, and staff responsibilities.”¹⁸ The other Senior Service Colleges -- the Naval War College in Newport, RI, the USAWC in Carlisle, PA, the Air War College in Mobile, AL, and Marine War College in Quantico, VA -- all share similar missions with the National War College and tend to place a strong academic and developmental emphasis on strategic thinking, decision-making in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments, and working across joint, interagency, and multinational boundaries. All of the United States Military’s Senior Service Colleges award Masters Degrees; the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, and National War Colleges grant a Master of Strategic Studies degree, while the Industrial College of the Armed Forces grants a Master’s of Science in National Resource Strategy. Where the other War Colleges emphasize the promulgation of the Nation’s National Security Strategy, ICAF places a greater emphasis on strategic decision making in the context of managing national resources in a national security environment. As such, ICAF is the Senior Service College most often attended by senior military officers and civilians possessing acquisition, technology, or logistics backgrounds. Because the majority of Army and other Department of Defense and Government Agency civilians occupy positions in the aforementioned career fields, the Industrial College of the Armed Forces educates the greatest proportion of civilians of all of the Senior Service Colleges, albeit a number vastly lower than the numbers of their military participants.

The Senior Service Colleges can most aptly be described as the “the wellspring from which the services will draw their future leadership.”¹⁹ “The Army is most reliant on the United States Army War College to educate its future leaders at the senior service

college level – no other institution or program instructs as many Army officers at this level of education.”²⁰ An analysis of the United States Army War College’s Class of 2008 resident student body reveals a systemic problem relative to the military’s regard for and emphasis on senior level civilian education. The 340-person student body is comprised of 264 senior United States military officers representing the 4 military services and Coast Guard, 43 foreign military officers, and 33 civilians. Of the 264 officers, 200 come from the active duty Army, Army reserve, and Army National Guard. Of the 33 civilians, only 16 are Army Civilians selected through the Department of Army’s competitive selection board.²¹ There are nine other civilians, a few of whom are Army civilians, that are attending the Army War College as part of the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP), a competitively selected DOD-sponsored and DOD-funded leader development program that provided enhanced opportunities for developmental assignments, graduate education, and Senior Service College. In 2007, however, the Department of Defense announced that it would admit no new participants to the program and that, effective in 2010, the program is to terminate. Discounting the class of 2008 Army War College participants in DLAMP, the College’s ratio of selected Army officers to selected Army civilians stands at 8:1. This ratio, which has actually improved over the past several years,²² is discouraging when one considers the high number of eligible Army civilians who would benefit from the educative, reflective, and interactive civilian / military experience that Senior Service College provides.

Competitive Professional Development, Short-Term Training, and Long-Term Training

The Army describes civilian Competitive Professional Development (CPD) as the functionally tailored, significant developmental opportunities that are available to Army civilians in university programs, Training with Industry, and/or other planned developmental assignments.²³ Examples of CPD initiatives include the Army Comptrollership Program, the Army Congressional Fellowship Program, the Logistics Executive Development Program, and the Secretary of the Army Research and Study Fellowship. The ACTEDS describes Short Term Training (STT) as any targeted training curriculum for Army civilians enduring 120 calendar days or less. Examples of STT include professional workshops, seminars, and university classes. Long Term Training (LTT), on the other hand, may consist of either training or formal education to which an Army civilian is assigned on a continuous full-time basis exceeding 120 days. Like Short Term Training, civilians on an LTT assignment may be resident at either a government or non-government facility or institution and be engaged in formal training, educational, or developmental assignment opportunities. CPD, STT, LTT provide a conduit for enabling Army civilians to “keep abreast of changes and innovations in their occupational fields, learn new skills, or develop/improve abilities needed in current or future positions.”²⁴

CPD, STT, and LTT opportunities overarch the Army’s civilian Career Program (CP) construct. In Army Regulation 690-950, [Civilian] Career Management, the Army established CPs for their civilian workforce. Civilian members fall into one of many CPs based upon individual job characteristics such as occupation, salary grade, position commonality, and qualification requirements. The Army established CPs to ensure a sufficient base of qualified and trained civilian personnel would be available to meet

their Army's needs, both today and in the future.²⁵, A Functional Chief (FC) and a Functional Chief Representative (FCR) head each CP; together these individuals are called CP Functional Officials. CP Functional Officials have multiple responsibilities:²⁶

1. Monitoring career management requirements and opportunities within their CP
2. Monitoring progress EEO goals within their CP
3. Developing policies, procedures and program requirements for each CP
4. Resolving career management issues
5. Reviewing proposals for program changes
6. Reviewing program effectiveness
7. Projecting intern requirements
8. Fostering broad-based employee representation and ensuring all qualified candidates are equitably considered for promotions to Executive level feeder grades
9. Establishing training and development requirements

When one examines the Army's various CPs and each CP's model for STT, LTT, and CPD, great variances and inconsistencies in the breadth and depth of requirements and opportunities emerge. For example, a review of CP-14, the Contracting and Acquisition CP, reveals a relatively robust CP planning guide, replete with information about numerous opportunities for university training, developmental assignments, fellowship programs, and STT and LTT training opportunities. For each of these training, education, and career broadening areas, detailed instructions guide the civilian through the prerequisites for various opportunities, the application and notification process, the selection criteria and timeline, the funding requirements and

sources, and other relevant information such as whether a time in service commitment will be demanded of participants. CP-14 presents specific opportunities for training, education, and career development, articulating the requirements, eligibility criteria, application information, and other important details of university training, fellowship, training-with industry, developmental assignments, functional training, management and executive training, and others. Other CP narrative descriptions, however, offer significantly less than CP-14. While there are vast differences between CP descriptions and the educational, training, and developmental opportunities available within each, the entire CP construct presents gaping holes that essentially relegate it to status as marginal tool that only an aspiring and hard-charging Army civilian leader could use to help guide his or her career path. Even the most robust CP narrative still lacks a clear, cohesive, and usable trail map for future leaders. At no point in the CP section of the ACTEDS catalog, nor in any other section, does it provide guidance, instructions, or recommendations for what types of assignments individuals in specific career fields should pursue, what types of formal education should be considered (e.g., technical or managerial), or what training specific to an individuals CP should be planned for.

Government / Non-Government Training and Career Field Training

As the heading of the remaining two sections of the ACTEDS catalog implies, the Government and Non-Government Training and Career Field Training chapters provide descriptions to some generic and non-generic opportunities available to Army civilians broadly, as well as those available only to civilians at senior job grade levels or in specific career fields or functional areas. For example, the Government Training subheading provides information on the Army Senior Fellows Program, the Commerce

Science & Technology Fellowship Program, Defense Leadership and Management Program, the OPM Federal Executive Institute Leadership for a Democratic Society, and the Master of Military Logistics. As discussed earlier in this SRP, the Department of Defense announced the termination of DLAMP in 2007, yet the link in ACTEDS remains active. The Army Senior Fellows Program is an executive development program that aims, via professional developmental, educational, and training opportunities, to create a cadre of high potential candidates for Army executive positions. While the ASFP might serve as a template to help model a more comprehensive civilian leader development initiative after, it is only admitting six new entrants in the current application cycle. The Master of Military Logistics program, on the other hand, is open to all CPs, but would likely only be of interest to individuals in logistics or related career fields.

All of the programs in these two sections of the ACTEDS catalog would be significantly more useful if incorporated into new and revised CP narratives. Every educational, training, and developmental opportunity, regardless of status as a government or non-government sponsored activity, should be referenced or described in each CP narrative to which it is relevant. For example, an acquisition professional civilian leader who utilizes the ACTEDS catalog to discover opportunities and advice for advancing his career should be able to easily find his specific CP and drill down into the education, training, and developmental assignments available without having to circumnavigate through training specific to comptrollers or other peripheral career fields. The Army should be making it easier for civilians to understand and pursue the path to becoming a senior leader. Incomplete, disintegrated, and confusing guidance, such as

the information currently accessible to today's Army civilians, accomplishes just the opposite.

Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management

Commissioned Officer professional development and career management is implemented very differently for military officers than for their civilian counterparts. Army pamphlet 600–3, the professional development guide for all Army officers, outlines officer development and career management programs for each of the Army's career branches and functional areas. Although it does not prescribe specific paths of training, educational, or career assignments to guarantee success, it comprehensively presents a full spectrum of opportunities that an Army officer can utilize to develop and advance his or her career. In developing and implementing 600-3, the Army recognized that it needed not only a document to guide individual officers along their career paths, but also one to serve as a mentoring tool for supervisors and personnel management guide for assignment officers, proponents, and Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA) selection board members.

The current and future success of any organization is contingent upon its ability to grow confident, competent, and self-aware leaders who are prepared to face evolving challenges. The Army's future force officers must have the ability to perform multiple functions and be capable of supporting a full range of military operations in a Joint, Interagency, and Multinational environment replete with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Through its leader development framework, the Army has been successful in producing competent military leaders to be mentors, role models, trainers, and standard-bearers. "Leader development through progressive, sequential,

and continuous education and experience throughout one's career benefits the Army and the leader."²⁷

Developing Army leaders to meet the needs of the Army and the nation requires robust, innovative, and flexible leader development, training, and education systems. The Army's commissioned officer leader development and education system has been very effective in training, educating, and growing successful Army leaders through its use of three primary developmental domains:

- Operational – The Army develops its officers operationally through firsthand experience, insights gained, and from training, assessment, and feedback from subordinates, peers, and superiors; Army PAM 600-3 describes operational experience as “the linchpin component of leader development from which officers learn what right looks like.”²⁸
- Institutional – Officers also develop through standards-based education and training. This education and training instills a common doctrinal foundation that instills qualities of self-awareness, innovativeness, and adaptability. Officers develop the skills and abilities needed to take the initiative and operate as part of a Service, Joint, and Interagency team. “Institutional leader development builds on leaders' operational experiences and enables lifelong learning through resident and non-resident schooling at Army, Joint, and civilian schools using live-virtual-constructive training as a foundation for experiential learning.”²⁹
- Self-development - An essential component of lifelong learning, self-development is a goals-based, feedback driven program of activities and learning

to enhance professional competence, organizational effectiveness, and overall professional development.³⁰

The career management of Army officers is accomplished through the robust Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS), a system that was designed to: 1) identify, recruit, and prepare talented individuals for officership in the Army; 2) maximize an officer's skill and potential through iterative and targeted education, training, and development; 3) appropriately utilize officers by matching knowledge, skills and abilities with the Army's requirements; 4) retain the right mix of officers in the right positions to meet the Army's demands; 5) identify and promote officers who have demonstrated the requisite competence, skills, and experience to satisfy the needs of the Army; and 6) transition officers from the Army in a manner that recognizes their valued service to the nation.³¹ The evolutionary and inherently flexible OPMS balances the Army's needs with the developmental requirements and career aspirations of the professional Army officer. Its flexibility can be found in its ability to respond to and balance a variety of variables (e.g., doctrinal changes, individual initiatives, etc.) to meet the Army's emerging needs.³² The subsystems are the key to success of OPMS. These subsystems and their functions include:

- Strength management. The number of Army officers is defined by demand (e.g., grade, specialty, etc.), which determines the number of officers to promote, develop, assign, and separate. This system is inherently flexible as the force structure is designed to change as the Army's requirements change.³³

- Assignments. Balancing the best interests of officers against the Army's requirements, officers are assigned to fill positions within the various functional areas and career branches.³⁴
- Professional development. Under the umbrella of developing multi-skilled leaders, an officer proponent is assigned to define the appropriate combination of training, education, and experience, by officer grade level, in each functional area (e.g., infantry, armor, core of engineers) and career branch (e.g., field artillery, acquisition officer, foreign area officer). Again, this system is flexible, enabling assignments to change as the Army's requirements change. Every officer is able to consult a life cycle development model (see Figure 2. Chemical Branch Active Army Developmental Model below) to help guide him or her through the range of education, training, and experience required to develop future leaders in his or her specialty.³⁵

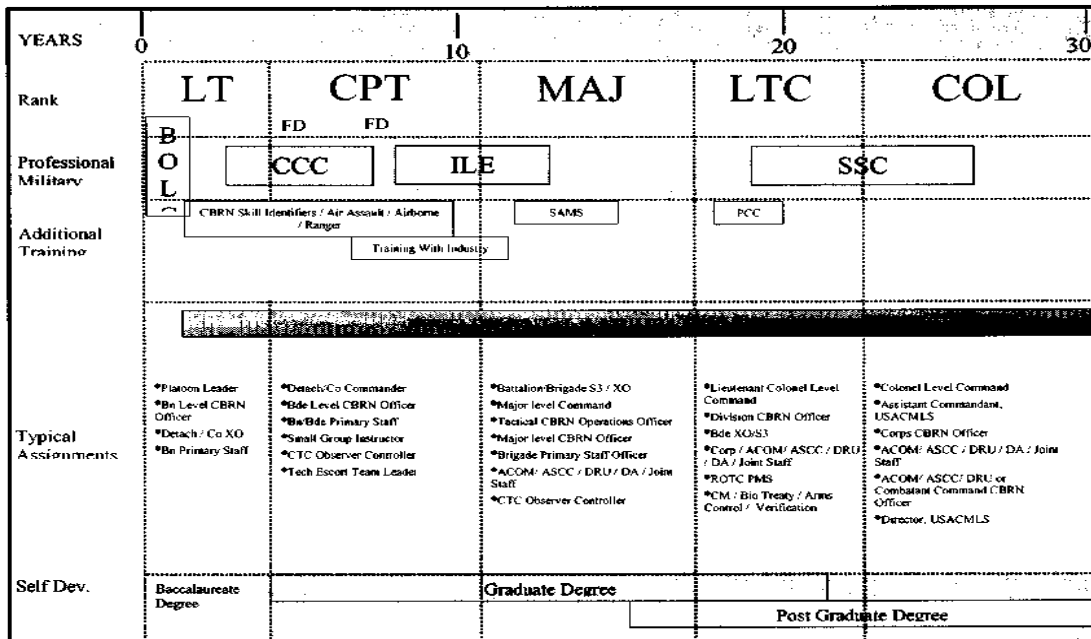


Figure 2. Chemical Branch Active Army Developmental Model

- Evaluation and Centralized Selection. Established performance measures and superiors' judgment of potential to thrive in increasingly greater positions of responsibility are the main determinants of an officer's potential to advance through the ranks. The Army's mechanism for judging performance against established objectives is the Officer Evaluation Report (OER). Information contained in an officer's OER, together with the Army's process of centralized selection, determines his or her opportunities for promotion selection, functional designation, schooling, selection to command and key billets, developmental opportunities, and ultimately retention as an officer in the United States Army.³⁶

Conclusions and Recommendations

The career management of Army civilians, when contrasted with that of Army officers, presents a severely deficient developmental process and framework for maturing tomorrow's civilian leaders. The current civilian career development process for civilians is predominately a passive activity, with little active management and only bits and pieces of valuable information disseminated sporadically across multiple Army civilian personnel pamphlets and websites. Moreover, the current civilian process places a great emphasis on do-it-yourself employee development and career management. If civilians enlist the help of an executive mentor, study the ACTEDS catalog and civilian personnel online websites, demonstrate geographic mobility, seek out opportunities for developmental or rotational assignments, and pursue training and formal education opportunities, they may successfully develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to complete effectively for executive positions. On the other hand, civilians who complacently stand idle hoping for recognition, promotion, or other bigger

and better things may be waiting for a train that will never depart the station. Currently, the Army simply does not have an actively managed, monitored, and uniform civilian career management system and requirements in place to develop its future leaders. It is no wonder that retired military officers are more competitive for senior civilian posts.³⁷

The Army's 2006 civilian attitude survey revealed similar results with respect to the morale of its workforce. Concentrating on what the workforce viewed as the most favorable attributes associated with their civilian employment, four of the top five grievances were relevant to this discussion: 47 percent of civilians surveyed felt dissatisfied with their opportunities for promotion; 44 percent felt negatively about their opportunity to get a better job within their organization; 41 percent felt that retired military officers were more often selected over qualified civilian candidates; 41 percent were dissatisfied with their career progression opportunities.³⁸

Several recent studies by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have noted that while the Department of Defense has some strategic plans to address shortfalls in the development of the civilian workforce, these plans have generally lacked many critical elements essential to successful workforce planning.³⁹ For example, none of the Department's plans have included an analyses of the gaps between critical skills and competencies needed for today's vice the future's civilian workforce – plans which, if not in place, foster the perpetuation of ineffectively designed and implemented plans for recruiting, developing, and retaining top notch civilian leaders.⁴⁰

The Army's leadership would be well served in adopting many of the leader development and career management processes and attributes currently used to assign, evaluate, promote, and retain its professional military officers. While the Army

has established a robust infrastructure to fairly and uniformly manage the career progression, educational and training opportunities, and job assignments of its officers, it has done very little to do the same for its civilians. Like the military, the civilian workforce could be divided into a commissioned officer-like (COL) and a warrant officer-like (WOL) workforce, with the COL workforce comprised of those individuals identified as being on track for increasingly greater levels of leadership and responsibility. The WOL workforce would be comprised of civilian professionals such as engineers, accountants, logisticians, computer scientists, lawyers, etc. who are excellent technicians but either do not aspire to or have not shown an aptitude to take on increasingly greater levels of supervisory or management responsibility. Both the COL and WOL workforces would have their careers iteratively and actively reviewed and managed through the Army's G-1 or a similarly staffed organization.

Using the OPMS as a model, both the COL and WOL civilian workforces would undergo the practices of strength management, directed assignments, professional development, and centralized selection and evaluation. While assignments of civilians in both groups would include assignments that provide both breadth and depth of experience, the WOLs would emphasize depth over breadth, capitalizing on educational, developmental, and training opportunities that add a greater degree of knowledge and experience to their own and peripheral (i.e., those individuals they need to work and interface with often) career areas. The COLs, on the other hand, would have a greater exposure to broader areas of opportunity, working, learning, and developing across an array of assignments, educational, and training opportunities. For both civilian groups, there would be significantly greater exposure to and interaction with

their military counterparts than exists in the Army today. Professional Military Education (PME) institutions, including Intermediate Leadership Education (ILE) and SSC, would create and staff student slots proportional to the size of the civilian and military workforces. As in the current military system, the new civilian career management framework would be inherently flexible, placing more individuals, especially in the COL group, in training, educational, and developmental assignments if more assignable COL individuals than open billets exist. As currently is the case in many research, development, and acquisition Army organizations, more of the non-kinetic military positions would be open to the best-qualified candidate, regardless of his or her status as a military officer or a civilian professional.

Endnotes

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