
Military Leadership Diversity Commission

Decision Paper #5: Defining Diversity



February 2011

MLDC decision papers present the Commission-approved, subcommittee-specific recommendations. These recommendations are the product not only of the logic and evidence presented in the decision papers but also the values and judgments of the Commissioners. Legally imposed time constraints naturally limited the Commission's ability to undertake extensive research. Thus, the decision papers present the evidence that was available and that could be collected during the discovery phase of the Commission. The decision papers were reviewed by subject-matter experts external to the Commission.

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INTRODUCTION

Many organizations in the United States assert a commitment to diversity, but *diversity* means different things to different people. For some, diversity means differences with respect to an individual's race, ethnicity, and sometimes gender. In this view, individuals from groups who were traditionally excluded from the work place are "diverse," and the challenge is to treat them equally and fairly. For others, diversity encompasses both demographic and work-related differences, including occupational specialty, organizational membership, and length of service. In this view, the workgroup is "diverse," and the challenge is to leverage its differences to build capability.

This decision paper puts forth the Commission's recommendations for defining and using the term "diversity" and presents the supporting logic and empirical evidence on which the recommendations are based. The recommended definition of diversity informs all Commission policy recommendations on enhancing the demographic and other diversity of military leadership presented to the Department of Defense (DoD) and military branches.

Strategy to Develop a Definition of Diversity

A single charter task led the Commission to examine issues and methods related to defining diversity in ways that will increase diversity in military leadership: "Develop a uniform definition of diversity to be used throughout DoD congruent with the core values and vision of DoD for the future workforce."

To meet this charter directive, the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) subcommittee tasked with defining diversity, the Definition of Diversity Subcommittee, investigated the ways in which different organizations, including the Service branches, define diversity. This investigation was two-pronged, looking at both what is considered best practice and what is supported by empirical research. Activities included reviews of empirical research, analysis of corporate and DoD/Service documents, interviews with Service representatives, and briefings to the Commission. The activities were guided by five key questions:

- What are the elements of a definition of diversity, and what organizational goals do they serve?
- Why is there confusion about what diversity means?
- How do corporations define diversity?
- How do DoD and the Services currently define diversity?
- What should be the goals of the Commission's recommended DoD definition of diversity?

Guiding Assumptions

Based on the MLDC charter, Commission discussions, and subsequent investigations, the subcommittee developed four sets of assumptions to guide its work.

The Recommended DoD Definition Applies to the Coast Guard in Spirit

Although the Coast Guard is not part of DoD, it is part of the Armed Forces and was included under the purview of the Commission based on its charter. Thus, the Definition of Diversity

Subcommittee included the Coast Guard in its investigation and the resultant issue papers. All of the definitions it developed to recommend to the Commission were formulated to apply to the Coast Guard as well, if only in spirit.

Diversity Management Is Not the Same as Equal Opportunity

Based on its investigations, the subcommittee concluded that diversity management and equal employment opportunity/equal opportunity (EEO/EO) are not one and the same. Both exploratory paths followed by the subcommittee—how other organizations, military or civilian, have decided to define diversity, and what empirical research supports—led the subcommittee to this finding.

Conceptually, the distinctions between the goals of EEO/EO and diversity management are clear:

- Diversity management relates to the impact of all kinds of diversity attributes (work-related as well as demographic) on mission capability, while EO initiatives focus on protecting members of specific demographic groups from illegal discrimination.
- Diversity management seeks to enable people from all groups to effectively manage their careers toward whatever goals they have, while EO initiatives ensure that there are no institutional barriers to advancement for members of protected groups.

Thus, the organizational goal of EO is protecting specified demographic groups of people from discrimination and removing institutional barriers to their advancement. The organizational goal of diversity management is harnessing the strengths of all employees to meet organizational goals.

In practice, although these goals are clearly distinct, organizations tend to “do diversity” with activities supportive of EO goals rather than diversity management goals. Since the implementation of diversity strategies and policies is still very much a work in progress for DoD and the Services, it is not surprising that servicemembers whom the Commission contacted (by survey or informational meetings) found it hard to distinguish diversity policies from EO policies.

These findings, coupled with the work the Services have already done regarding diversity management (see Issue Paper #34), led the subcommittee to assume that the Commission would consider recommending a definition that directly focuses on mission readiness rather than employment fairness, and, as such, it examined how aspects of diversity influence organizational effectiveness. This, in turn, led the subcommittee to assume that it must consider whether diversity defined narrowly, as implied by the charter’s focus on demographic diversity, may not harmonize with the assumption that diversity and EO have different goals.

Legal Aspects of Approaches to Diversity Have to Be Carefully Considered

The subcommittee also considered the legal aspects of taking a broad versus a narrowly demographic approach to the attributes that the Commission defines as diverse. Issue Paper #36 notes that policies to pursue demographic representation of minority groups are defensible. Issue Paper #35 explains that programs that use different standards for individuals based on their membership in one or more “suspect classes” are subject to the “strict scrutiny” test if challenged in court. Suspect classes include race, ethnicity, national origin, color, religion, and, to a lesser extent, gender. The courts have defined these classes on the basis of immutable characteristics, prior oppression, and relative lack of political power.

If DoD were to use different standards based on membership in one or more suspect classes in making admission, accession, assignment, promotion, or separation decisions, that policy would be

subject to “strict scrutiny.” Under this test, the use of different standards would be legal if DoD were able to prove that using them was necessary to achieve a “compelling government interest” and to demonstrate that their use was “narrowly tailored” to be effective and to infringe as little as possible on the rights of others.

In the absence of evidence that different standards serve a compelling government interest, the subcommittee assumed that the Commission would not recommend a definition that would subject DoD to strict scrutiny and would not pass the test—i.e., it would not propose a definition that defines diversity as representation of specific demographic groups. If the definition remained just a definition but no policies incorporating different standards were based on it, it might be less problematic. However, it makes little sense to have a definition that cannot support policy.

Some Attributes of Diversity Are Currently Being Addressed Elsewhere

The last set of facts and assumptions concerned human differences that would be encompassed by a more inclusive definition of diversity but that are not fully included in today’s military. The Commission recognizes that military requirements limit eligibility, as shown in Issue Paper #5. However, there are some policy limitations on individual differences among people who otherwise meet military requirements, such as differences in religious practices or sexual orientation, and the subcommittee could not find substantiated mission-based reasons for this.

The Commission is addressing one such “inclusion failure”—the DoD policy that excludes women from combat-related occupations and assignments. However, it chose to defer issues regarding exclusion of two other diversity attributes identified by the subcommittee to other bodies that are addressing them:

- A DoD task force has been established in the Office of the Secretary of Defense to review current DoD policy and policy implementation regarding accommodation of religious diversity. Issue Paper #22 concluded that current implementation of DoD’s policy on religious accommodation “may be at cross-purposes with the range of religious diversity found in today’s U.S. military.”
- A DoD task force has been reviewing the implications of changing the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law regarding diversity in sexual orientation.¹

Thus, the subcommittee assumed that these bodies would make recommendations that will be consistent with an inclusive definition of diversity. This assumption allowed the Commission to consider an inclusive definition without having to wait for other bodies to complete their work and provide recommendations.

¹ Congress repealed the law in December 2010.

Commission-Approved Recommendations Related to the Definition of Diversity²

The Commission recommends the following:

Recommendation 1—

The DoD shall expand its definition of diversity to read: Diversity is all the different characteristics and attributes of individuals that are consistent with Department of Defense core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the nation we serve.

- ***a. The DoD shall accompany this definition with a mission statement that prioritizes equity and inclusion and provides a purpose that is actionable and measurable.***
- ***b. The mission statement shall be accompanied by a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) to advance implementation.***

Organization of This Paper

The remaining sections of this paper are organized around the following questions:

- What are the elements of a definition of diversity, and what organizational goals do they serve?
- How do corporations define diversity?
- How do DoD and the Services currently define diversity?
- What should be the goals of the Commission's recommended diversity definition?

Each of these questions is explored in this paper, and this discussion is supported by information from the MLDC issue papers. An additional section addresses the charter task requirements. Finally, this decision paper closes with a description of the development and assessment of alternative definitions, an account of the Commission's deliberations of these alternatives, and its final recommendation.

² The recommendations discussed in this decision paper are the Commission-approved, topic-specific recommendations that resulted from the Commission's understanding and interpretation of the findings from this subcommittee. Following the approval of all of the subcommittee-specific recommendations, the Commission developed its final recommendations by combining recommendations across subcommittees to reduce overlap and repetition. Therefore, the recommendations presented in this paper do not map directly to the recommendations presented in the Commission's forthcoming final report.

DEFINING DIVERSITY: ELEMENTS AND APPROACHES

The lack of a clear definition of diversity can contribute to confusion and lack of focus for diversity policies, programs, and practices, as well as lukewarm support for them. Defining the term *diversity* requires a coherent framework based on research and rooted in organizationally relevant realities.

To develop a definition of diversity for DoD, the Definition of Diversity Subcommittee first examined some of the challenges associated with defining diversity, as well as ways in which definitions of diversity are frequently developed. The findings for this section helped inform the Commission's primary recommendation—to define diversity broadly (i.e., as *all* relevant differences between individuals, not just demographic differences), with an internally consistent goal.

Definitions of Diversity Relate Human Attributes and Organizational Goals

The Commission focused on how organizations approach and define diversity in terms of the way they conduct their activities, recognizing that other definitions have been developed for other purposes (e.g., Bell and Hartmann [2007] cite definitions from sociology, ethnic studies, anthropology, and political science). Organizational approaches to diversity typically define which individual differences are relevant to the organization and link this definition to specific organizational goals. There are two contrasting approaches to doing this, although some organizations incorporate both of them.

First, defining diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, supported by organizational activities often associated with EO programs, situates diversity in the long line of civil rights advances. In contrast, diversity researchers and practitioners who are focused on organizational performance tend to define diversity in terms of a wide range of differences between people that can affect how they work together. In this view, differences extend beyond demographic characteristics to include such work-related differences as occupation and organizational tenure.

Thus corporate and institutional diversity definitions, and their accompanying policy statements, generally specify the attributes they consider as “diverse” and the organizational goals that are related to those attributes. This creates a basic formula for an organization to use in defining diversity: *Diversity = X* human attributes in the service of *Y* organizational goals.

The first part of the definition, *X*, describes the human attributes that the definition covers. These attributes can be broad (i.e., they can include work-related as well as personal differences that research has found can matter in the workplace). These attributes may also be narrow, such as the demographic characteristics that EO policies and programs address.

The second part of the definition, *Y*, essentially describes the organization's goals for diversity. Goals can focus on benefits to individuals or society, such as fairness, or to the organization, such as improved performance.

Definitions that define diversity in narrow demographic terms tend to assert that it is important that organizations or businesses reflect the population as a whole, or that there is a need to redress or eliminate discrimination and promote fairness. This is the original basis behind the arguments for diversity in the military, an organization founded mostly on democratic ideals. A subsequent argument is that the Civil Rights Act applies to the military via the 14th Amendment. Consequently, the shorthand reference to the social set of diversity goals is generally “EO.”

Definitions that define diversity in terms of a broad range of human differences tend to assert that diversity can increase organizational effectiveness, performance, and innovation (Thomas, 2005).

Nonmilitary organizations are interested in using diversity to improve organizational outcomes, such as lowered costs, increased revenue and market share, and greater creativity and innovativeness. The military is also interested in improving its performance, but it focuses on different organizational outcomes, such as enhanced efficiency and readiness. The organizational set of goals is usually referred to as “the business case” or, in the case of the military, “the mission case.”

Definitions Clarify the Organization’s Goals for Addressing Diversity

As these contrasting approaches suggest, defining diversity implicitly leads organizations to answer the question, “Does diversity mean the same thing as equal opportunity, or does it mean something else?” Resolving this question is necessary for situating policies and programs within the organization, as well as assigning accountability for successfully implementing them.

Current definitions of diversity answer this question with varying degrees of coherence. Notably, some definitions imply that increasing the representation of racial and ethnic minorities among the organization’s employees and leaders will serve the goal of improving organizational performance. However, research finds no direct link between demographic representation and organizational capability, absent racial, ethnic, or gender diversity within the broader occupation or industry.³ Indeed, several researchers have found that the *type* of diversity is not a significant moderator of the positive versus negative effects of diversity per se.⁴ Thus, for the most part these definitions lack internal consistency.

A later section of this decision paper describes how DoD’s and the Services’ current definitions of diversity generally take the broad approach to attributes and either implicitly or explicitly adopt the mission-case goal (also see Issue Paper #3). However, the MLDC charter addresses what can most accurately be characterized as EO issues and thus implies a narrow, demographic definition of attributes. This is quite different from the path on which DoD and the Services have embarked.

Thus the question for the Commission was twofold. First, should it recommend that DoD retain the broad range of attributes in its current definition or shift to a narrow one? Second, if the Commission adopted the narrow range of attributes implied by the charter, how should it reconcile that decision with DoD’s and the Services’ mission-case goals for diversity? To a large extent, answering the latter question answered the former.

Sources of Confusion in Defining Diversity

The major source of confusion regarding the definition of diversity in the military is the inconsistency between the professed goals of diversity policies, as expressed in the diversity policy statements that the Services have issued, and the actual goals of the programs that operationalize those policies. This dissonance leads many servicemembers to think that diversity is affirmative action under another name (Issue Paper #18).

Specifically, the Services’ diversity policy statements say that the goal is increased capability, but the diversity programs that Service representatives described to the Commission largely focus on a goal of increasing the representation of specified demographic groups. Moreover, the key metric of success is the extent to which the Services increase representation with regard to whatever baseline is chosen. The policy statements, and Service briefings delivered to the Commission, often asserted that increasing the presence of underrepresented demographic groups increases organizational capability,

³ See, for example, Joshi & Roh, 2009, for a recent meta-analysis regarding research into the performance impact of demographic versus task-oriented diversity.

⁴ See Bowers et al., 2000; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; and Webber & Donahue, 2001.

but there is little consistent evidence for this link (Williams and O'Reilly [1998] review three decades of empirical research). Recent research indicates that, under certain conditions, increased demographic diversity may enhance performance, but without an inclusive culture (i.e., one in which individuals of all backgrounds experience a sense of belonging *and* experience their uniqueness as being valued) and supportive leadership, it is unlikely to do so (Shore et al., forthcoming).

The persistence of defining diversity in terms of population representation is seen in the report of the most recent attempt to address the topic that is the focus of the Commission—i.e., the relative absence of minorities in military leadership:

In 2003 the Assistant Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs from each of the military Services and the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), asked The Defense Business Board (DBB) for assistance in developing strategies to achieve broader diversity in the general and flag officer and Senior Executive Service ranks. This request specifically equated “diversity” with increasing representation of under-represented population groups, namely black or African American, Hispanic or Latino/a, Asian American or Pacific Islander, and American Indian or Alaskan Native. (Defense Business Board Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES Ranks, 2004)

The guidance that the board received included the following:

- The DBB should avoid engaging in definitional clarifications of the term *diversity*.
- The DBB should not deliver judgments about the value of diversity as it relates to DoD.

In other words, the DBB was not allowed to address the organizational goals for diversity, let alone define the term. Instead, the ultimate objective of its activity was to identify best practices from the private sector that contribute to a proactive, strategic approach to recruiting, developing, retaining, and promoting minority personnel and to adapt these best practices to recommendations applicable to the DoD’s military and civilian structure (Defense Business Board Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES Ranks, 2004).

The DBB effort was founded on the assumption that increasing representation of minority populations in senior leadership could be linked to strategic organizational goals (Defense Business Board Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES Ranks, 2004)—in itself another source of confusion. Whether based on research or intuition, people who question this link often perceive “diversity” as being about advancing nontraditional demographic groups. Indeed, respondents to a Commission-sponsored survey generally agreed that diversity was about demographics, especially race, ethnicity, and gender (Issue Paper #18).⁵ Consistent with these findings, servicemembers reported in informational meetings conducted by Commissioners that diversity is about demographics (Issue Paper #18).

However, in these informational meetings, some servicemembers volunteered that diversity was about any differences that may exist among individuals, including such differences as religion, hometown location, education, occupational specialty, values, general background, and different lifetime experiences. Furthermore, when discussing what the term *diversity* meant to them, those

⁵ Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) with statements about the meaning of diversity. The average score for a statement asserting that diversity is about demographics was 3.96, and the average score on a statement asserting that diversity is different from EO was 3.69.

servicemembers focused on diversity as being anything that could help contribute to different perspectives and learning within their unit.

These servicemembers perceive the potential of diversity programs to meet the stated goal of diversity policy statements: to increase organizational effectiveness. This perception has its root in a seminal article, “From Affirmative Action to Affirming Diversity,” in which Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., distinguished diversity from affirmative action, asking, “Why don’t we turn [America’s diversity] to our advantage?” (1990, p. 107). Like those concerned with population representation, Thomas (who briefed the Commission in April 2010) was concerned about the slow progress of minorities and women to senior positions in U.S. organizations. However, he concluded that affirmative action would not achieve this goal. Instead, managing organizations to get the full potential of an increasingly diverse workforce would be more likely to diversify leadership and also to make the organization more effective.

For Thomas, and diversity researchers in general, diversity is about improving organizational performance by acknowledging, accepting, and leveraging differences (see, for example, Ely & Thomas, 2001; Herring, 2009; Thomas & Ely, 1996). However, this is a subtle concept, and many professionals concerned with advancing minorities have not fully grasped it. As one Commissioner observed, they (e.g., military EO practitioners) changed the sign on the door but not what goes on inside. But, as Thomas foresaw, evaluation research on diversity management in corporations has found that such common programs as diversity training, diversity evaluations, mentoring (except for black women), and affinity groups are relatively ineffective in increasing the share of minorities and women in top management (leadership) and often result in backlash from those whom they exclude (Kalev et al., 2006; Dobbin presented the research to the Commission at a May 2010 meeting).

Thus, the Commission needed to develop a definition that would not cause confusion—i.e., one in which the individual attributes described in the definition are consonant with the organizational goal. Definitions that link a narrow set of attributes to a goal of fairness to people who possess those attributes are not confusing, nor are definitions that link a broad set of attributes to a goal of improved performance for the organization as a whole. The Commission had to choose between these two internally consistent but different approaches.

With this understanding of the basic strategies for developing a definition of diversity to be used throughout DoD, the Definition of Diversity Subcommittee investigated how both nonmilitary and military organizations define diversity and reviewed academic literature on what a diversity definition should be designed to achieve. These are the next three sections of this decision paper, and they correspond to the remaining guiding questions.

HOW NONMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS DEFINE DIVERSITY

This section summarizes how nonmilitary organizations are currently defining diversity and how the meaning and value they place on diversity defines their approaches to diversity management. In this part of its investigation, the subcommittee focused primarily on corporations, rather than other public sector organizations, because that is where the business case for diversity has been developed, operationalized, and assessed.⁶ It also, however, looked at the current diversity definition and statement from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) because it is particularly instructive, as well as relevant, given that it is the official home of the Coast Guard.

In its 2003 investigation of private sector best practices, the DBB Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES [Senior Executive Service] Ranks found that the organizations interviewed had moved beyond a traditional definition of diversity limited to narrow categories of gender and race: “Rather, diversity defines an inclusive culture where differences in people are valued and performance is recognized regardless of background.” Thus, they found, diversity has an amorphous and changing definition that includes a broad range of personal and work-related attributes (Defense Business Board Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES Ranks, 2004, p. 14).

To put this finding into context, the DBB noted that “best-practice” companies had moved from an initial focus on meeting the legal requirement of EEO in the 1970s, followed by affirmative action in the 1980s, to their current focus on the broader incorporation of diversity as a “business imperative.” Each step in this progression built on the previous one. The DBB concluded that the primary challenge encountered by private corporations has been to develop a corporate culture in which real requirements drive business decisions *and* everyone understands that people who are different can be assets to the corporation.

Meaning and Value of Diversity in Corporate Contexts

Table 1 provides excerpts from diversity statements that show how some well-known corporations approach defining diversity (see also Issue Paper #3). Some of these organizations explicitly define what they mean by diversity; others define the term implicitly in diversity statements. Whether explicit or implicit, these definitions incorporate more diversity attributes than does the MLDC charter. Moreover, they address the business utility of diversity, typically in a very direct way.

The corporate diversity statements quoted in Table 1 share two broad themes:

- Diversity is recognizing, appreciating, respecting, and utilizing a variety of individual attributes, not just race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Diversity creates organizational advantages through the synergy of diverse ideas and people.

In addition, these statements are situated within the context of specific business needs and characteristics. For example, GE’s definition focuses on functional (occupational) diversity and community diversity within a global context. Other corporate definitions implicitly recognize that diversity among their customers calls for diversity among their employees.

⁶ In addition, a separate task in the MLDC charter mandated that the Commission examine “[t]he incorporation of private sector practices that have been successful in cultivating diverse leadership.”

Table 1. Selected Corporate Meanings of Diversity

| Corporate Entity | Diversity Statement |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Disney Interactive Media Group | "It is critical that as a global business, we have people from different backgrounds and experiences that truly understand the international markets and communities we operate in." |
| Lockheed Martin | "The definition of [diversity] has become much broader than its traditional focus on creating a workforce that is diverse from the standpoint of race, ethnicity, gender and age. Diversity today also emphasizes inclusion. Inclusion means embracing employees with different working styles, capabilities, communication styles and life experiences, so that all individuals in the workforce are valued for what they bring to the enterprise and have the support they need to succeed." |
| Walmart | "At Walmart, we believe that business wins when everyone matters, and that the true strength of diversity is unleashed when each associate is encouraged to reach their full potential. Diversity then becomes the foundation for an inclusive, sustainable business that embraces and respects differences, develops our associates, serves our customers, partners with our communities, and builds upon an inclusive supplier base." |
| General Electric (GE) | "We are more than 300,000 people with jobs that range from biochemist to finance specialist to wind energy engineer. . . . We're diverse, supporting our communities in more than 140 countries. We are GE." |

SOURCES: Disney Interactive Media, n.d.; General Electric Company, 2009; Lockheed Martin, 2009; Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., n.d.

These themes suggest that in defining diversity, these organizations have considered the following questions:

- Is diversity more than simple population representation?
- Is diversity the same as EO?
- Why is diversity valuable to our organization?
- How is diversity valuable to our organization?

Meanwhile, some corporate diversity statements, such as those developed by Lockheed and Walmart, directly address the diversity climate they intend to maintain. "Inclusion/inclusiveness" is the key theme for these organizations, and it implies the approach they will take to managing diversity.⁷ This approach fits the definition of an inclusive organization put forth by Holvino et al. (2004): an organization "in which the diversity of knowledge and perspectives that members of different groups bring to the organization has shaped its strategy, its work, its management and operating systems, and its core values and norms for success."

Diversity Definitions and Organizational Approaches to Diversity Management

When it comes to approaches to managing diversity, corporate diversity statements rarely, if ever, specify the EEO/affirmative action approach of mitigating past discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity for protected minorities, even when this is the focus of the organization's current diversity activities. Instead, they generally situate their approach to diversity within one or both of the following perspectives:

- Perspective 1: People bring differences to work, and we should respect them as long as they are consistent with our values and organizational goals.

⁷ For its purposes, the Commission defines *diversity management* as the ways in which organizations drive or affect the impact of diversity on key organizational outcomes through plans, policies, and practices.

- Perspective 2: The differences that people bring to work can be useful to our organization.

Occasionally, organizations derive their definition of diversity from a third, more political perspective:

- Perspective 3: Diversity has political value as a “brand” (it reflects the people the organization represents or serves), as a part of public relations efforts aimed at interest groups, or as a way to observe legislated goals.

To illustrate these concepts, Table 2 parses the diversity statement of DHS, which combines all three perspectives as it unfolds, and suggests how they relate to one another.

Table 2. Approaches Reflected Within the Department of Homeland Security Diversity Statement

| Selected Paragraphs from the DHS Diversity Statement | Related Perspective | Reflection of Perspective in Diversity Statement |
|---|---------------------|---|
| “With a mission and occupations as unique as those in the Department of Homeland Security, we need a workforce that is equally diverse and <i>reflects the face of the nation</i> that it serves and protects.” | Perspective 3 | This section indicates that demographic representation is necessary to accomplish the DHS mission. |
| “Improving diversity benefits the Department by <i>enhancing our capabilities</i> through increased points of view, creativity, and life experiences. We . . . seek applicants that provide the widest range of solutions, ideas, perspectives, skills, experiences and backgrounds to protect and secure America.” | Perspective 2 | Diversity here is defined in a broad sense and is not limited to demographic attributes; it suggests that diversity is necessary for increasing DHS capabilities. |
| “The Department promotes diversity as a matter of <i>inclusion, equity and fairness</i> and optimizes the talents, characteristics, origins and experiences of everyone working to carry out our mission.” | Perspective 1 | This element of the diversity definition builds on the traditional fairness approach and commits the DHS to both recognizing and valuing differences. |

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.

CURRENT DOD AND SERVICE DEFINITIONS OF DIVERSITY

This section summarizes the current status of diversity definitions and related activities within DoD and the Services and identifies the decisions they have made around the two basic elements of a definition—attributes and goals. With this investigation, the Definition of Diversity Subcommittee sought not only to learn from the Services’ various efforts but also to explicitly acknowledge and give weight to the considerable amount of work that the military services have already undertaken.

The DoD Definition

With the release of Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 1020.02, DoD issued a definition of diversity on February 5, 2009—about four months after the passage of legislation establishing the Commission. Specifically, DoDD 1020.02, “Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (EO) in the Department of Defense,” became DoD’s primary policy statement about diversity and diversity management, providing definitions of both concepts and assigning responsibility for the oversight and implementation of diversity management efforts within the department.⁸ The directive defines diversity as “[t]he different characteristics and attributes of individuals (U.S. Department of Defense, 2009, Section 3b).” This definition is quite broad, implicitly including characteristics and attributes that are not protected by law.

Viewed within the context of the corporate best practices described in the previous section, this definition is incomplete, as it defines diversity attributes without defining the organization’s diversity goals. However, according to Issue Paper #50, it does this implicitly via the definition of diversity management provided in the directive, which ties diversity management to enhanced capability and mission readiness: “Diversity management. The plans made and programs undertaken to identify in the aggregate the diversity within the Department of Defense to enhance DoD capabilities and achieve mission readiness” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2009, Section 3c).

Thus, although DoD’s current definition of diversity is incomplete, the DoD directive addresses both of the fundamental questions about defining diversity. First, what is the organization’s goal for diversity? And second, how is diversity different from EO? The directive chooses the goal of improving organizational performance and a broad over a narrow set of attributes, and so distinguishes diversity from EO in terms of both goals and attributes.

Service Definitions and Policy Statements

The current DoD definition is consistent with the diversity definitions and policy statements the Services have developed. Issue Paper #20 describes the work each Service has already done to define diversity. Four of them have done so explicitly, and the fifth has done so implicitly.

Because these definitions and policy statements were developed with a considerable investment of resources and time—far more than the Commission had available—the Commission viewed them with considerable deference. Subcommittee interviews with Service representatives found that across the Services, the development process was collaborative and broadly representative. In all cases, the effort to develop a definition was spearheaded by a commanding officer committed to increasing awareness of diversity within the Service branch. In addition, each Service took pains to have a team

⁸ For more information about DoDD 1020.02, see Issue Paper #50.

of representatives from a wide swath of its membership; the development efforts were therefore not consigned solely to a human resources or personnel department. Each Service undertook a thoughtful, strategic approach to ensure that the definitions and policy statements were clearly linked to its own determination of mission readiness and its core values. Each Service also wants its definition and policy statement to be useful to its units (Issue Paper #20, p. 3). Table 3 shows each definition along with the date of its release and the time invested in its development.

Table 3. Services' Definitions of Diversity, with Dates Finalized and Duration of Development

| Organization | Definition | Date Finalized | Length of Formal Development Process |
|--------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| DoD | "The different characteristics and attributes of individuals." | February 5, 2009 | Unknown |
| Army | "Army diversity is defined 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." | April 1, 2009 | 1 year |
| Air Force | "Diversity in the Air Force is broadly defined as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission. Air Force diversity includes, but is not limited to, personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity and gender." | March 27, 2008 | 1 year |
| Navy | "The term diversity encompasses not only the traditional categories of race, religion, age, gender, national origin, but also all the different characteristics and attributes of individuals that enhance the mission readiness of the Department of the Navy and strengthen the capabilities of our Total Force: Sailors, Marines, Government Civilians, and Contractors." | August 27, 2007 | A few weeks |
| Marine Corps | Currently, no definition per se; marines are included in the Navy definition above. Marine Corps diversity policy holds that "Diversity in the background and experience of those who join the Marine Corps is not only a reflection of American society but also a key element to maintaining the strength and flexibility required to meet today's national security challenges." | February 2008 (policy) | Months |
| Coast Guard | "Diversity is not a program or policy—it is a state of being." | 2006 or 2007 | A few weeks |

SOURCES: Allen, n.d.; Conway, n.d.; Preston et al., 2009; Winter, 2007; Wynne, 2008.

These Service-specific definitions of diversity are embedded within "diversity policy statements." Diversity statements are typically one-page memos written by commanding officers that outline the perceived need for diversity and what it entails (see Allen, n.d.; Conway, n.d.; Preston et al., 2009; Winter, 2007; Wynne, 2008). Each Service diversity statement does the following:

- defines diversity broadly
- links diversity to mission-readiness and/or execution
- links diversity to the Service's core values
- emphasizes that inclusion and equity are ways to ensure that diversity goals are met
- asserts that the combination of individuals' talents and qualities makes the Service stronger (e.g., in terms of versatility, innovation, or working with people from different cultures)
- focuses on the continuum of a servicemember's career and, therefore, on the need to recruit, retain, and promote a diverse force.

Diversity Attributes and Goals

The MLDC charter directs the Commission to focus on race, ethnicity, and gender. However, the Services' diversity policies have adopted the goal of mission capability. This goal calls for a broader range of attributes than race, ethnicity, and gender.

Issue Paper #14 summarizes research that shows that demographic representation per se does not increase operational performance, here conceived of as mission capability. (The next section discusses the demographic business case for recruiting and retention.) However, a wide array of individual differences, including but not limited to the traditional demographic attributes, can be positive for mission capability. (See, for example, van Knippenberg et al., 2004.)

In this vein, the DoD Services have all chosen to define diversity using the broad versus the narrow palette of diversity attributes, as described earlier. The Navy and the Air Force definitions include specific demographic attributes, but their lists extend beyond the "minority members" that Congress specified in the MLDC charter. The Navy and the Army definitions also explicitly include civilian employees, family members, and others who are not servicemembers. All four DoD Service definitions and policy statements assert organizational diversity goals.

Issue Paper #20, which also includes the Coast Guard, reports that the DoD Services had five explicit motivators when they developed their diversity policies and accompanying definitions:

1. *Differentiating diversity from equal opportunity.* The Service representatives cited an organizational need to distinguish diversity, and therefore diversity management or leadership training, from EO. For each Service, EO is a legal concept in place to ensure that no servicemember experiences discrimination because of his or her gender, religion, race, or ethnicity or by being a member of any other legally protected group. In contrast, diversity is more about the spirit or intent of equity and inclusion. For example, the Marine Corps representative noted that the aim of diversity is to "bring in all the talents in an inclusive way." The Navy representative mentioned the importance of retaining EO requirements by considering diversity separately.
2. *Mission readiness.* Each Service representative noted that diversity was important to being mission ready. Most Services, however, did not seem to understand how diversity is actually linked to mission capability (as described in Issue Paper #14), nor do any of the policy statements articulate such a link clearly. The Marine Corps diversity policy statement specifically notes that diversity is "a key element to maintaining the strength and flexibility required to meet today's national security challenges" (Conway, n.d). The "business case" for diversity was mentioned as particularly important for the Navy, which developed a broad, overarching definition to capture the entire potential population of the Navy. According to the Air Force's diversity website, diversity is defined as mission-oriented: exploiting the

uniqueness of each airman to enhance organizational effectiveness and readiness. In contrast, EO is defined as compliance-oriented: ensuring that airmen are treated fairly and work in an environment free of harassment and discrimination (U.S. Air Force, n.d.).

3. *Representation.* For the Navy, the goal has been to ensure that the officer corps reflects the enlisted force. The subcommittee heard that it had become clear to commanding officers that enlistees were receiving the wrong message: There was a lack of minorities or women in commanding positions relative to whom they were commanding. In contrast, the Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard see the U.S. population, not the enlisted force, as their benchmark. The Coast Guard's diversity statement sees such representation as important to its relevance: "To ensure that we continue this level of excellence and thus maintain our hard-earned relevance in the minds of the American people, it is imperative that our workforce be reflective of the society that we serve" (U.S. Coast Guard, n.d.). This is a motivation often cited in making the business case for diversity (Issue Paper #22).
4. *Cultural competence.* Cultural competence seems to unite representation and mission readiness in relation to the Services' global reach—i.e., it assumes that a diverse force will be more competent in dealing with different cultures. In their documentation, the Army and Air Force note the need for diversity to ensure cultural competence overseas. The Army's diversity statement argues that improving the diversity of the Army will increase the cultural astuteness of its members.
5. *Roadmap for leadership.* The diversity policies are also intended to provide clarity for leadership—to act as a roadmap for recruiting, retaining, and promoting servicemembers. For example, the Air Force decided to provide a list of potential characteristics under which diversity could be defined so that the diversity statement could be used as a tool for leadership development and commanding officers could tailor the definition to their needs. Similarly, Marine Corps interviewees stressed that the policy statement was meant to be internalized by leadership so that they could emphasize it in their daily operations yet put their personal stamp on it.

A sixth, implicit, motivator was fairness, usually expressed in terms of optimizing the potential of all personnel and/or providing EO to develop and progress. In no way did the Services believe that diversity programs and policies eliminate the need for EO programs and policies. Rather, the Services tend to want diversity programs to leverage what is already in place and see strong EO efforts, such as assuring fairness in promotions, as creating a climate in which diversity efforts can meet their organizational goals.

The Coast Guard does not define diversity per se but rather its approach to diversity—"diversity is a state of being." However, its diversity statement starts with a goal—population representation, and the attributes it lists are specifically racial and ethnic. The Coast Guard's diversity statement sees such representation as important to its relevance: "To ensure that we continue this level of excellence and thus maintain our hard-earned relevance in the minds of the American people, it is imperative that our workforce be reflective of the society that we serve" (U.S. Coast Guard, n.d., p. 5). Thus, by "including representation, ensuring equal access, and providing opportunity to all facets of our society," the Coast Guard definition fits into the older, EO-based paradigms of diversity approaches. The activities emphasized by this diversity statement and the specific goals for them—improving retention and promotion within the minority workforce, especially for senior officer levels—fit directly within the MLDC charter.

The next section lays out the underlying logic for choosing a business-case, or mission-case, diversity goal. Since DoD and its Services have made this choice, the Commission would have needed to have good reasons for recommending a definition of diversity that did not share this goal.

DEFINING DIVERSITY: BUSINESS-CASE GOALS

Because the Services' approaches to defining and managing diversity are generally informed by business- or mission-case goals, this section describes the different categories of business-case goals and considers their implications for defining diversity.

Business-case goals for diversity are rooted in two sets of arguments for improved organizational performance from diversity: demographic and operational.⁹ The demographic business case is where confusion between societal and organizational goals tends to occur, caused by the prominent role of a particular metric—population representation—that has its source in EO programs and policies. However, demographic business-case arguments are about organizational capability, not fairness to individuals.

Demographic Business-Case Arguments

The “unique, strategic requirements for a diverse workforce and leadership” (Defense Business Board Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES Ranks, 2004) that the DBB perceived for DoD lend themselves to demographic business-case arguments. These arguments derive from the self-evident assumption that, given demographic trends in the nation's labor supply, workplace diversity is inevitable. That is, demographic diversity is becoming more prevalent inside organizations and businesses—both in the executive suite and on the shop floor—and outside organizations and businesses—among customers, suppliers, and competitors.

Given that demographic diversity is already here, pervasive, and growing, demographic business-case arguments stress the importance of managing it to achieve desired organization and business outcomes. These arguments suggest two ways for an organization to look at demographic diversity:

- *Cost arguments* suggest that ineffectively managing the growing presence of women and minorities in the labor force is costly. Such costs can be *direct* (e.g., costs are produced by markedly increased turnover and absenteeism among employees who are in the minority in their work group [Thompson & Gooler, 1996] or *indirect* (e.g., reduced productivity is the result of conflict or reduced communication between employees who are different [Jehn et al., 1999; Pelled, 1996; Pelled et al., 1999]). In theory, then, organizations that are successful in managing and retaining employees from different backgrounds will avoid these costs and gain a competitive advantage, thus making a business case for diversity management.
- *Resource-acquisition arguments* extend cost arguments into the future. They suggest that businesses and organizations that successfully attract and retain women and minorities—and engage them fully in meeting the organization's goals—will gain a competitive advantage because those groups are increasing their share of the workforce. This competitive advantage is potentially twofold. First, the organization can recruit from a larger pool and thus acquire superior talent. (Recall that this is a primary motivation of the Service diversity policy statements described in the previous section.) Second, once

⁹ This distinction reflects two main strands in diversity research: the self-categorization perspective and the information/decisionmaking perspective. See Williams and O'Reilly, 1998, and von Knippenberg et al., 2004; the latter integrates the two strands in a categorization-elaboration model.

hired, women and minorities can help their organizations do a better job of serving increasingly diverse external audiences. Because women and minorities are also consumers and stakeholders—that is, they have an active role outside of businesses and organizations—an organization with a diverse workforce should (1) improve marketing capability, (2) be better able to meet the particular needs of diverse consumers by understanding those needs, and (3) positively represent the company in a marketplace that increasingly values diversity.¹⁰

Resource-acquisition arguments have particular relevance for the military, where recruiting and retaining servicemembers is of prime importance. In the military, successful recruiting is a marketing priority, and research has found, for instance, that minority recruiters are more successful in recruiting minority members (Dertouzos & Garber, 2006). Similarly, advancing women and minorities into senior positions could be helpful in managing a diverse workforce, given research that suggests that individuals are more likely to be seen as leaders when people are able to identify with them (Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003).

Whether diversity initiatives based on either set of demographic business-case arguments actually produce the benefits they seek is still being investigated, although the evidence so far is generally positive (Issue Paper #14). However, the question for the Commission is whether diversity initiatives developed according to these arguments increase the presence of underrepresented groups in top leadership, and the answer is that, so far, they have not. Across industry as a whole, white men still hold a disproportionate share of management positions: In 2008, over 75 percent of the nation's chief executive officers were men, and 90 percent were white non-Hispanics (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). And the Commission found that senior military leadership is still overwhelmingly white and male.¹¹

Moreover, some researchers have found that diversity initiatives based on demographic business-case arguments have had a negative impact on promotions for minorities and women by “racializing” certain job functions (Collins, 1997). This finding extends to the military: A DoD study on career progression among women and minority officers found that black officers may have been hampered by their frequent “removal” to recruiting and other diversity-related specialties (Gilroy et al., 1999).

Operational Business-Case Arguments

These unsatisfactory results—a lag in representation in leadership and “dead-ending” some employees from nontraditional groups—have led diversity researchers and practitioners to pay close attention to the evolution of operational business-case arguments for diversity. This set of arguments says that managing a diverse workforce to avoid costs, and harnessing the positive aspects of that diversity, will produce superior operational outcomes, largely through improved cohesion, creativity, and decisionmaking. The positive aspects of diversity that underlie these arguments fall into two categories: (1) diverse perspectives and attitudes and (2) cultural competencies.

In terms of *diverse perspectives and attitudes*, researchers have found support for the argument that diverse groups bring a greater array of perspectives to bear on problems and, thus, can suggest answers to problems that groups made up of homogeneous members may not think of. In addition to

¹⁰ Herring (2009) provides a recent empirical test of these arguments.

¹¹ A series of issue papers showing the demographic profiles of officers, enlisted personnel, and warrant officers in both the Active and Reserve Components documents this fact. See Issue Papers #13, #19, #44, #54, and #55. In addition, Issue Paper #26 shows the extent to which top active-duty officer and enlisted leadership are representative of selected benchmark populations.

simply adding perspectives, diversity helps avoid “groupthink” by forcing the group into a deliberative process that may yield a superior selection of alternatives (Cox & Blake, 1991).

This argument has been widely studied, and the evidence pertaining to it relates mostly to the impact of diversity on work-group productivity rather than on individual or organizational productivity. A key feature of this research is that it studies the impact of many kinds of diversity, not just race, ethnicity, and gender. All kinds of diversity, including age, occupation or skill set, and position in the organization have been found to have positive effects on operational outcomes.¹² Thus, researchers have concluded that it is “difference” per se that can create superior performance, as people master how to work with each other productively.

Research has not found support for a *cultural competencies* argument, wherein a few researchers have proposed that some demographic groups have different capabilities than others (e.g., women have better verbal skills than men), such that their presence would improve organizational performance. Because a culturally “different” group has to live in two cultures simultaneously, they also argue that members of such a group will tend to be more flexible and have greater propensity for creative thinking. Thus, whereas the diverse-perspectives argument applies to multiple dimensions of diversity, the cultural-competencies argument is specifically predicated on race, ethnicity, and gender.

Issue Paper #4 shows that average differences in personality traits across race, ethnicity, and gender groups are small to moderate in size and that differences in personality are larger within demographic groups than between them. More importantly, the issue for organizations is not what different people bring to the table but how the resultant diversity functions to change operational outcomes. By and large, research does not support the argument that simply putting people with very different personalities into a workplace will improve organizational performance. For instance, field studies of the operational impact of demographic differences in managerial and communication styles have found little or no effects on organizational outcomes (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Jackson, 1992).

Note that the term “cultural competencies” is not the same as “cultural competence.” The Commission understood the former to mean identity-based differences in competencies and the latter to mean skill in dealing with people from other cultures.

Organizational Perspectives on Diversity

Research in organizations with outwardly similar diversity profiles, including the presence of minorities among senior leadership, has identified three different diversity perspectives that usefully situate the role of business-case goals among the broad array of potential diversity goals. These perspectives are (1) discrimination and fairness, (2) access and legitimacy, and (3) integration and learning. This paradigm, developed in two related papers by Thomas and Ely (1996) and Ely and Thomas (2001), has been widely adopted by diversity researchers. The first perspective aims for a demographically representative workforce, but new members may be expected to assimilate to cultural norms that are defined and upheld by the dominant majority. The second perspective seeks diversity to match important constituents and markets, thus reinforcing the different identity of new members. In contrast, the third perspective is based on broad principles of integration and inclusion. It assumes that workers from underrepresented groups bring different ideas and approaches to designing processes, framing tasks, communicating ideas, and so on, thus providing fresh and meaningful approaches to work from which the organization can learn and grow (Thomas & Ely, 1996).

¹² Williams and O’Reilly (1998) offer a useful review of this research. See also Joshi and Roh, 2009; Webber & Donahue, 2001; and van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007.

Research suggests that gaining operational improvements from diversity depends on the organization's diversity perspective. For example, Thomas and Ely (1996) find that organizations that adopt the discrimination and fairness perspective tend to measure diversity success against recruiting and retention goals. In that approach to diversity, there are no substantial operational improvements because "[t]he staff . . . gets diversified, but the work does not" (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 81).

In contrast, diversity is more likely to be positively related to operational performance in organizations that adopt the integration and learning perspectives. This occurs because these organizations internalize both visible and job-related differences among employees in such a way that they learn and grow *because* of these differences, not in spite of them (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Richard et al., 2003). For example, a financial services company had assumed that aggressive cold-calling was the only successful sales technique and rewarded employees according to the number of calls they made. As part of an internal diversity review, the company discovered that profitable employees also included women who had found that relationship-building, rather than cold calls, was also an effective sales technique (Thomas & Ely, 1996). These authors concluded that "the leadership's vision of the purpose of a diversified workforce" is at the root of an organization's ability to gain performance benefits from diversity (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 90).

These perspectives are not mutually exclusive in terms of the business-case arguments. First, demographic business-case arguments call for hiring and utilizing women and ethnic minorities to attain demographic outcomes, such as recruiting and marketing (perspective 1), but operational business-case arguments call for including them in the core culture and decisionmaking of the organization (perspective 3) (see, for example, Shore et al., forthcoming). Second, demographic business-case arguments focus on reflecting the external customer base (perspective 2), but operational business-case arguments focus on integrating diverse ideas to ensure that thinking is not monolithic, not just in the service of external constituents but rather to improve internal processes (perspective 3).

Finally, note that operational business-case outcomes are more dependent on the creation of inclusive climates than are demographic business-case outcomes. In the spirit of Ely and Thomas's learning and integration culture, inclusion efforts focus on creating the kind of organizational environments in which relational (i.e., demographic) sources of discrimination are eliminated and the likelihood of benefiting from integrative decisionmaking is increased. As a paper by Shore et al. (forthcoming) articulates, inclusion is achieved when individuals of all backgrounds experience a sense of belonging and experience their uniqueness as being valued. Put another way, in an inclusive climate people are integrated and not expected to assimilate to some majority standard; people do not feel the need to conform to a narrowly defined norm in order to belong; and their perspectives are valued, listened to, and incorporated (when appropriate) into core decisionmaking.

Implications of Business-Case Arguments for a Diversity Definition

The empirically supported operational business-case arguments essentially define diversity as including more attributes than the demographic ones that are subject to EO laws and practices. However, they also imply that successful EO programs and practices are a necessary requirement for achieving the inclusion of different people that can, if managed, deliver the performance benefits of diversity. Obviously, an inclusive environment is incompatible with noncompliance with EO law and/or institutional barriers to advancement for some demographic groups. The earlier discussion of corporate diversity definitions shows how organizations are resolving the dissonance between limiting the definition of diversity to the narrow set of EO attributes while asserting a business-case goal.

Most importantly, including a broad range of diversity attributes shifts the focus from individuals to the relations between them. Instead of labeling some individuals as “diverse” or the target of diversity efforts, and thus implying that others are not, it focuses on all the individuals in the organization and how they work together to achieve their common organizational goal. Over 20 years ago, Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., launched this perspective by joining EO concerns with the longstanding body of research into workplace diversity (Thomas, 1990). Thomas, who addressed the Commission at its April 2010 meeting, gave the 2007 DoD Diversity Summit this definition: “Diversity embraces the differences, similarities, tensions, and complexities that characterize a group. Diversity management is the craft or process of making quality decisions in the midst of those differences, similarities, tensions, and complexities” (Lim et al., 2008).

This shift is subtle but meaningful in terms of what organizations actually “do” with diversity. As Thomas put it, “Changes in demographics lead to changes in representation. Changing attitudes about being different leads to diversity.” Or, as others who addressed the Commission put it: Diversity is not about counting heads but about making heads count.

REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY THE CHARTER TASK

The charter task addressed by the Definition of Diversity Subcommittee requires the Commission's recommended definition of diversity to be "congruent with the core values and vision of DoD for the future workforce." To properly fulfill this requirement, the subcommittee had to learn about both elements of the requirement and consider what it means for a diversity definition to be congruent with them.

Diversity and Core Values

Although the charter task is not explicit in what it means for the diversity definition to be "congruent with the core values" of DoD, the definition formula provided in the previous sections suggests that either the attributes or the goals, or both, should reflect the ideals embodied in them. Or, at minimum, neither the attributes nor the goals should contradict the core values.

Core Values as Diversity Attributes

Issue Paper #6 reports that the DoD core values are leadership, professionalism, and technical know-how. However, DoD also places particular emphasis on the special core values that everyone in uniform must live by: "duty, integrity, ethics, honor, courage, and loyalty" (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). Although DoD provides an umbrella set of core values for uniformed personnel, each Service brings to the table its own identity in the form of Service-specific core values, which serve as common ground for all its members. A definition of diversity that is consistent with DoD's core values should also be consistent with the Services' core values. The core values for DoD and each of the Services are

- DoD: Duty, integrity, ethics, honor, courage, and loyalty
- Air Force: Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do
- Army: Loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage
- Coast Guard: Honor, respect, and devotion to duty
- Marine Corps: Honor, courage, and commitment
- Navy: Honor, courage, and commitment.

In addition, each Service has its own take on core values. For example, the Marine Corps' core values "form the bedrock of [a marine's] character" (Sturkey, 2001), the Air Force's core values "tell us the price of admission to the Air Force itself" (U.S. Air Force, 1997), and the Army's core values are "what being a soldier is all about" (U.S. Army, n.d.). And beyond these irreproachable values, each Service has a more subtle set of values that make up its identity, as illustrated in recruiting literature, including such classics as "a few good men" and "be all that you can be."

Making the attributes in a diversity definition consistent with these core values adds a new element that is not addressed by either the demographic or operational business-case approaches to diversity management. Clearly, attributes based on the core values listed above go beyond the narrow demographic attributes. But, at the same time, the core values imply limits on the broader set of attributes implied by the operational business-case approach. For example, recall the current DoD definition of diversity: "the different characteristics and attributes of individuals." A definition so all-inclusive can conceivably incorporate characteristics that may not be consistent with those implied by

the core values, even if they do, in fact, affect capability. Thus, incorporating core values into the diversity attributes requires making a call about how purely the attributes must be defined by the goals.

Diversity Goals and Core Values

Applying core values to the goals component of the diversity definition further highlights the complexity of the relationship between an organization's diversity definition and its core values. The previous section identified two categories of organizational, or business-case, goals that might be incorporated in a diversity definition: demographic and operational.¹³ Thus, a first question is whether these goals are consistent with the DoD and Service core values. At the same time, though, research indicates that an organization's core values will determine whether and how diversity goals are met. Thus, a second question is whether the DoD and Service core values support these two potential goals.

It is difficult to see how either the demographic or operational diversity goals could be seen as incongruent or incompatible with the core values of either DoD or the Services. However, the fact that neither goal has strictly been met suggests that the DoD and Service core values have not been framed to support these goals. This conclusion is consistent with the "lessons learned" by the DBB task group on increasing minority representation in leadership (Defense Business Board Task Group on Increasing Minority Representation in Flag and SES Ranks, 2004), the third of which was "[m]ust make diversity and inclusion part of the organization's mission, values and culture."¹⁴

Research has shown that because an organization's core values shape how its people conduct business from day to day, they also shape how its people view and relate to the organization's diversity. Core values do not just admonish people to be "nice"; they have a concrete role in building a shared identity that can allow people in an organization to leverage diversity for the benefit of the mission (Chatman et al., 1998). Issue Paper #6 specifies how core values relate to diversity: They provide a strong organizational identity, govern how people interact within the organization, and guide the actions of individuals.

Put another way, core values are foundational principles that guide how people in an organization will conduct their everyday business (see Collins & Porras, 1996, and Lencioni, 2002, for example, for definitions of organizational core values). An organization's core values do not require external justification. They are the internal structure that underlies interactions among its members and that guides the strategies the organization will employ to fulfill its mission. Ultimately, they motivate how the organization works and give a shared identity to people belonging to it.

Obviously, some values are more conducive to meeting diversity goals than others. If, for example, "diverse" employees are forced to assimilate to cultural norms that are defined and upheld by a dominant majority, this can perpetuate problems rather than help the organization manage diversity effectively (Shore et al., forthcoming), whether in terms of increasing capability or meeting recruiting and retention goals. Also, if the cultural values emphasize individualism rather than collectivism, that can create problems too (Chatman et al., 1998).

As a productive middle ground, research has found that a cooperative interdependence among group members may focus them on a common group identity and distract from subgroup

¹³ Note that here, starting with diversity management goals means that the fairness goals of EO are no longer sufficient, although they are necessary—i.e., fairness is an intermediate goal for both diversity goals.

¹⁴ Lesson one—leadership from the top is essential—was discussed in the previous section; lesson two is obvious—policies need to be implemented and reviewed.

categorizations (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) and also motivate them to see beyond simple stereotypes (Chatman et al., 1998; Jehn et al., 1999; Schippers et al., 2003). Servicemembers contacted by the Commission often mentioned the role of combat in creating such a focus, but military service in general fits the diversity profile that Chatman et al. (1998) found positively associated with group performance: groups with collectivistic norms emphasizing cooperation. In this sense, the military's strong collective culture offers a platform for accomplishing diversity-related goals, unless it goes too far in forcing members to conform to the core values. Recognizing this potential, the Commission has recommended that DoD and the Services should inculcate their organizational cultures with a broader understanding of the various types of diversity by emphasizing diversity as a core value.

DoD's Vision of Its Future Workforce

As with core values, ensuring that the Commission's recommended definition of diversity is congruent with the DoD vision "for the future workforce" requires giving attention to both the diversity attributes and the diversity management goals. Specifically, the vision, as laid out in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) report issued in February 2010 (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010), addresses attributes that are primarily relevant to a definition of diversity that is based on or includes operational business-case goals:

The Department will continue to work to ensure that America's cadre of commissioned and noncommissioned officers are prepared for the full range of complex missions that the future security environment will likely demand. Too often, a focus on weapons acquisition programs and overall force structure crowd out needed attention concerning how the Military Departments generate, train, and sustain their leaders. As part of our commitment to ensure that tomorrow's leaders are prepared for the difficult missions they will be asked to execute, DoD will place special emphasis on stability operations, counterinsurgency, and building partner capacity skill sets in its professional military education and career development policies. (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, p. 54)

Specifically, DoD envisions that its future workforce will need more

- regional and cultural capabilities
- "partner capacity" skill sets¹⁵
- joint military/civilian capability
- "seamless" integration of Guard and Reserves with the all-volunteer force
- specialized skills, such as foreign languages, medicine, and computer network operations.

These heightened workforce demands all involve various aspects of diversity that go beyond demographics, such as structural and global diversity. Using examples developed for the Air Force, which has conducted research into the business case for diversity, these aspects of diversity were defined in Issue Paper #3, as follows:

¹⁵ The Commission understands partner capacity skill sets to mean the ability to work productively with partner organizations, whether domestic or foreign.

- Structural diversity refers to organizational and institutional characteristics that affect interaction. Leveraging skills and experiences from other Services, components, and occupations increases mission capability.
- Global diversity occurs through contact with those who have national affiliations other than the United States, such as members of foreign military services and foreign nationals with whom we interact as part of a globally engaged force. Global diversity expands experiences and skills to draw on for problem solving and decisionmaking.

The QDR concludes, “The Department is facing mission requirements of increasing scope, variety, and complexity” (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, p. 55). Thus, DoD’s newly formed vision of its future workforce implicitly comprises more diversity within and across the “Total Defense Workforce.”

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Based on its review of both corporate and Service definitions of diversity, the Definition Subcommittee developed four alternative courses of action (COAs), each associated with a draft definition, for the Commission to consider. In so doing, the subcommittee assessed each recommendation against six criteria developed for all Commission recommendations and three additional criteria rooted in relevant facts and assumptions derived from the subcommittee's investigation. The Commission considered these four specific COAs, chose one of them, and then modified the definition associated with that choice to come up with its final recommendation. Because more than one COA could be considered consistent with the evaluation criteria and because many definitions could be considered consistent with each COA, the final recommendation was the combined product of the subcommittee's activities and the full Commission's collective wisdom. To capture this interplay, this section lays out the deliberative process in some detail.

Alternative Courses of Action

The four COAs proposed by the subcommittee were

1. retain the existing DoD definition
2. focus on broad workforce "differences"
3. focus on legally protected groups
4. combined approach: COA (2) and COA (3).

In addition to their foundation in the findings of the Definition of Diversity Subcommittee, these COAs are also consistent with findings in Lim et al. (2008, pp. 13–19). This report of the 2007 DoD Diversity Summit developed the following framework for defining diversity in the military:

- focus on legally protected groups
- broad focus on workforce "differences" (e.g., the "capability" approach used by all the Services except the Navy; see Table 3)
- combined approach of 1 and 2 (e.g., the DHS approach in Table 2 and the Navy approach in Table 3).

Nine Criteria Guided the Decision to Choose a Final Definition

Based on the findings provided in this paper, the subcommittee assessed its recommendations against the following criteria:

1. fulfill charter and congressional intent
2. supported by empirical evidence
3. strategic rather than tactical
4. executable
5. meet legal requirements
6. have a quantifiable component so progress can be measured
7. consistent with the Services' definitions/diversity policy statements

8. congruent with Service and DoD core values and their vision of the future workforce
9. easy to communicate and understand/internalize.

Commission Chairman General Lester Lyles established the first six criteria for the Commission to use in evaluating all subcommittee recommendations. The Definition of Diversity Subcommittee added three additional criteria for evaluating options for a uniform definition of diversity:

- Criterion #7 acknowledges that the individual Services have different missions, as well as commonalities, and that each Service has made a considerable investment in developing a diversity definition and related policy statements.
- Criterion #8 reaffirms the charter requirements.
- Criterion #9 focuses on the implementation of the recommended definition. Issue Paper #18 found that “the level of awareness and understanding of Service diversity policies seems to be mixed.” The subcommittee felt that the definition must be broad but succinct in order to facilitate better understanding and internalization throughout DoD.

In addition, throughout its assessment, the subcommittee applied the diversity definition formula by pursuing internal consistency between the diversity attributes set forth in the definition and the organizational goal that the definition purported to seek.

Assessing the Four Courses of Action

The subcommittee assessed the four COAs, and the draft definitions associated with them, according to the facts and assumptions described earlier and their likely implications.

Course of Action (1): Retain the Existing DoD Definition

The existing DoD definition of diversity—“the different characteristics and attributes of individuals”—is contained in DoDD 1020.02. The directive thus defines diversity as the full range of differences that individuals bring to the workplace, but it does not situate diversity in the context of any organizational purpose or goal. The subcommittee also questioned whether this definition fulfills the Commission’s charter, which asks it to develop a definition that is “congruent with the core values and vision of DoD for the future workforce.” And it noted that this definition does not lend itself to measurement and accountability.

Course of Action (2): Focus on Broad Workforce “Differences”

A composite of the Navy and Army definitions of diversity—“the different attributes, experiences, and backgrounds of servicemembers and civilians that enhance the mission readiness of the Department of Defense”—refines and extends the broad focus of the DoD definition and situates it within an organizational goal. The Army definition specifies, “[t]he 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” (Preston et al., 2009). The Navy definition specifies, “[a]ll the different characteristics and attributes of individual sailors and civilians that enhance the mission readiness of the Navy” (Winter, 2007).

A primary goal of the Army was to be inclusive; another goal was “to describe differences that the Army could incorporate into core competencies and use to leverage mission effectiveness.” The Army Defense Diversity Working Group (DDWG) representative told the Definition Subcommittee that the Army Diversity Task Force deliberately selected the term “attributes” instead of “characteristics”

because it did not want to evoke the perception that only demographic characteristics mattered as opposed to other relevant personal attributes. The task force chose the term “experiences” to call attention to a person’s training, education, or what he or she has done. The task force selected the term “background” to cover culture and social background (Issue Paper #20, p. 4).

The Navy DDWG representative told the subcommittee that its goal was to build a statement that would encompass the widest scope of attributes sailors have to offer, was connected to mission readiness, and was aligned with the Navy’s core values. The Navy team “was also concerned that diversity would be lumped together with affirmative action or equal opportunity and so wanted the definition and the policy statement to be differentiated from those concepts” (Issue Paper #20, p. 4).

This COA has several implications:

- *It differentiates diversity from EO.* It thus meets, at the DoD level, the organizational need the Services felt to distinguish diversity from EO, as reported in Issue Paper #20.
- *It specifies an organizational goal: mission readiness.* Issue Paper #50 concludes that the definition of diversity management in DoD Directive 1020.02 implicitly establishes a capability goal. Issue Paper #20 also reports that the case for mission readiness was an important motivating factor for the Services when they developed their diversity definitions and policy statements.
- *It is based on empirical evidence that all individual differences—not just demographic characteristics—interact to affect work outcomes.*
- With so many potential diversity attributes, such a broad definition *could take attention away from the MLDC’s charter to rectify the minority leadership gap* and thus “define the diversity leadership gap away.”

Course of Action (3): Focus on Legally Protected Groups

A draft definition of diversity taken out of context from the Navy’s Diversity Policy Statement (Winter, 2007)—“the traditional categories of race, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, religion, and physical and mental disabilities”—focuses on the attributes that, as the COA title implies, are covered by EO law.

This COA has several implications:

- This definition may reinforce the perception that “diversity” is simply another name for EO. For example, Issue Paper #18 notes that “Service diversity policies all define diversity in broad terms, going beyond traditional demographic dimensions of race, ethnicity, and gender. Yet, in terms of how the term diversity is conceptualized, survey respondents generally agreed that diversity was about demographics (race, sex, ethnicity, etc.).”
- This definition explicitly addresses the objective that the Commission was directed by its charter to pursue, specifically, to “conduct a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of policies that provide opportunities for the promotion and advancement of minority members of the armed forces, including minority members who are senior officers.”
- This definition has demographic representation as an implicit goal, not the capability goal the Services have chosen.
- Although this definition is limited to demographic attributes, it excludes some demographic groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered. It also ignores the fact that the Services are legally allowed to discriminate based on age and mental abilities.

Course of Action (4): Combined Approaches

This fourth definition of diversity—“all the different characteristics and attributes of individuals that are congruent with Department of Defense core values and integral to mission readiness, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, and physical and mental abilities”—is based on a combination of COAs (2) and (3)—with three differences. First, it specifies congruency with core values, as required by the charter. In this way, it narrows the current DoD definition, while leaving DoD and the Services the flexibility to specify it appropriately. Second, it employs additional elements of the Army’s and Navy’s definitions to make clear that the demographic characteristics contained in COA (3) are only one category of relevant diversity attributes. Third, it substitutes the words “are integral” for “enhance.”

The subcommittee recognized that diversity research has not explicitly determined whether diversity is “integral” to mission readiness or merely relevant to it. However, Issue Papers #14 and #29 lead the subcommittee to assume that if leadership were to commit to leading with a diversity lens, diversity would become integral to mission readiness.¹⁶

The following evidence from Issue Papers #14 and #29 supports this aspiration:

- “Although the impact of diversity on organizational performance at the individual, workgroup, and organization levels tends to be negative, mixed, and inconclusive, respectively, a thread running through the research suggests how businesses and organizations can improve such impacts: Effective diversity management policies and leadership practices (such as an organizational commitment to diversity) can mitigate these effects at all levels and enable companies and businesses to reap positive benefits” (Issue Paper #14).
- “Diversity leadership practices are basic people management practices; what is new is viewing them through a diversity lens. With this lens, leaders can explicitly manage the self-categorization mechanisms that accompany diversity and the mediators—trust, cohesion, conflict, and communication—that make the difference in the impact, whether positive, neutral, or negative, of diversity on mission capability” (Issue Paper #29).

Because COA (4) incorporates aspects of COAs (2) and (3), it shares several implications with them. In addition, this COA has multiple unique implications:

- A definition that explicitly includes demographic groups that have historically been underrepresented within a broad conception of diversity that addresses organizational goals is both legal and potentially effective for the Commission’s purpose. It acknowledges that “difference” is organizationally valuable and commits the organization to learn how to “manage” differences for organizational success. It thus balances historic social goals with the evidence-based mission case.
- This definition is flexible enough to both allow congruency with DoD’s core values and its future workforce vision as the charter task requires and as workforce needs and core values evolve. The earlier section on DoD’s future workforce vision concludes that the DoD anticipates that servicemembers will work more with people who are different in a variety of ways. Thus, limiting diversity attributes solely by core values implicitly incorporates the work-related differences that the DoD’s QDR forecasts as becoming

¹⁶ The term *diversity lens* is defined in Issue Paper #29 as the “ability to explicitly pay attention to diversity dynamics.”

more common, as well as the demographic differences that are usually associated with diversity.

- This definition explicitly links diversity to an organizational goal of mission readiness. It is thus internally consistent in terms of diversity attributes and goals.
- This definition is largely based on existing Service definitions and is consonant with the differences among them. Thus it allows flexibility for the Services.
- This definition requires careful thinking about metrics, implementation, and accountability.
- The term “integral” emphasizes leadership as the critical component of diversity management. The Commission believes that if diversity is “integral” to mission readiness, leaders will act and implement diversity initiatives. In that sense, this definition situates diversity management as a line, not a staff responsibility. Thus, this definition calls for making leading with the “diversity lens” a core competency for leaders at all levels, as the Commission recommends. Issue Paper #29 provides details about the implications of that recommendation.

Criteria Matrix and Scoring

The subcommittee presented the Commission with a scorecard that numerically evaluates all COAs by the established criteria (Table 4). If a COA fully meets a criterion it receives a 2, if it meets a criterion to some extent it receives a 1, and if it does not meet a criterion it receives a 0. In making this evaluation, the subcommittee made these observations:

- COAs (1) and (2) do not address minorities, as specifically outlined in the MLDC charter.
- Empirical evidence does not support a direct connection between demographic representation and organizational outcomes, such as mission capability. However, there is some evidence that if differences that exist among individuals, including but not limited to demographic differences, are well-managed, they can enhance mission effectiveness.
- COA (3) is tactical because it is narrowly focused on EO categories. COAs (2) and (4) directly link diversity with mission effectiveness and thus are strategic.
- The Services are already operationalizing definitions with similarities to each course of action.
- All COAs are designed to meet legal requirements.
- There are obvious metrics for demographics; measuring other attributes will require some work and the development of new metrics.
- COA (3) is narrowly focused on legally protected groups. As detailed in Table 3, the current Service diversity definitions and statements tend to be broad and inclusive and do not focus on legally protected groups.
- None of the COAs conflict with Service and DoD core values, but the inclusivity of COAs (2) and (4) is more in line with them.
- According to the literature, servicemembers do not fully understand the link between diversity and capability (Issue Paper #18; Riche & Kraus, 2009). The breadth of COA (2) may make it difficult to communicate and for servicemembers to fully understand and internalize it.

COA (4) received the highest score and fully meets all of the evaluation criteria. This was the subcommittee’s recommended definition.

Table 4. Courses of Action Scored Against Evaluation Criteria

| Criteria | COA | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| 1. Fulfills charter and congressional intent | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 2. Supported by empirical evidence | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 3. Strategic rather than tactical | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 4. Executable | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 5. Meets legal requirements | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 6. Has a quantifiable component | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 7. Consistent with the Services’ diversity statements | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 8. Congruent with Service and DoD core values | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 9. Easy to communicate | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Total score | 12 | 14 | 11 | 18 |

Recommendation

Although the subcommittee presented COA (4) as its recommendation, the discussion by the Commission modified it to a version of COA (2): “Diversity is all the different characteristics and attributes of individuals that are consistent with Department of Defense core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the Nation we serve.”

Recommendation 1—

The DoD shall expand its definition of diversity to read: Diversity is all the different characteristics and attributes of individuals that are consistent with Department of Defense core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the nation we serve.

- ***a. The DoD shall accompany this definition with a mission statement that prioritizes equity and inclusion and provides a purpose that is actionable and measurable.***
- ***b. The mission statement shall be accompanied by a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) to advance implementation.***

The Commission’s discussion of the recommended definition revolved around two basic questions:

- Should the definition specify individual attributes, and if so, which ones?
- Should the definition simply define diversity or be extended to contain elements of a diversity policy statement?

The following section summarizes the Commission's discussion, held on August 23, 2010, and illustrates the key points made by quotations from Commission members.¹⁷

Selection of Diversity Attributes

The definition recommended by the subcommittee combined two approaches to diversity, a mission-based approach that includes all differences among people in the workplace that are consistent with core values and integral to mission readiness, and an EEO-based approach that acknowledges that specific groups are protected. The Commission's discussion was largely framed in terms of inclusion:

“We were troubled by the last clause, where we specified some demographic attributes, but if we are truly talking about diversity, there are 30, 40, probably 100 categories that could also be included. In the process of being inclusive, if we are as specific as we are here, are we not defeating the purpose of this effort?”

“The Army's definition goes a little deeper into soldiers, civilians, and families. All of those are very diverse demographic groups, and I want to make sure we're including them as well.”

Several Commissioners proposed different specifications of “individuals,” such as contractors, but the eventual resolution was that the current DoD broad focus on “all” the characteristics and attributes of individuals is the most inclusive.

In addition to resolving this fundamental issue, the discussion led to several changes in wording. Notably, the Commissioners inserted the phrase “reflective of the nation we serve” in response to these concerns:

“The definition needs to include the future force we recruit from.”

“The Metrics and Implementation and Accountability subcommittees went back to the charter task, and its reference to the future work force. If we insert ‘mirror or reflect America’ after ‘individuals’ we will capture that part of the task.”

This addition addresses the Charter's mandate that the Commission focus on minorities and supplements the goal of improving organizational capability with an objective of improving demographic representation.

Another discussion led to a revision in the subcommittee's recommended definition, based on this view:

“We would like to insert . . . that after the reference to the mission readiness it also include mission accomplishment as the end goal. Not

¹⁷ See Military Leadership Diversity Commission, 2010, for a transcript of the August 2010 meeting.

just implying that mission readiness is the end state, but mission readiness and accomplishment.”

Diversity Goals and the Supplemental Recommendation

As it evolved, the final recommendation includes mission capability and improved demographic representation as implicit diversity management goals. The Commissioners also debated, however, whether the goals component of the definition should be stated more explicitly. In particular, they discussed whether the definition should incorporate additional elements that DoD and the Services have placed in diversity policy statements (Issue Paper #20). This debate was an outgrowth of the desire to incorporate the goal of inclusion in the definition; in addition, some Commissioners wanted to include the idea of equity, once the definition no longer singled out the protected groups.

The following comments illustrate the different approaches considered:

“Our group wondered if we could make a statement such as: It is a strategic imperative that inclusion drive diversity.”

“I don’t have any problem with the definition as it stands. However, ‘inclusion’ is missing: it’s a critical aspect of making diversity into some value. So I would like to recommend that we put some words in there about the importance of inclusion and the use of the diversity that we are aspiring to.”

“I don’t think inclusion goes into the definition; it goes into the policy statement. The result of understanding diversity and managing and leading diversity is to create inclusion.”

“I think what we’re struggling with is diversity as an end state, where we want to be. And we’re all trying to develop a road map to get there. I think we’re chasing rabbits, trying to make it all those things that we want that are actionable, and I don’t know that that’s necessary. All we want to do is define it, what is diversity.”

Although some Commissioners wanted to include the words “inclusion” and “equity” in the definition, the Commission’s research found that “inclusion” and “equity” are subsets of the overall capability goal that is already implicit in the recommendation. As reported in several Commission documents and briefings, the empirical evidence (recommendation criterion #2) shows that a key feature of diversity management is the creation of an environment of trust, based on fair treatment, and inclusion, based on the demonstrated valuing of different perspectives. This is the aspect of diversity management that can neutralize negative aspects of diversity, as well as produce superior organizational outcomes.

The following comments illustrate the eventual resolution of this debate:

“We’re supposed to be defining what diversity is, but we all thirst for the action that follows on from understanding what diversity means. So it seems to me, do the definition, keep it short and simple, and understand what diversity is. If we want to go to the next step, define the actions that come from understanding, managing, and leading through diversity; then that starts to gather up inclusion.”

“The term ‘inclusion’ does seem to be more appropriate to the policy statement after the definition. I think that’s probably a better way to try to work this.”

“OK, as long as the . . . points about the policy statement explicitly include diversity as inclusion. Because right now what I see in the supporting recommendations are very broad statements that anybody could interpret any which way.”

“To be memorable it [the definition] has to be short and simple.”

This discussion produced the following supplementary recommendation for the definition of diversity:

“The DoD shall accompany this definition with a mission statement. The DoD mission statement must prioritize equity and inclusion, provide a purpose that is actionable and measurable, and accompany it with a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) to advance implementation.”

Conclusion

This paper asked whether the Commission should accept the performance goal of the current DoD diversity directive, and the related broad range of human attributes, or substitute or complement it with an EO-based goal and EO-related demographic attributes. The recommended definition takes the former approach while modifying the current DoD definition (“The different characteristics and attributes of individuals”) in several ways:

- It links diversity to mission readiness, thus making explicit DoD’s implied reliance on the business case for diversity, as explicated in Issue Paper #14 on the business case for diversity.
- It incorporates requirements from the MLDC charter:
 - It directly addresses core values, as discussed in Issue Paper #6 on core values.
 - It implicitly addresses DoD’s vision of its future workforce.

The Commission’s decision against taking the second, EO-based approach, suggested by the MLDC charter, is rooted in the broad range of research that the Commission conducted or consulted. First, this approach has not been successful in increasing the presence of minorities and women in the senior ranks of leadership in the private sector. Thus, it would not advance the goals of the charter. Second, it runs counter to the approach that each DoD Service is taking to diversity. However, achieving diversity effectively cannot happen without effective EO policies and practices. Such efforts are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for creating an inclusive climate in which diversity efforts can thrive and turn *all* the human differences that exist in the military workplace into mission advantages.

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