



MLDC Research Areas

Definition of Diversity
Legal Implications
Outreach & Recruiting
Leadership & Training
Branching & Assignments
Promotion
Retention
Implementation & Accountability
Metrics
National Guard & Reserve

This issue paper aims to aid in the deliberations of the MLDC. It does not contain the recommendations of the MLDC.

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Common Outreach and Recruiting Practices Across the Services

Abstract

During the October 2009 MLDC meeting, each Service presented briefings on the outreach and recruiting programs it is using to target currently underrepresented demographic groups. This issue paper provides an overview of those briefings by summarizing the types of efforts that are common across the Services and by calling out a few that are unique to each Service. Overall, the briefings showed that the Services are generally pursuing similar strategies, starting with the establishment of organizational divisions or offices dedicated to this effort and including targeted recruiting and advertising as well as outreach to affinity groups and influencers. At the same time, each Service has developed unique efforts consistent with its organizational culture.

During the October 2009 Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) meeting, each Service presented briefings on the outreach and recruiting programs it is using to target currently underrepresented demographic groups. This issue paper (IP) provides an overview of those briefings by summarizing efforts that are common across Services, including (1) general recruiting and outreach programs, (2) programs specifically used by the Service academies, and (3) programs specifically used by the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and the Officer Candidate School/Officer Training School (OCS/OTS). In addition, the IP highlights a few of the unique efforts from each Service. The intent of the IP is to present the detailed information from the briefings in a way that is easily accessible and that highlights the similarities and differences among the Services' efforts.

General Outreach and Recruiting Programs Used Across the Services

Although each Service is in charge of its own accessions and has its own unique programs and practices for reaching specific civilian populations, many of the Services reported using similar outreach and recruiting strategies. In addition, many of these practices are used to attract demographically underrepresented youth for both enlisted and precommissioning officer programs. The following list summarizes some of those practices:¹

- Establish organizational divisions or offices devoted to recruiting members of underrepresented demographic groups. For example, both the Naval and Air Force Academies reported having established a diversity recruiting directorate or division, and the Coast Guard reported establishing a diversity outreach board and manager to provide a national strategy for and to oversee implementation of diversity outreach initiatives.
- Attend affinity-group events, such as the annual conferences of the National Society of Black Engineers and the Society of Advancing Hispanic/Chicano and Native American Scientists.²
- Conduct targeted advertising, such as (1) creating marketing materials in multiple languages, (2) providing profiles of demographically diverse officers on main websites, (3) advertising in college newspapers at historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs),³ (4) using media and entertainment marketing sources directed at demographically diverse audiences such as Telemundo, Black Entertainment Television, and minority-oriented publications such as *Jet*, *The Root*, and *Black Collegian*.

- Use social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube.
- Establish connections to community influencers (leaders, educators, and administrators).
- Strategically locate recruiting offices in communities with high concentrations of underrepresented groups.
- Generally expose the Service to the community through participation in mentoring programs that are often targeted toward disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. For example, the Marine Corps participates in Toys for Tots, Adopt a School, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and a program called “Big Bears.”

Common Practices Across Service Academy Programs

The Service academies use many of the above outreach and recruiting practices to attract high-quality applicants from all racial/ethnic groups. However, they also have several programs that are specifically geared to their needs. The following list summarizes those common practices:

- Make use of academy preparatory schools and other academic-improvement programs designed to help potential applicants become academically eligible.

- Conduct targeted recruiting at demographically diverse high schools.
- Provide candidate/parent weekend visits to expose potential applicants to the academy. These visits often include targeted visits for underrepresented youth.
- Provide academy summer seminar programs designed to expose potential applicants to the academy.
- Design and conduct programs to promote early engagement with students. For example, the Naval Academy has several science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs designed to target demographically diverse 7th–11th grade students. These programs target underrepresented students nationwide and provide a full scholarship to attend a summer camp. The Naval Academy also has a mini-STEM program involving a one- or two-night visit to the academy for high-school groups.
- Design and conduct programs to recruit influencers (i.e., community leaders, educators, and administrators) and educate them about the academy, including providing academy visits and tours (e.g., the Navy’s “Centers of Influence Program”).

Table 1. Overview of Selected Service Programs Focused on Underrepresented Populations

Coast Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A program in which recruiters who are successful at recruiting demographically diverse populations present best practices to others ● An “ambassador program” in which volunteer officers mentor demographically underrepresented appli-
Navy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baccalaureate-degree completion programs focused on high-quality minority candidates ● A “Navy Blitz” program in which junior officers engage student affinity groups and influencers
Marine Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A leadership workshop called “Tools for Graduation,” which is aimed at demographically diverse markets
Air Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The “Gold Bar Recruiting Program,” in which 18 second lieutenants focus specifically on recruiting demographically underrepresented youth, with a goal of producing qualified ROTC scholarship applicants ● The “Leaders Encouraging Airmen Development (LEAD) Conference,” which provides information to command chiefs, base education offices, and career assistance advisors about Air Force Academy opportuni-
Army	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The National Association of State Boards of Education Pilot program, which focuses on improving the number and quality of high-school graduates in communities with unusually high drop-out rates ● The “March to Success” program, designed to help young people with the SAT Reasoning test and the ACT ● The “Planning for Life” program, which is an interactive seminar featuring career- and education-planning tools, a nutrition/physical-fitness segment, and a personal-development segment ● The “Partnership for Youth Success” program in which the Army partners with corporations to guarantee a future job interview for an individual who chooses to enlist in exchange for companies to have better ac-

- Design and conduct programs to educate congressional members and staffers on the academy, including visits and tours of the academy.
- In the case of the Air Force Academy, hold a “Service Academy Diversity Conference,” in which directors of admissions and chief diversity officers from the other Service academies meet to share knowledge and synchronize efforts.

Common Practices Across ROTC and OCS/OTS Programs

Like the Service academies, the accession commands in charge of recruiting for ROTC and OCS/OTS programs use many of the above general outreach and recruiting programs. However, they too have several programs designed specifically to attract high-quality applicants from all racial/ethnic groups with college degrees or who have expressed an intent to attend college. The following list summarizes those common practices:

- Place ROTC programs at HBCUs and MSIs.
- Have a targeted recruiting presence for OCS/OTS at HBCUs and MSIs.
- Use targeted academic scholarships at HBCUs and MSIs.
- Establish Junior ROTC (JROTC) programs at targeted demographically diverse high schools to increase awareness among underrepresented youth. Legally, these cannot be used as recruiting programs. However, JROTC participants are eligible for many selective scholarships.

Service-Specific Programs and Initiatives Focused on Underrepresented Populations

In addition to the above set of common practices, many of the Services have unique programs in place to help meet their specific outreach and recruiting goals. Although by no means an exhaustive list, Table 1 provides an overview of some of these unique programs.

Conclusion

The information presented here is by no means an exhaustive summary of the Services’ current efforts to attract underrepresented youth to enlisted and precommissioning officer programs; rather, it is an overview of the briefings presented at the October 2009 MLDC meeting. Overall, the briefings showed that the Services are generally pursuing similar strategies, starting with the establishment of organizational divisions or offices dedicated to this effort and including targeted recruiting and advertising as well as outreach to affinity groups and influencers. At the same time, each Service has developed unique efforts consistent with its organizational culture.

For more information, see the briefings themselves, which can be found on the MLDC website.

Notes

¹Note that this list includes practices that were reported by two or more of the Services but not necessarily by all the Services.

²Some of these include the HBCU Conference, the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference, the Society of Advancing Hispanic/Chicano and Native American Scientists Conference, the National Association of Asian American Professionals, the Society of Women Engineers, the National Society of Black Engineers, the National Society of Black Physicists, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, the National Student Nurses Association Conference, the Organization of Black Airline Pilots, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society Conference, the American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages, the Tuskegee Airmen, and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

³These are considered colleges and universities with high percentages (i.e., greater than 25–30 percent) of demographic minorities.