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AIR UNIVERSITY

HISPANICS:
AN UNTAPPED LEADERSHIP RESOURCE

by

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Preface

This research paper lays out the problem of under-representation of Hispanics in the AF officer ranks, especially among the senior leadership. I chose this topic due to the huge growth of Hispanics in the United States and also because I firmly believe that the AF needs to seriously devote a concerted effort to reverse the trend of Hispanic under-representation, not only because it is the right thing to do, but it is absolutely vital for future organizational survival. I believe my research clearly points out the problem and offers some recommendations that the AF senior leadership should explore. I also believe that this research has applicability to equal opportunity professionals as well as human resources officers and senior leadership throughout the AF.

I would like to thank my research advisor, CAPT Ed Johnson for his enthusiastic support. His guidance and encouragement were so beneficial to this project. I am very grateful to the following individuals for the assistance they all provided: Colonel Mike Baker from ROTC, Colonel Bev Wright from OSD P&R, Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Driscoll from SAF/MRE, Major Dennis Mislap from ROTC, Major Rick Bennett from AFSLMO, Major Charlene Jefferson from the Joint Staff, Captain Sean Bailey from the AF Academy, Mr. Tim Talbert from AFRS, and Mr. John Service from AFSLMO. I am also thankful to Ms Edith Williams from the AU Library who helped provide books that were unavailable locally and grateful to MSgt Tammy Stewart for instructing me on how to extract exactly what I needed from the AFPC statistics website.

Abstract

The United States Air Force is committed to achieving diversity among all its personnel. Both the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff have stated the desire to have the Air Force's senior leadership mirror the population it serves. The Hispanic population is the largest growing minority nationally, growing more than any other race or ethnic group from now until the year 2050. Additionally, this group is projected by 2020 to add more people to the United States annually than all other race or ethnic groups combined. Hispanic youth already make up the largest number of youth aged 18 and younger in the country. By 2050, one of every four persons will be Hispanic. This paper outlines the problem of severe under-representation of Hispanic officers, especially among senior leadership. Of all the Services, the Air Force has the least number of Hispanic officers. This paper lays out the under-representation of Hispanic officers in selections for Below the Promotion Zone promotions, service school attendance, pilot career fields, and senior level command positions. Various Service efforts are discussed and recommendations are offered in the areas of: recruiting, accessions, mentoring and development of Hispanic officers. This paper stresses the necessity to incorporate the largest minority into the Air Force officer ranks, especially into senior leadership positions.

Chapter 1

Diverse Leadership?

Gen. John Jumper (chief of staff of the Air Force) and I are committed to the proposition that the leadership of the Air Force should look like America.

—Dr. James Roche, secretary of the Air Force

The Department of Defense (DoD) has for years publicly stated that the department should mirror the population of the society it serves. One of DoD's goals is to increase the representation of Hispanics throughout the department, both military and civilian.¹ Unfortunately, the department has seen limited gains and the Air Force in particular does not come close to achieving adequate representation as evidenced by the low numbers of Hispanics in their officer ranks. Further, Hispanic representation is even worse among the senior leaders (colonels and general officers) of the Air Force (AF). Greater emphasis on Hispanic officer recruiting, accessions, mentoring and development is needed if the AF is serious about having its senior leaders be a reflection of America. Additionally, this effort must be monitored and followed up by senior leadership to ensure progress. Why is this effort so important? The slower growth and increasing diversity of the labor force, the fact that Hispanics are projected to be the largest minority in the United States and the business case for diversity management are all reasons why AF senior leadership needs to pay attention. The sheer numbers of the Hispanic growth cry out for action by all organizations. The AF should tap into the emergent Hispanic

resource for vital human capital or risk becoming ineffective. Organizational survival is ultimately at stake if the Hispanic resource is not incorporated. The AF needs people to accomplish its mission and the Hispanic populace as a significant portion of America's population will help to provide the personnel to fill its ranks. The AF must recruit more Hispanics and will also need to develop them within the organization to ensure that its senior leadership does indeed mirror the population and meets the goals outlined within DoD and the AF for diverse representation.

This paper will frame Hispanic under-representation by first looking at demographics in the national population, labor force, across the Services and within the AF itself. Then, a discussion of whether the AF is serious about diversity follows. Next, discussions and recommendations of recruiting, accessions, mentoring and development of Hispanic officers are presented. Finally, some concluding remarks and a recap of recommendations will close the paper.

Hispanic Explosion: Demographics

According to the United States Census Bureau, Hispanics may be of any race and their origin is Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Latino origin. One of every eight persons in the United States is Hispanic.² There is no doubt that the Hispanic population is growing; this group experienced a 60 percent growth rate during the 1990s and are now at virtual parity with the black minority.³ The Census Bureau projects that every year from now until the year 2050, the Hispanic group will be the one that grows *more* than any other race or ethnic group.⁴ "In fact, after 2020 the Hispanic population is projected to add more people to the United States every year than would all other race/ethnic groups combined."⁵ Moreover, the Hispanic population

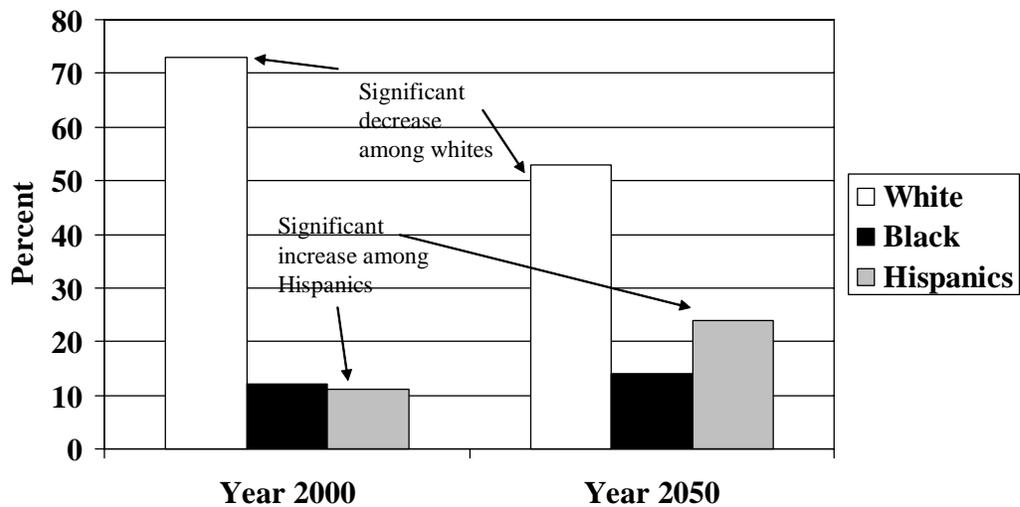
is a young one, comprising 35.7 percent of youth compared to 23.5 percent of whites.⁶ What does this mean to DoD and the AF? It means that this kind of population growth will translate directly into who is available to enter the labor force and therefore who ultimately will be eligible to enter the Services. This group promises to have a huge impact on social, political, business and economic trends throughout the United States.

The overall census demographics indicate the trend of a growing Hispanic population. The United States labor force is also projected to demonstrate the same type of expansion among Hispanics. The growth rate of workers has slowed; growth was 1.6 percent from 1950 to 2000 and projects to be 0.6 percent annually between 2000 and 2050. Slower growth means the fight to recruit and retain employees will become even fiercer. The work force will become increasingly diverse with the share of minorities rising and the share of whites (non-Hispanics) decreasing. The Hispanic portion of workers is expected to more than double from 11 percent in 2000 to 24 percent in 2050. Blacks are projected to increase from 12 percent in 2000 to 14 percent in 2050 and Asians are expected to go from 5 percent to 11 percent during the same period. The white (non-Hispanic) work force is expected to decrease from 73 percent in 2000 to 53 percent in 2050.⁷ The demographics are presented graphically in figure (1). Any good human resources officer or senior leader, for that matter, knows that to discount the impact of Hispanics in the labor force would equate to committing organizational suicide. This is true not only for the military, but for civilian organizations as well. Companies everywhere understand that Hispanics will increasingly make up a larger portion of the work force and they are scrambling to make sure that they have solid business strategies

in effect to incorporate this group. Organizational survival and viability are at stake and it is in the AF senior leadership's best interest to invest in Hispanic diversity.

Figure 1. Labor Force Race/Ethnic Rates

Labor Force Race/Ethnic Rates (Figure 1)



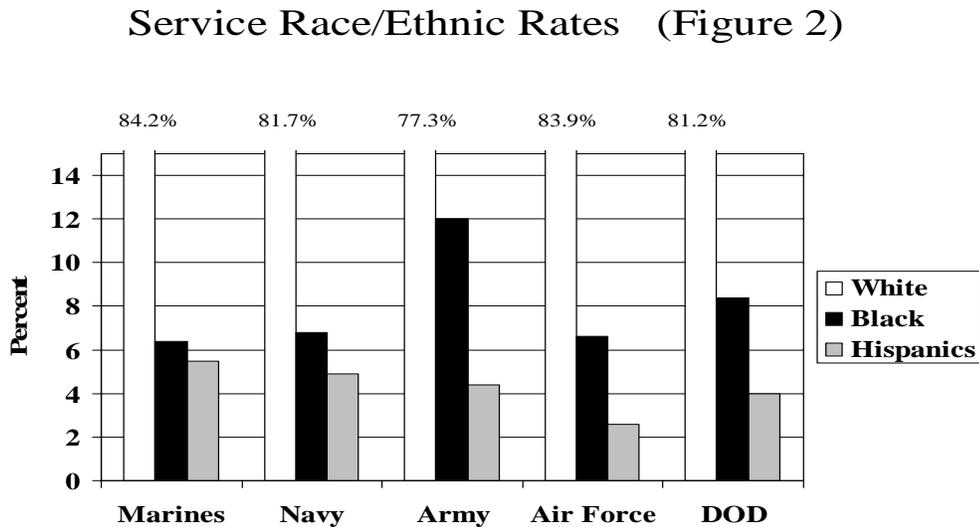
So there really has been and will continue to be a dramatic increase of Hispanics in the United States population and in the work place. This growth has considerable meaning for recruiting both enlisted and officer members. However, this paper would be remiss if it did not provide the number of college graduates in the national population since this is the group that assesses directly into the officer ranks. Hispanics are the most under-represented group in higher education. The rate of Hispanics with a bachelor's

degree or more is at 16.4 percent compared to 34.1 percent for whites (non-Hispanics) and 17 percent for blacks.⁸ Although the numbers of Hispanic college graduates are low, there are still enough to potentially be assessed into the AF. As shown in figure (2), the AF Hispanic officer rate is the lowest of the Services at 2.6 percent. Before focusing on the actual recruitment, accessions, mentoring and development of Hispanic officers in the AF, this paper will explore what the numbers look like within DoD and specifically, in the AF itself.

Service Statistics

Of all the Services within DoD, the AF lags behind in the numbers of Hispanic officers on active duty. Only 2.6 percent of the AF's officers are Hispanic whereas the Marines have 5.5 percent, the Navy has 4.9 percent, the Army has 4.4 percent and the total for DoD is 4 percent. The AF Hispanic rate at the major, lieutenant colonel and colonel levels is clearly lower than the other Services at the 0-4 level, slightly past Marines at the 0-5 level, but lower than all other Services and is about even with the Navy at the 0-6 level, but lower than the other Services.⁹

Figure 2. Service Race/Ethnic Rates



Air Force Statistics

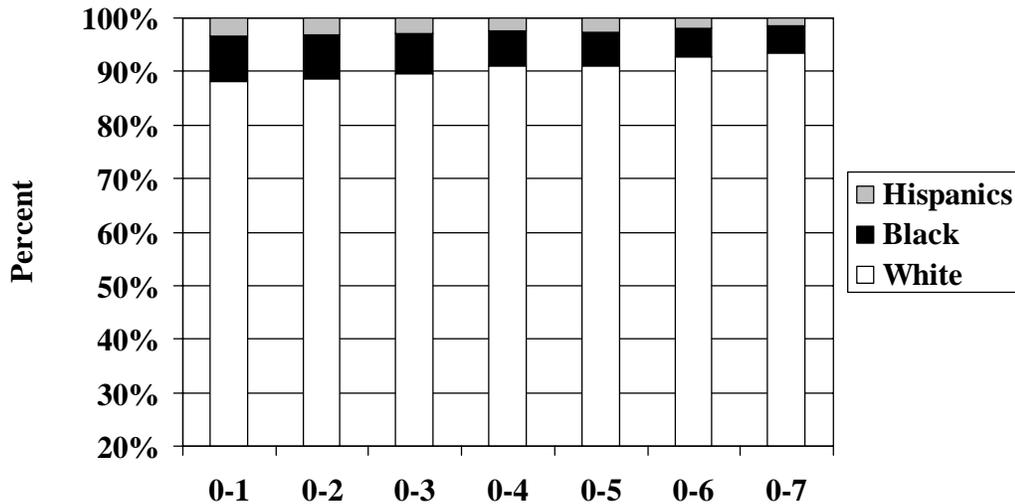
The highest percentage of Hispanic officers in the Air Force are found at the first lieutenant (0-2) rank; 230 for a 2.8 percent rate. The largest sheer numbers of Hispanics are at the captain (0-3) rank, 617 for a 2.7 percent rate compared to 1,553 blacks at 6.8 percent and 19,019 whites for 82.7 percent.¹⁰ Please review figure (3) depicting officer demographics from second lieutenant (0-1) through brigadier general (0-7).

If you think the rates for second lieutenant through lieutenant colonel (0-5) are low, turn your attention to the numbers of colonels (0-6) and generals in the AF and see how diverse the senior leadership really is. Of the 3,856 colonels in the AF, only 76 are Hispanic which equates to a 2 percent rate, 198 are black for a 5 percent rate and 3,489 are white for a 90 percent rate. Of the 274 general officers in the AF, only 2 are Hispanic for a 0.7 percent rate whereas 12 are black for a 4.3 percent rate and 258 are white for a

94.1 percent rate.¹¹ Hispanics are significantly under-represented in the both the colonel and general officer ranks. In fact, the data in figure (3) clearly demonstrates how diversity seems to shrink the higher up in rank one goes. Do the AF officer ranks really look diverse? Is the general officer leadership really diverse if blacks make up only 4.3 percent and Hispanics make up a mere 0.7 percent? If you consider what the future demographics will bring and the fact that AF officers can not be simply added to each rank from external sources since they are “grown” from within, then the AF definitely has a huge challenge ahead.

Figure 3. AF 0-1 Thru 0-7 Race/Ethnic Rates

AF 0-1 Thru 0-7 Race/Ethnic Rates (Figure 3)



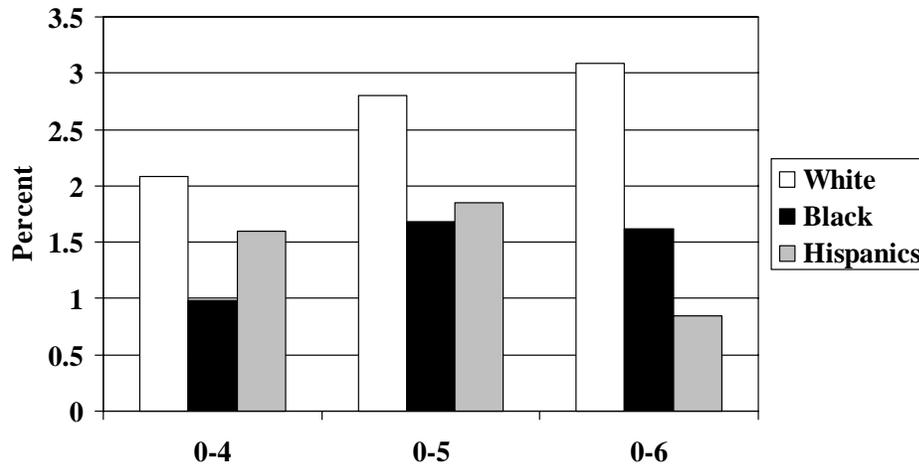
Since below the promotion zone select rates, selection for service schools, pilot representation and opportunities for group and wing command directly correlate to selection for senior leadership, this paper will review these areas to look at the race and ethnic statistics.

Below the Promotion Zone Statistics

Below the promotion zone (BPZ) select rates have traditionally been an indicator of general officer potential.¹² In the most recent thirteen-year period only 6 Hispanics (.85 percent) were promoted BPZ to colonel whereas 29 blacks (1.62 percent) and 1,044 whites (3.09 percent) were selected.¹³ To lieutenant colonel, 29 Hispanics were selected BPZ for a 1.85 percent select rate, 69 blacks for a 1.68 percent rate and 1,577 whites were selected for a 2.83 percent rate.¹⁴ Below the promotion zone selections to major were; 22 Hispanics for a 1.61 percent select rate, 36 blacks for a .98 percent select rate and 1,084 whites for a 2.08 percent select rate.¹⁵

Figure 4. Below the Promotion Zone Race/Ethnic Rates

Below the Promotion Zone Race/Ethnic Rates (Figure 4)



Most significant is the Hispanic BPZ rate to colonel, which falls below both the black and white select rates; only 6 Hispanics in thirteen years were promoted early to colonel. To lieutenant colonel and major, the rates for Hispanics are slightly higher than the rate for blacks, but both still fall short of the select rates for whites.

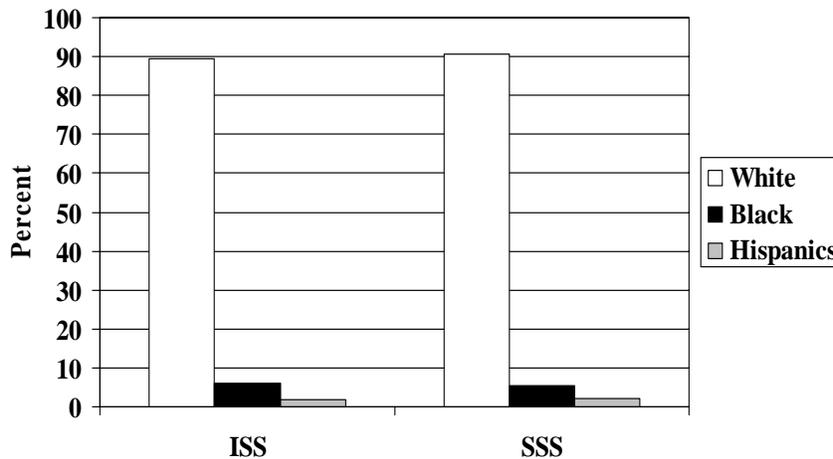
Service School Statistics

Selection for service school in residence has long been considered a pathway to the senior ranks, with selection for intermediate service school being a strong predictor of promotion to colonel.¹⁶ How many Hispanics in the AF have attended intermediate service school (ISS) in residence? Merely 1.9 percent of Hispanics attended ISS

compared to 5.9 percent of blacks and 89.3 percent of whites.¹⁷ The Hispanic disparity is significant. And, the Hispanic numbers are even more pronounced for senior service school (SSS). Only 2.2 percent of Hispanics attended SSS compared to 5.5 percent of blacks and 90.6 percent of whites.¹⁸ Clearly, minorities, particularly Hispanics are not selected to service schools in proportionate numbers.

Figure 5. ISS and SSS Race/Ethnic Rates

ISS and SSS Race/Ethnic Rates (Figure 5)



Pilot Statistics

Hispanics have been traditionally over represented in support career fields and under-represented in the pilot ranks.¹⁹ This is significant since it is in the pilot ranks where the AF's senior leaders are identified, equipped and groomed for promotion.²⁰ The

numbers themselves undoubtedly demonstrate just how far behind Hispanics really are. Of all the 12,143 pilots in the AF, there are very few minorities; 243 blacks (2 percent) and only 207 Hispanics (1.7 percent).²¹ This Hispanic percentage of total pilots is likely to go down since the Hispanic accession rate for pilots has remained below 1 percent since 1990.²² These low rates can be directly tied into the dramatic absence of Hispanics in the very senior ranks of the AF.

Pilot selections to general officer reveal that pilots are selected at higher rates than other career fields to general officer. In the CY2002 promotion board to brigadier general, 4.3 percent of eligible selected were pilots compared to 1.6 percent non-rated and in the CY2001 board the select rates were 3.8 percent for pilot and 1.6 percent for non-rated.²³

Group and Wing Command

Selection for group and wing command is another highly selective process and those selected exhibit the leadership traits that are deemed necessary for future selection to the general officer ranks. There were no Hispanic officers selected for group or wing command in CY2001. Whites made up 93.4 percent of those selected with blacks next in line with 4.8 percent. In CY2000, whites made up 86.6 percent of those selected and blacks were at 7.9 percent, followed by both Hispanics and American Indians at 2.4 percent.²⁴ Command billets are vital for access to the general officer ranks and the Hispanic command select rates demonstrate just how big the under-representation challenge really is.

The AF statistics clearly point to an officer force that is not nearly diverse enough, especially at the most senior ranks. In addition, they plainly point out that the new largest

minority is severely under-represented. A discussion of diversity management will be next as it is important to understand how corporate America defines the business case for diversity. Organizations everywhere are engaged; they understand the significance of the Hispanic growth explosion and have come to realize that they must develop diversity strategies that are tied to business strategies so that they can reap benefits from the Hispanic explosion. This is not a fad, but a serious effort to ensure organizational survival.

Business Case for Diversity

The globalization of business and the shifts in the United States population and labor force demographics have convinced many human resource directors and leaders everywhere that they should actively pursue organizational strategies that promote inclusion, especially of the largest growing minority in order to not only survive, but to prosper. No longer is one person's view or a particular group's viewpoint enough to maintain or advance an organization's growth in the face of global competition. "Tomorrow's successful organizations will be those that harness the collective and synergistic brilliance of all their people, not just an elite few."²⁵ The business case for diversity points out the following advantages for organizations that impact positively a company's bottom line: minimizes turnover, increases retention, maximizes productivity, enhances customer service, results in more effective marketing strategies, better problem solving, and enriches innovation.²⁶ The Navy has recently contracted with Booz Allen Hamilton to further explore the business case for diversity within the Navy and to look at connecting diversity efforts to leadership.²⁷ The AF is also looking to hire a contractor to work with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the AF for Equal Opportunity and with

Major Air Commanders to assist the AF in moving beyond compliance of equal opportunity and to accomplish more in the diversity arena. Getting senior leadership involved in diversity management is absolutely vital to the success of any effort to reverse under-representation of minorities. Diversity efforts must be *tied* into both the corporate culture and business strategies and *actively* and *visibly* supported by *senior leadership*. In fact, some companies have tied diversity strategies to manager's performance appraisals and/or bonuses. This provides managers with an incentive to work harder to effectively manage diversity.²⁸

The AF lately has initiated efforts to achieve a more inclusive and enabling environment for all personnel. They will need to put some teeth behind their recent efforts if they are serious about reversing the under-representation of Hispanic officers which is, by far the most challenging diversity issue facing senior leadership today. The next chapter will explore what AF senior leadership is doing and then look into efforts and recommendations specifically tailored to recruiting, accessions, mentoring and development aspects of Hispanic officers.

Notes

¹ Williams, Rudi, "Hispanic Students Briefed on Military, DoD Civilian Workplace Opportunities," *American Forces Press Service*, San Antonio, Texas, 10 Oct 2002.

² Therrien, Melissa and Roberto R. Ramirez, *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2000*, Current Population Reports, U. S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C.

³ Navarette, Lisa and Eric Rodriguez, Press Release, Statement of Raul Yzaguirre, National Council of La Raza, 6 March 2001.

⁴ U. S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of Census, Current Population Reports, *Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2050*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Therrien, Melissa and Roberto R. Ramirez, *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2000*, Current Population Reports, U. S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C., 2-3. In the year 2000, 35.7 percent of Hispanics were less than 18 years old and 23.5 percent of youth aged 18 and younger were white.

Notes

⁷ Toosi, Mitra. *A Century of Change: The U. S. Labor Force, 1950-2050*. Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 125, No. 5. (May 2002), 15

⁸ Cafferty, Pastora San Juan and David W. Engstrom. *Hispanics in the United States: An Agenda for the Twenty-first Century*. (New Brunswick, NJ.: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 128-129

⁹ Defense Manpower and Data Center, *Distribution of Active Duty by Service, Sex and Ethnic Group*, as of 30 Jun 2002.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Briefing, AETC/CC, subject: Minority Officer Accession and Development Summit, 23 April 2002

¹³ Air Force Personnel Center, Retrieval Applications Website, Historical Officer Promotion Rates, for the years 1989 through 2001, statistics are as of 30 Oct 02.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., It is important to note that below the zone promotions to major within the AF ceased to be authorized effective 1999, so BPZ percentages to major are depicted from 1989 through 1989.

¹⁶ Briefing, AETC/CC, subject: Minority Officer Accession and Development Summit, 23 April 2002

¹⁷ Air Force Personnel Center, Retrieval Applications Website, PME and race/ethnic groups, as of 1 Nov 02

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *AF Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY1999*, SAF/MRE.

²⁰ Roche, Dr. James G., Secretary of the Air Force. Address. 2002 National Image Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 2002

²¹ Ibid.

²² Briefing, AETC/CC, subject: Minority Officer Accession and Development Summit, 23 April 2002

²³ AFGOMO brigadier general promotion select rates by aero rating.

²⁴ AFSLMO Group and Wing Command Race/Ethnic Select Rates for CY2001 and 2000.

²⁵ Miller, Frederick A. and Judith H. Katz. *The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Power of Diversity*. (San Francisco, CA.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2002), 14

²⁶ Loden, Marilyn. *Implementing Diversity*. (USA: McGraw-Hill, 1996), 89-96

²⁷ Telephone interview with CDR Syd Abernathy, CNO Minority Affairs, BUPERS, 6 Nov 02.

²⁸ Miller, Frederick A. and Judith H. Katz. *The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Power of Diversity*. (San Francisco, CA.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2002), 55-57

Chapter 2

Are Senior Leaders Serious About Diversity?

Though we are in many ways diverse, we have not yet achieved the full appreciation of diversity.....We, in the Air Force, are not yet where we want to be. However, our signal is coming from the top; it will be done.

—Ms. Shirley Martinez,
Deputy assistant secretary for AF equal opportunity

For more than 30 years, efforts have been attempted to try to reverse the under-representation of Hispanics in the federal work force and later among the military members of the Services, all with little progress.¹ Are the recent initiatives in the AF any different? Why should AF personnel think that this is not just another post-Hispanic Heritage Month effort that year after year fizzles out and dies? The environment is different for one, just look at the demographics in the national population now and in the near future. The growth of minorities, especially Hispanics is difficult to escape. Second, all the signs within the AF point to recent initiatives being different. For the first time there seems to be absolute determination from both the secretary of the AF, Dr. James Roche and from the AF chief of staff, General John Jumper to create a climate where preparation meets opportunity, where concerted efforts are applied to recruiting, mentoring and developing all personnel, including Hispanics.² The bottom line is senior

leadership has recognized that a true inclusive, diverse service will enhance mission effectiveness in a multi-cultural environment.

In a truly earth shattering move, the AF hosted a 4-Star Officer Accessions and Development Summit which focused on minority officers on 23 April 2002. Secretary Roche commented “with an attendee list that included virtually all of our senior leaders, we were able to devote our full attention to developing a strategy to tackle minority under-representation.”³ Those in uniform know that when you get the four stars behind an issue, then the rest of the service will follow. That is what makes this 4-Star Summit on minority issues so significant; the senior leadership of the AF is paying attention. Now, they need to pay particular attention to Hispanic under-representation. Hispanic advocacy at the top in form of general officers is vital, but is severely lacking due to the virtual absence of Hispanic general officers among the AF senior leadership. As mentioned previously, there are only two line Hispanic brigadier generals. The last time the AF had a Hispanic 3-star general was in 1983 (only the second time in AF history) and there has never been a Hispanic 4-star general in the AF.⁴ Until Hispanics are represented at this pinnacle, true diversity will not be achieved.

Secretary Roche has accurately determined that “assimilation of cultures, embracing diversity, substantive mentoring and recruitment of minorities are not equal opportunity programs but functions of command that must be part of our systematic approach to building a leadership cadre that is representative of our nation and our Air Force.”⁵ The 4-Star Summit also focused on how to institutionalize diversity into an organization. This area is highlighted by Dr. David Thomas, author of *Breaking Through: The Making of Minority Corporate Executives in Corporate America*.⁶ Dr.

Thomas provided the AF senior leadership with several lessons that he has garnered from extensive study of diversity in successful companies.⁷ These lessons can be broken down into these categories; create enabling environments, ensure opportunity, ensure development, and leverage developmental relationships.⁸ The summit efforts have translated into an equal opportunity strategic plan with the following focus areas articulated by Secretary Roche:⁹

1. Expand specialized cross-cultural training to equip recruiters as ambassadors for our outreach efforts
2. Establishing and maintaining strong coalition partnerships with community, education and industry groups
3. Analyzing studies and data on the scope and effectiveness of our mentoring activities as well as improving Air Force educational programs, tools and guidelines for mentoring
4. Ensuring we have robust and flexible equal opportunity training programs
5. Eliminating barriers to a level playing field for all accessions early in individual careers
6. Refining our message of inclusiveness while capitalizing on our success and communicating our contributions to society

This strategic plan is aggressive and robust and will be very difficult to institutionalize. There are elements of systematic prejudice, biases that occur in promotions, selections for school and key command billets and not all AF officers start out with the same quality of education. Some women and minority members report being held to a higher standard than their majority peers and of having to constantly pass tests to prove their competency.¹⁰

The office of the deputy assistant secretary for AF equal opportunity, Ms. Shirley Martinez, is taking the lead on the strategic plan and is working on a draft AF Diversity Policy Letter.¹¹ As previously mentioned, the AF is looking to hire a contractor to help them move beyond equal opportunity compliance. Ms. Martinez will work with the

contractor and each major air commander to get their personal vision and commitment to make diversity a part of the AF's core business strategy.¹² This is important as it gets 4-star support from the top of AF leadership to ensure diversity efforts are part of the organizational culture. This level of leadership involvement is an absolute imperative for success in the diversity field.

It appears the senior AF leadership is serious and committed to the diversity effort. However, visible action needs to accompany the rhetoric as actions always do speak louder than words. More importantly, actions will send a true signal to the entire AF about how serious the senior leadership really is. Time will be the ultimate judge and as the secretary has stated; true success will be achieved when opportunities are provided to minorities and they are prepared for them. Now the focus will turn to specific efforts and recommendations in the recruiting arena.

Notes

¹ Williams, Rudi. "DoD Holds First Observance of Hispanic Heritage Outside of Pentagon," Armed Forces Press Service, San Antonio, TX., 9 Oct 2002

² Briefing, SAF/MRE, subject: Hispanic Representation and Recruitment, National Image Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 2002

³ Roche, Dr. James G., Secretary of the Air Force. Address. 2002 National Image Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 2002

⁴ AFGOMO Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino Extended Active Duty General Officers (since 1978), as of 10 Sep 02

⁵ Roche, Dr. James G., Secretary of the Air Force. Address. 2002 National Image Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 2002

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997.

¹¹ Interview between author and Lt Col Kevin Driscoll, SAF/MRE, 6 November 2002.

¹² Ibid.

Chapter 3

Recruiting: Targeting Hispanics

Recruiting officials are placing a greater emphasis on targeted recruitment in specific markets – a sort of niche recruiting – as opposed to general recruitment and advertising.

—Harold Jordan, American Friends Service Committee

According to the Office of the Under Secretary Defense's report on *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, (August 1999), the AF does not have actual numerical goals for minority accessions, it does seek to align its officer mix in accordance with recent college graduates in the civilian population.¹ As mentioned previously, the percentage of Hispanic college graduates is 16.4 percent for Hispanics 25 to 29 years old.² The same rate for 22 year olds, is 12 percent for Hispanics, 15 percent for blacks and 30 percent for whites.³ When one compares the percentage of Hispanic officers in the AF to the percentage of Hispanic college graduates, it is obvious there are fewer Hispanics in the AF than is readily available. Further, there is no one officer grade that is more than 3 percent Hispanic. *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers* point out that "Hispanics are under-represented among officer accessions and in the officer corps relative to civilian college graduates; in the Air Force the under-representation is more pronounced."⁴

What can be done to increase the number of Hispanics in the AF? This paper will look at the various accession sources in the next chapter and offer some recommendations. However, this chapter will explore why the college graduate rates for Hispanics are low and what can be done about it. Further, this chapter will also portray how the reasons behind the lagging rates can help shed some light into recruiting practices. Finally, the chapter will conclude with specific AF recruitment practices and initiatives targeted to Hispanics.

The Pew Hispanic Center recently completed a report entitled, *Latinos in Higher Education: Many Enroll, Too Few Graduate*, which pointed out that Hispanics pursue higher education in ways that can thwart degree completion.⁵ For example, many Hispanics attend school on a part-time basis, enroll in community colleges and some delay their college education until in their mid-20s or later.⁶ Attending college in this manner produces a lower graduation rate compared to other methods of completion such as full-time enrollment at four-year institutions during the normal college-going age.⁷ The implications for AF recruiting are that recruiters need to target community colleges and focus on scholarships for those who enroll later or who are enrolled part-time (since the main reason for both is primarily lack of funds for school). Family obligations, academic preparation, failure to understand college advancement and graduation requirements and financial aid policies also appear to be factors in influencing Hispanic students' choices on method and timing to attend college.⁸ Recruiters need to also ensure that ROTC and AF Academy information is conveyed and understood by Hispanic students and their families, in language that they both can understand.

Another implication for recruiting is that the majority of Hispanic youths (age 23 or younger) live in just five states; California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois.⁹ Targeted recruiting in these states should be at the forefront of any recruiting campaign aimed at Hispanics. This paper will refer to these five states as Hispanic Core States.

Some recommendations to increase the Hispanic college graduate rate provided in a recent RAND report are:¹⁰

1. Raise public awareness of the need for greater investments in post-secondary education
2. Increase the capacity of the nation's postsecondary institutions, especially those located in California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Texas
3. Focus as much attention on keeping students in college as is currently given to preventing students from dropping out of high school
4. Coordinate interventions across all levels of education
5. Increase both the amount and availability of financial assistance
6. Support expansion of high school-, community-, and college-based programs for at-risk students
7. Support evaluation of existing programs and experimentation with new programs

All these recommendations hold some significant information for recruiting and for the AF's various accession programs. The RAND report explains the Hispanic college situation so all can get a better picture to understand how to approach improving Hispanic college graduation rates and how one might tap into the few that are out there. The military has an opportunity to step in and provide alternatives to the Hispanic community. They can offer increased minority scholarships to those in need and they can increase the number of Hispanics that enlist and provide them financial assistance to

complete degrees. In turn, some of these enlisted Hispanics could be commissioned, in effect; the AF could grow some of their own minority officers.

Not satisfied with the standard operating procedures in place, the AF recruiting service is aggressively pursuing some innovative measures and beefing up those already in place. GSD&M is now the AF prime contractor for advertising and marketing and they use two minority-owned subcontractors to assist them in developing the AF message.¹¹ The AF media plan uses a variety of methods to target Hispanics; television, national magazines, professional trade journals, radio, college newspapers, on-line internet advertising and community events.

Television spots amounting to 6 percent of total television spending or \$1.7M are seen on *Univision*, *Telemundo*, *Galavision* and *Telefutura*.¹² Professional trade journals such as *Hispanic Engineer*, *Hispanic Career World* are avenues to get the word directly to the Hispanic market and total about \$8,000 or 2 percent of the total trade journal spending.¹³ The college newspaper program includes nine predominantly Hispanic colleges and totals \$30,000 or 3 percent of the total college newspaper program.¹⁴ The AF participates in several community events that are in the Hispanic population such as Cinco de Mayo celebrations, Hispanic State Fairs, League of United Latin American Citizens and National Council of La Raza conventions and Hispanic Engineering National Achievement Awards. These particular programs fall under the sub-contractor Ad Rendon (minority owned small business) and cost approximately \$382,000.¹⁵

The AF tries to reflect diversity in their advertising by representing minorities in all creative materials they develop and in fact, use Hispanic active duty personnel in some commercials, both print and television. A recent innovative advertising brochure is

written in both English and Spanish, hoping to reach out to the many bilingual Hispanics and their predominately Spanish speaking parents. Another recent television ad depicts a Hispanic girl fixing her family's satellite dish and then later working in uniform at the AF's Space Command. Another print ad that has been recently approved, but not yet used is truly innovative and uses Hispanic slang to reach out to Hispanic youth. Efforts to educate recruiters in culturally appropriate marketing strategies and to better match up recruiters with minority-satiated areas are being undertaken by AF Recruiting Service.

The AF's senior leadership is working to develop new tools to both identify and recruit successful minorities. They hired a contractor, Point 1 Corp, with a proven success record in attracting quality minorities in the private sector for companies like SAIC, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman and NASA.¹⁶ The first test will be with black pilot candidates and if successful could be applied to other minority groups such as Hispanic pilot candidates.

Another of the senior leadership's new tools is to use a civilian contractor to gain access to college market areas normally unavailable to blue suiters and to use ROTC scholarships, Air Force Academy appointments, OTS selections and pilot slots as incentives to capture truly high quality minorities, the cream at the top.¹⁷ This program is in the design stages and will have the black minority group as its focus initially.

A third effort is being considered that will attempt to better match up ROTC detachments with minority populations and Houston, Texas is one of the first areas that is being considered due to its large Hispanic and black populations.¹⁸ Since Houston is the fourth largest city with the fourth largest minority population (and third largest Hispanic city) in the country, it makes good business sense to open a ROTC detachment there.¹⁹

Be that as it may, this is an important effort, but can be fraught with political problems as well as zero sum budget requirements if some lower producing detachments are closed in order to make room for new detachments in minority concentrated areas.

The Navy Recruiting Command is collaborating with corporate sponsorships such as the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, the Mexican American Engineers and Scientists and attending various conventions similar to the AF such as ones sponsored by National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens.²⁰ The Navy has also held several diversity summits with its top admirals to focus on diversity efforts, identify shortfalls in processes and resources and to check progress as they see this effort as a long-term commitment.²¹ Additionally, the Navy also has developed a recruiting website in Spanish.

Another effort undertaken by the Navy that could prove beneficial to the AF is the Minority VIP program. This program identifies qualified potential officer candidates at colleges and universities nationwide for attendance at a three or four day tour of Navy facilities and platforms. The Minority VIP program targets those college students who have expressed interest in the Navy as a career and who might be categorized as “on the fence” since they have not yet committed to entry into the service. The Navy implemented this program in 1999 and has seen a 93 percent success rate. They hold two to three trips per year with approximately 10 to 15 students in each tour.²²

The Army has begun in recent years to aggressively recruit the Hispanic market. In fact, they have stated their goal of increasing Hispanic production to be proportional to the Hispanic representation in the United States population by FY2006.²³ Like both the AF and the Navy, the Army uses many of the same recruiting initiatives; Spanish

language television, radio, Hispanic college newspaper campaign, community events and national conferences. An Army sponsored research project focusing on Hispanic officers identified several recruiting insights. The Army report found that; the public knows little about “officer stuff” and did not have a clear image of the Army; there was a shortage of Hispanic officer role models in the Army and in Hispanic ROTC cadres, and most Hispanics were in 2-year and state colleges.²⁴

What all these efforts by each of the Services indicate is just how difficult it is to recruit Hispanics as officers. What further complicates the Hispanic recruitment effort is that there is such diversity within the larger Hispanic group. Diverse sub-groups exist with their own unique differences. For example, there are Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and others from each Latin American country and each of these groups has such distinct differences that recruiting aimed at the larger group may sometimes not be received in the same manner. However, recruiting efforts should still target the larger Hispanic group. If recruiting were to focus on any one specific sub-group then it would exclude the others and be detrimental to the entire recruiting effort. Recruiting should focus on the similarities that exist within the larger group and minimize the differences.

The pool of Hispanic college graduates is small and this is additionally compounded by the fact that the AF is in direct competition with its sister services, and they are all in competition with the private sector’s most prestigious organizations who have traditionally culled the top of the minority college graduate market by using enticing salary and benefit packages. The battle for quality, talented minorities is fierce. The following are recommendations to enable the AF to try to win that battle.

Recommendations

The AF must really focus on the areas that have the most Hispanic youth. The majority of Hispanic youths are in the Hispanic Core States of California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois. Specialized targeted recruiting in these states makes sense. The AF could have regionally focused recruiting efforts and saturate all the markets in those states at a higher percentage than what is normally done. It would be beneficial to assign Spanish-speaking recruiters to recruiting groups in these states.

The AF needs to use more Hispanic officer role models in its advertising and also in face to face meetings with prospective officer candidates. Potential Hispanic officers need to see one of their own, especially those that have “made it.” This will go further than any civilian recruiter trying to explain that the AF is a good way of life and what it can offer a Hispanic. These young people need to hear it from someone who looks and talks like them and has achieved success in the AF. This is especially true for those areas with large ROTC Hispanic populations, where on a daily basis they could interact and receive mentoring from senior AF Hispanic officers.

The AF needs to pull out all the stops to advertise among Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). These are institutions of higher education which have an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic.²⁵ The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) is the only national association that represents the 183 HSIs, which are home to more than two-thirds of all Hispanic college students in the United States.²⁶ Additionally, senior officer visits to HSIs with Hispanic participation among students and faculty should be arranged.

Officers who are visiting or speaking at nearby locations could be asked to visit minority affairs offices and deans of various schools at HSIs.

The AF should increase its advertising and marketing budget that targets Hispanics. Current programs are but a fraction of the AF's overall recruiting and marketing budget. When one factors in the largest growing Hispanic demographic market it just makes sense that this particular budget should increase. An analysis of market penetration between the AF Hispanic recruiting and marketing programs should be undertaken. This small investment in a fruitful area could reap tremendous benefits among Hispanics if properly targeted.²⁷

The AF should develop an outreach program entitled, "Adopt a School."²⁸ This program would identify those high schools that have the most minorities with the highest SAT scores and then assign an air force base that is near as their host. A minority officer from the base could then go to the adopted school periodically, but at least once a year, to present a recruiting pitch to the entire student body. If a minority officer was not available, then a majority officer and a Hispanic enlisted individual could attend. The students, especially the minority ones would experience first hand the potential benefits of becoming an AF officer. Additionally, this program could expand to include middle schools as well since planting the seed early could be advantageous.

The AF should assign a Hispanic officer to the HACU. Recently, the Coast Guard assigned an officer as a new in-house executive on loan to the HACU headquarters to help promote Coast Guard college and career opportunities to Hispanics.²⁹ This is an innovative concept to get in "on the inside" of an organization to help increase Hispanic officers in the Coast Guard.

The AF should step up its efforts to partner and outreach with predominately Hispanic professional and non-professional organizations and should centrally coordinate these efforts.

Organizations that could be included are: La Raza, LULAC, Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC), Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, Pew Hispanic Center, and HACU. The AF should consider establishing contact with the top 25 companies recently recognized by Hispanic Online as having the best Hispanic recruitment programs. This list includes: Ford, GE, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, SBC Communications and Southwest Airlines.

The AF should establish a recruiting website in Spanish and implement a Minority VIP program as the Navy has done. A Spanish language website can appeal to a wider Hispanic audience and most importantly appeals to the parents of potential officers. The AF could implement a program similar to the Navy's Minority VIP program, which targets minority college students who have expressed interest in the service, but have not yet committed. This program could offer selected interested students a three or four day tour of AF facilities and programs. The Navy's 93 percent success rate with this program cannot be discounted.

The AF should include Hispanics in the first two tests mentioned earlier in this chapter that involve private contractors hired specifically to target high quality black pilot candidates. The AF has hired a contractor with a proven success record in attracting quality minorities in the private sector for companies like SAIC, Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman and NASA. They are also planning to hire another contractor to gain

access to college market areas normally unavailable to AF recruiters in order to try to recruit high quality black minorities. Both these efforts should expand to include Hispanics.

Notes

¹ Ibid.

² Cafferty, Pastora San Juan and David W. Engstrom. *Hispanics in the United States: An Agenda for the Twenty-first Century*. (New Brunswick, NJ.: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 128-129

³ Rand Issue Paper. *Increasing Hispanic Participation in Higher Education: A Desirable Public Investment*, 1995

⁴ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997.

⁵ Saenz, Dianne and Cristina Miranda. *Latino High School Graduates Enroll in College at Higher Rates Than Whites, Yet Too Few Graduate*, Pew Hispanic Center Report, Washington D. C., 5 September, 2002. The Pew Hispanic Center is a non-partisan research organization founded in 2001 with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia. The center is a project under the USC Annenberg School for Communication.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Vernez, Georges and Lee Mizell. *Goal: To Double the Rate of Hispanics Earning Bachelor's Degree*, RAND Education, Center for Research on Immigration Policy, 1999.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Demiranda, MSgt Juan. AFRS/RSMA paper on Minority Advertising Initiatives, 27 May 02

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Speigel, MG John. AF/DPF briefing: *The Big Picture*, 2002 National Image Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 02

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Voelker, RADM George. Briefing: *Navy Recruiting DoD Forum, National Image Conference*, 28 May 2002.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Telephone interview between author and CAPT Cathy Contres, Director of Diversity Recruiting, Navy Recruiting Command, 3 Dec 02.

²³ U. S. Army Briefing: *The Hispanic Market is Important to the Army*. 2002 National Image Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 02

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²⁴ Topete, Colonel Hector E. Briefing: *Recruitment and Representation of Hispanic Americans in the U. S. Army*, National Image, Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 2002

²⁵ H. R. 2495. Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century Act.

²⁶ Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Press Release: *HACU 101: The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities*, 13 September 2002

²⁷ Interview between author and CAPT Ed Johnson, Faculty Advisor, Air War College, 3 Dec 02.

²⁸ Interview between author and Capt Sean Bailey, AF Academy, Chief of Minority enrollment, September 2002.

²⁹ HACU Press Release: *HACU Boasts a Coast Guard Officer on Board*, San Antonio, Texas, 20 September 2002.

Chapter 4

Accessions: Academy, ROTC and OTS

The strength and productivity of the U. S. work force increasingly depends upon the educational progress of Latinos.

—Pew Hispanic Center

According to OSD's report on the *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, education is the most prominent factor for gaining access to the officer corps.¹ There are differences among race/ethnic groups as to quality of education and level of education achieved and these differences serve to limit the amount of race/ethnic minorities that meet the criteria for admission into the officer ranks.² These differences in academic achievement and school quality also contribute to minorities not being as initially prepared as whites for advancement through the ranks in the right career fields to general officer ranks.³ Before a discussion about what can be done to increase the number of Hispanics that are qualified for entry as officers and what can be done to improve the quality of their education so they may be better prepared to advance through to senior leadership, a look first at where the officer accessions come from in the AF.

As of 30 September, the largest source of AF officers (42 percent) come from the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program, followed by Officer Training School (OTS) at 21 percent, the AF Academy at 19 percent and direct appointment at 18

percent.⁴ Hispanics are more likely to be commissioned through OTS and less likely to gain entry through the Academy or via a ROTC scholarship.⁵

Of the 143 AF ROTC detachments nationwide, including Puerto Rico, there are eight Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs) and five Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).⁶ There is a ROTC detachment at an HSI in only one of the Hispanic Core States mentioned previously with high Hispanic youth populations; Texas. The AF senior leadership is looking to study closing under-productive ROTC detachments and possibly open new ones in areas with larger minority populations to better target minority accessions. Truly, the demographics of the Hispanic group demand that the AF look at accessions in a different way in order to be successful in bringing in officers.

There are a variety of scholarships available to all individuals and seven Host Minority Institution scholarships are available to just HBCUs and HSIs.⁷ Scholarships are particularly important to minorities, as minorities tend to come from lower income households more than non-minorities.⁸

ROTC is looking to collaborate with organizations such as League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to sponsor scholarships for qualified Hispanics.⁹ The idea is that organizations like LULAC have access into the right market and can progress much faster and farther than ROTC on their own.

The AF is evaluating expanding to Hispanics a program it implemented in 1997, which focused on increasing the number of minorities, especially blacks in aviation.¹⁰ The program at Delaware State University offered a 10-week summer program in aviation and aerospace studies to selected students from ROTC programs at HBCUs or other minority institutions with the goal of preparing minority students to return to ROTC

detachments with the skills and the motivation and drive to become AF pilots. Consideration is underway for another Flight Summer Awareness Program in Texas, which would be similar to the Delaware program in that selected ROTC students would undergo flight training, instruction in maintenance and an opportunity to test for a pilot's license.

One AF ROTC program that targets minorities is the Gold Bar program which assigns newly commissioned minority ROTC graduates on a full-time basis to target under-represented markets to recruit minorities for ROTC.¹¹ Gold Bar recruiters were placed at every AF HBCU and the percentage of minorities enrolled in ROTC increased from 6.6 percent to 14.7 percent from 1992 to 1996.¹² Instead of expanding this program to focus more on the growing Hispanic group, the AF is planning to terminate the Gold Bar program.¹³ This action goes directly against one of two key issues brought up by minority officers participating in panel discussions at the 4-Star Officer Accessions and Development Summit held 23 April 2002 which was the lack of Hispanic officer role models, specifically at the accession sources.¹⁴ There has been some discussion that the Gold Bar program failed to recruit *highly competitive* minorities into ROTC and that perhaps it is because there has been no unified, institutionalized AF vision to keep efforts from being fragmented and inconsistent.¹⁵

The AF Academy has an aggressive campaign to recruit minorities and currently has more minorities than the AF officer corps at large; 17 percent versus 15 percent.¹⁶ The Academy Minority Recruiting Office makes 800 school visits, attends 250 college fairs, and contacts 12,000 minority students annually.¹⁷ Some initiatives that the Academy is looking into are: utilizing market data to better focus efforts, following up

aggressively on appointment offers, increasing the number of minority educators participating in the Educator Orientation program, increasing Minority Affairs Coordinators in target areas and educating minority Congress members and staffs on the nomination process.¹⁸ Educating the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in particular is important since this body does not fully utilize their nominations to the Academies according to research done in 1999 by the Army.¹⁹

The Academy prep school has also been a source of minorities entering the Academy over the years. According to the report on Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers, over the last several years, the prep school provided between 30 and 50 percent of minority students enrolled in the Academy.²⁰ Attrition does play a factor and only about one-half of all the students who enter the prep school including race and ethnic minorities eventually are commissioned compared to the 72 percent graduate rate of those who admit directly to the Academy.²¹ However, this program does allow less qualified minorities a chance to enter the Academy. The high prep school attrition rate should be thoroughly researched.

Recommendations

The AF should institute an aggressive campaign to identify quality Hispanic enlisted personnel and encourage them to pursue degree completion via several available methods so that they may be eligible for OTS. Hispanics are more likely to attain their commissions via OTS and this would allow the AF to “grow their own.”

The AF should continue to pursue their evaluation of ROTC detachments for closure and open new detachments in highly concentrated Hispanic areas or colleges. Evaluate increasing the number of detachments at HSIs. With the population projections

predicted by the Census Bureau it makes sense that there would be more HSIs than HBCUs, especially in the Hispanic Core States (California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois) where the largest number of Hispanic youth tends to be.

The AF should combine the efforts of Recruiting Service, ROTC, Academy and OTS into a unified, comprehensive plan to recruit highly qualified minorities.²² These efforts need to be tied together in one agency for oversight and management. This would help to eliminate the problems in recruiting *highly qualified* minorities that plagued such initiatives such as the Gold Bar program.²³

The AF should continue the Gold Bar program. The program should be revamped with increased emphasis on Hispanics in concentrated areas and continued emphasis on areas that produce the most black officers. Role models are a significant part of any diversity program.

The AF should continue to pursue expanding the Summer Flight Awareness Training Program to more Hispanics. Increasing the number of Hispanic pilots that enter the AF would go a long way in not only increasing Hispanic officers, but in reversing the under-representation trend among senior leadership as pilots comprise most of the senior leader billets.

The AF should investigate and take action to reduce the attrition rate of minorities at the Academy's prep school to provide data for program changes that could reduce the attrition rate.

Notes

¹ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Notes

⁴ AFPC: *Service Demographics Offer a Snapshot of Force*. Release No. 073, 18 October 2002. Direct appointments are for those non-line categories such as nurses, doctors, lawyers, etc.

⁵ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997. chapter 3.

⁶ Interview between author and Col Mike Baker, AFOATS/RRU, Chief Scholarship Branch, September 2002.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997. chapter 3.

⁹ Interview between author and Lt Col Kevin Driscoll, SAF/MRE, 22 October and 6 November 2002.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interview between author and Maj Dennis Millsap, Chief of Recruiting, AF ROTC, September 2002.

¹⁴ Meeting Minutes of the 4-Star Officer Accessions and Development Summit, Washington D. C., 23 April 2002.

¹⁵ *AF Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY1999*, SAF/MRE

¹⁶ USAFA/RRSM Briefing: Air Force Academy Minority Enrollment, on or about 17 April 2002

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Topete, Colonel Hector E. Briefing: *Recruitment and Representation of Hispanic Americans in the U. S. Army*, National Image, Inc., Training Conference, Las Vegas, NV., 30 May 2002

²⁰ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997. chapter 3.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *AF Military Equal Opportunity Assessment, FY1999*, SAF/MRE.

²³ Ibid.

Chapter 5

Mentoring and Development: Key to Tackling Hispanic Under-Representation

True success will be measured by our ability to create opportunities and have minorities prepared to accept and seize those opportunities when they present themselves.

—Dr. James Roche, secretary of the Air Force

The second of two key issues brought up by officers participating in the officer panel discussions at the 4-Star Officer Accessions and Development Summit was the lack of or the need for an effective mentoring and development program for minority officers.¹ The AF does have a formal mentoring program and Air Force Policy Directive 36-34 dated 1 July 2000 governs it. Is it an effective program? No, the formal mentoring program does little than provide lip service to minorities. What is definitely lacking is a real mentoring program that is inclusive enough in nature to actively guide and assist minorities in their career and personal development. This is a difficult undertaking to accomplish and others have found it truly challenging as well.

In fact, this is an issue that is also significant in corporate America as well. As mentioned previously, author Dr. Thomas provided attendees of the 4-Star Summit some valuable lessons from his six year research of minority corporate executives that could be applied to the under-representation of minorities among senior leaders in the AF. One of Dr. Thomas' key findings was that the path to the executive suite was not the same for

minorities and whites; that whites were promoted “fast and steady” whereas minorities tended to “move at a significantly slower rate.”² Why? Minorities were tested twice in their careers (early on) and again in upper-management as opposed to only once for whites (upper-management).³ Minorities had to repeatedly exceed performance standards and expectations to gain promotion early on and this took time as they built competence, confidence, and credibility.⁴

Dr. Thomas found that an organization itself could contribute to diversity at the top; senior leaders need to be personally involved, the company’s corporate culture must be aligned with racial integration, and an ongoing partnership between white leaders and diversity champions must be established and maintained.⁵

The “success” pattern for minorities he identified to AF senior leaders was; a developmentally rich career stage one (supervisory level to middle management), opportunities to perform and exceed in high visibility assignments in career stages two and three (middle management to upper-middle management), creation of an enabling environment and a focus on diversity at the top.⁶

Some of what Dr. Thomas found is seen in the AF officer ranks as well since minorities tend to get a “slow start” compared to their non-minority peers. According to OSD’s *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, there have been differences noted in career progression between minorities and whites in the Services. Some minorities “are at a disadvantage in early career assignments because of differences in commissioning source, selectivity of colleges attended, and educational patterns (academic major and GPA).”⁷ However, the focal point for comprehending limited career progression for minority officers appears to lie in their difficulties in building

competitive performance records which can occur from more limited social integration and weaker pre-commissioning preparation.⁸ “Another critical factor is the greater difficulty minority officers have in gaining access to peer and mentor relationships, which are important for succeeding in one’s current assignment and for opening future career opportunities.”⁹ Minorities have stated that they believe they must deal with both visible and invisible barriers to their success, which serves to limit opportunities that come their way and limits recognition of their efforts.¹⁰ These findings are very similar to what Dr. Thomas found in his research of minority executives in corporate America.

Several of the Services have mentoring groups that are specifically targeted to minorities; Air Force Cadet/Officer Mentor Action Program (AFCOMAP), Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO), National Naval Officers Association (NNOA), and the Army ROCKS. All of these organizations work to provide professional and social interaction and development for minority officers and most have expanded to include all officers. Of these, the only group that targets Hispanics is ANSO. AFCOMAP is formally endorsed by the AF and in 1994 was expanded to include all cadets and junior officers, regardless of race.¹¹ What is important about AFCOMAP is not only that it is endorsed by the AF senior leadership, but that it has advocacy in the form of black general officer advisors and support.

The Navy has developed a virtual mentoring website that focuses on minorities. It is a voluntary program where senior officers can register to mentor and guide junior officers and where more junior officers can register to receive mentoring and to also provide feedback to senior officers. This has the potential to be an effective tool for the AF to utilize since there are so few Hispanic officers and this may be one way to ensure

mentoring is available. Additionally, many Hispanic officers do not know where to locate other Hispanics especially since there are Hispanics without Spanish surnames.

Already pointed out previously, Hispanics are accessed at lower rates than the labor force, over-represented in support career fields, under-represented in pilot ranks, and tend to get selected at a pace far below whites for service schools, below the promotion zone promotions and command opportunities at the group and wing level. It is no wonder that Hispanics are virtually absent from the AF's senior leadership. How can these statistics be turned around? Recruiting and accession efforts were discussed previously, now a focus on areas that might affect the positive development of Hispanic officers.

Recommendations

The AF needs to develop a viable mentoring program for all personnel. However, an informal mentoring group such as has been around for years for blacks should be implemented for Hispanics. Informal mentoring programs are sometimes more effective in dealing with minority groups. Senior Hispanic officers need to be part of any mentoring effort targeted at Hispanics. This mentoring program needs to educate young Hispanic officers on key assignments, professional education and other growth potential opportunities. Dr. Thomas showed in his research that the minorities who reached the executive suite had informal networks of both minorities and non-minorities.

The AF should establish a virtual Hispanic officer mentoring website similar to the Navy. On a volunteer basis, Hispanic officers, both senior and junior could mentor and receive valuable feedback. The AF should take advantage of available technology to initiate a Hispanic Virtual Mentoring Website.

Serious effort to place more Hispanics in the pilot ranks is needed. One way might be to target Academy students who are pilot qualified, but have not yet selected their career field.¹² As mentioned previously, another way is to groom high quality Hispanics in ROTC with such programs as the Summer Flight Awareness Program (like the Delaware State University program targeted largely to blacks). True diversity at the top will not be achieved until more Hispanics are placed in pilot ranks since pilots are the group that consistently makes up the senior leadership.

School selections, below the promotion zone selections and command opportunities need to be further evaluated to determine why Hispanics are not being selected at higher rates. The senior leadership needs to actively pursue these issues. Dr. Thomas found in his research of minority executives that real diversity at the top did not occur until high quality minorities were sought out and groomed for key positions.¹³ High quality Hispanic officers need to be identified and provided high visibility, critical positions.

The AF should assign an officer to a Hispanic think tank such as the Pew Hispanic Center as a senior service school fellow similar to what the AF already does with RAND and Harvard. This would provide an excellent opportunity for an officer to evaluate and research issues that have or may have significant impact on the Hispanic community and could provide insight for the AF on how to recruit and develop Hispanics. There are several different types of think tanks available; the Pew Hispanic Center is just one example and is not endorsed by the author.

The AF should tie diversity efforts to performance appraisals similar to what several private companies have done. When you hold people accountable and measure

them against how successful they are in implementing diversity, it is incredible how cooperative they can really be. This is one sure way to show that the AF is serious about diversity.

The AF organization needs to transform itself to become one that has an enabling environment where opportunity meets preparation for all personnel. All personnel, especially senior leaders need to understand equal opportunity. They need to be able to mentor across race and ethnic groups effectively. The AF's deputy assistant secretary for equal opportunity office has recently taken over the equal opportunity training for senior leaders (new general officers and senior executive service civilian employees).¹⁴ This is the right level of attention needed to ensure that the AF's senior leadership is trained appropriately.

Notes

¹ Meeting Minutes of the 4-Star Officer Accessions and Development Summit, Washington D. C., 23 April 2002.

² Thomas, Dr. David A. and John J. Gavarro. *Breaking Through: The Making of Minority Executives in Corporate America*. Boston, MA.: Harvard Business School Press, 1999), 30

³ Ibid., 31

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 33

⁶ Meeting Minutes of the 4-Star Officer Accessions and Development Summit, Washington D. C., 23 April 2002.

⁷ OSD/P&R, *Career Progression of Minority and Women Officers*, released August 1999, data collected thru 1997. chapter 8.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., chapter 7.

¹¹ 1FW AFCOMAP website, Langely AFB, VA.

¹² Interview between author and Capt Sean Bailey, AF Academy, Chief of Minority enrollment, September 2002.

¹³ Thomas, Dr. David A. and John J. Gavarro. *Breaking Through: The Making of Minority Executives in Corporate America*. Boston, MA.: Harvard Business School Press, 1999),

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¹⁴ Interview between author and Lt Col Kevin Driscoll, SAF/MRE, 22 October and 6 November 2002.

Chapter 6

Summary/Conclusions

This is not a matter of being nice to Latinos.....we are already a very significant part of the current workplace. We will be even more significant in the future as Anglo birthrates decline, and Anglos grow older and retire. It's in America's best interest to invest in the Latino workforce.

—Sonia Perez, deputy vice president,
National Council of La Raza

The fact that Hispanics are the largest growing minority in the United States is undisputable. In 2000, one of every eight persons was Hispanic in the United States and one out of every four persons will be Hispanic by 2050.¹ This is not just another diversity or equal opportunity fad. To discount the impact of Hispanics on the work force is to forfeit one's own survival. An organization cannot be viable without personnel and serious attention to the largest growing minority in the United States. The AF can not continue to do business as usual when it comes to diversity and this group, not if the senior leadership is serious about remaining effective and having the leadership of the AF looking like America. Unfortunately, the time to act on this issue was long before now; there must be serious concerted effort applied across the senior levels of the AF today to combat the under-representation of Hispanic officers or the gap will continue to grow.

The business case for diversity is another powerful reason for the AF to truly be diverse. Hispanics will be needed just to get the job done and to truly prosper the AF will need to apply appropriate diversity management strategies. Mission effectiveness in an increasingly global defense business is enhanced with a diverse workforce in a multicultural world.

The under-representation of Hispanics in the AF officer ranks is a complicated issue. The obvious answers are that the AF needs to access more Hispanics, better develop the Hispanic officers that are already serving and at the same time ensure that senior leadership visibly and actively supports an AF culture of inclusion. If only it was that simple. It can be, but it will take *momentous effort* and *change* on the part of the leadership and the organizational culture of the AF. The senior leadership appears to be serious about tackling the diversity issue head on. However, it must do more than pay lip service; no longer will half-hearted attempts proclaimed during Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations be sufficient. Significant transformational change must occur or Hispanic diversity will not be achievable. The following are recommendations from previous chapters that merit a second mention here. Please refer back to specific chapters for a more detailed explanation.

Recruiting Recommendations

- Focus on the Hispanic Core States where most of the Hispanic youth are; California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois
- Use more Hispanic role models in marketing, advertising and outreach programs
- Increase advertising among Hispanic Serving Institutions
- Increase the Hispanic advertising and marketing budget to better align with Hispanic growth nationally
- Implement an outreach program entitled, “Adopt a School” at selective high schools that have the most minorities and highest SAT scores. Closest AFB would act as host

- Assign an officer to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities as an “insider” position just like the Coast Guard has recently done
- Establish a Spanish recruiting website similar to the Navy site
- Implement a Minority VIP program similar to the Navy program which targets minority college students who have expressed interest, but have not committed to service entry
- Step up efforts to partner and outreach with Hispanic organizations
- Establish a relationship with the top 25 companies that successfully recruit Hispanics in the private sector
- Include Hispanics in the initial recruiting tests targeted at highly qualified black pilot candidates

Accessions Recommendations

- Implement a campaign to target high quality enlisted Hispanics for degree completion then follow on commissioning, “grow your own” campaign
- Open ROTC detachments at HSIs in highly concentrated Hispanic areas. Consider for closure existing detachments that are under-productive
- Assign one agency to oversee combined efforts of Recruiting Service, Academy, ROTC and OTS in accessions; avoids duplication of effort and provides a synergy effect
- Keep the Gold Bar program, revamp it as appropriate for maximum effectiveness, but do not terminate it as minorities being able to see “one of their own” is invaluable
- Expand the Summer Flight Awareness Training Program to include more Hispanics. Consider duplicating the Delaware State University program in area with high concentration of Hispanics
- Conduct research into the attrition rate of minorities at the Academy’s prep school

Mentoring and Development Recommendations

- Develop an informal mentoring group such as the AF AFCOMAP, Navy ANSO, and Army ROCKS. Ensure Hispanic general officer support and advisory role
- Develop a virtual Hispanic Mentoring Website where on a voluntary basis, senior and junior Hispanic officers could mentor and receive feedback
- Target pilot qualified Hispanic Academy students who have not yet selected their career field for possible entry into the pilot career field
- Target highly technically qualified Hispanic enlisted personnel for potential entry into the pilot ranks once commissioned

- Senior leadership should identify and mentor currently serving highly qualified Hispanic officers for selection to highly visible, competitive command opportunities and critical “career making” positions
- Assign an officer to a Hispanic think tank as a senior service fellow similar to what is already done at RAND and Harvard
- Consider tying diversity efforts to performance appraisals; when people are measured against a quantitative standard they tend to pay attention
- Transform into an environment that enables all personnel to be prepared to take advantage of opportunities
- Train all personnel, especially senior leadership in diversity efforts that support an inclusive environment
- Ensure that diversity is institutionalized so as senior leaders depart, these efforts can continue

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