

Why Military Leader Development Won't Work for Army Civilians

by

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Abstract

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Senior Army leaders recognize the Army Civilian workforce as a critical part of the total Army and the need to develop multifaceted civilian leaders similar to military senior leaders. The Army conducted multiple surveys and studies over the last decade and launched a Civilian Workforce Transformation in 2010. Three key structural issues—decentralized management of the Army civilian workforce, lack of civilian employee mobility, and an unbalanced grade structure—will prevent these latest initiatives from achieving the Army's strategic intent. Analysis of key characteristics of these structural issues and the resulting effects on the Army Civilian Leader development programs, the Civilian Education System (CES) and Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM) program, show the futility of the current approach. Recommendations include continuing an evolutionary approach that cannot completely ameliorate the existing structural issues or a revolutionary approach where the Army fundamentally reexamines its Army Civilian leader development approach. Further research is needed on the growth in retired military officers transitioning into civil service at high GS pay grades since significant law changes starting in 1998.

Why Military Leader Development Won't Work for Army Civilians

I know what you all are thinking. I was thinking the same thing as we were preparing these remarks. You've all heard this before.

—Under Secretary of the Army Honorable Joseph W. Westphal¹

Recently, the most senior Army leaders have asked “How can the Army best prepare, train, and retain uniformed and civilian leaders with multifaceted experience to meet future challenges in a world of change, uncertainty, and complexity?”² This paper focuses on the *civilian leader* portion of the question. The Army intends to shape the civilian workforce to ensure it has adaptive leaders, with diverse experiences, who are able to solve complex problems.³ To address these significant challenges, the Army invested in multiple civilian leadership programs over the last decade and announced a comprehensive Civilian Workforce Transformation initiative in 2010.⁴

Under Secretary of the Army Honorable Joseph W. Westphal noted the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA 2010) mandated that the military services improve their civilian workforce management. He outlined four actions the Army needed to take to meet what he described as “a major strategic challenge for the Army:” hire the right people and do it quickly; manage the workforce in career fields; train and develop our workforce into leaders; and take care of and keep the civilians we do hire.⁵ Explaining how the Army was going to approach this strategic challenge, he noted the success the Army has in managing its military workforce and said, “We need to mimic what we do for the guys in green for all of us in the Army.”⁶ He then highlighted efforts in each area to ensure that, this time, the results of these initiatives would be different.

However, despite significant Army effort over the last two decades, the combined effects from three existing structural issues within the civil service system—

decentralized management, mobility of the civilian workforce, and the unbalanced civilian grade structure—will prevent this latest set of Army initiatives from realizing the stated civilian leader development goal.

Background

Specific characteristics of the Army civilian workforce contribute to the challenges in developing civilian leaders with multifaceted experience, and past civilian leader development studies form the basis for today's civilian leader development programs.

Characteristics of the Army Civilian Workforce

The Army is decreasing its civilian workforce from the current level of 285,000 to 263,000 by the end of FY15.⁷ The Army civilian workforce performs training, supply, and engineering functions so “war fighters can concentrate on their missions and come home safely.”⁸ If Army civilians only did these three functions (training, supply, and engineering) it would probably make the Army civilian leader development goal less complex, but these 263,000-285,000 employees actually represent 138 different specific occupational series in 31 broad career programs and they are paid (primarily) by three different pay systems.⁹ Blue collar (craft, trade, and general labor) positions fall under the Federal Wage System; white collar positions fall under the General Schedule (GS); and Executive, Senior Executive Service (SES), judges, and other senior personnel fall under the Executive and Senior pay plans.¹⁰ The breakout for these pay plans at the end of FY12 was 70 percent for the GS and SES pay plans, 15 percent for Wage Grade , and 1 percent in Wage Leader or Wage Supervisor plans.¹¹ The remaining 14 percent of employees not accounted for in this breakout belong to agencies having the statutory authority for their own pay systems (such as the Acquisition Demonstration Project).¹²

The most important characteristic is Army civilian workforce personnel management and hiring processes are largely decentralized and open, which differs significantly from the centralized and closed management of the military personnel.¹³ Hiring of civilian personnel is based on specific position vacancy rather than a centralized military authorization structure. Initial hires can be at any level of the GS grades or even as an SES, which is characteristic of open labor pools. Military personnel, on the other hand, almost exclusively enter the service at the lowest career rung and then progress up through the ranks—a closed labor pool—and must comply with worldwide relocation through deployment and permanent change of station requirements, whereas civilians (generally) have to volunteer for mobility or deployment, unless specifically part of the job criteria when first hired.¹⁴ And where military members have specific terms of service and forced separation or retirement in an “up-or-out” construct, the Army civilian has more individual choice and much longer tenures, especially within pay grades.¹⁵

Because of the open labor pool, veterans comprise a much higher percentage (47 percent) of the Army workforce than the federal-wide civilian workforce (29 percent) and a disproportionate number of veterans are supervisors or managers.¹⁶ As of 2006, about 50 percent of civilian leadership positions (GS-13 to SES) were filled with mostly retired Colonels, and the number reached 75 percent in some Army commands.¹⁷ A 2013 Army civilian leader survey found the trend increasing, with 59 percent of Army supervisors and 63 percent of managers having prior military service.¹⁸

While military commanders retain the Secretary of the Army (SecArmy) delegated civilian personnel management authority, in practice they further delegate a

tremendous amount of authority for leading and managing the civilian workforce to managers and supervisors.¹⁹ Army supervisors and managers execute the entire sequence of personnel management, from initial determination of position descriptions through recruitment, selection, and assignment of new employees to employee performance counseling, expectation setting, training, development, and awards (or discipline).²⁰

Professional development of civilians is also decentralized when compared with the military, including civilian training which is *primarily* occupation-related compared to the military schools that combine technical and leadership skills.²¹ Regarding supervisory and leadership training, it is important to note that the online Supervisory Development Course is the “Army’s single source for providing mandatory supervisory training for first time and refresher/sustainment training”.²² The course must be completed within the first year of placement in a civilian supervisory position and as a refresher every three years.²³

Another critical characteristic of the Army civilian workforce is the overall opinion employees have of the Army compared to other large federal agency employees’ opinion of their agencies. The Army ranks near the bottom (17th place out of 19) as one of the comparatively worst places to work in the federal government.²⁴ The rankings are derived primarily from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey conducted annually by OPM.²⁵ Specifically troubling is the appreciable drop since 2010 in the following four categories. In the effective leadership category, which includes whether employees feel that leaders promote professional development, rankings dropped almost 11 percentage points from a high of 66 percent in 2010 to 55 percent in 2014.²⁶ The rate

that employees view senior leaders and supervisors in a positive way has also decreased, with senior leaders losing 10 points since 2011 and supervisors losing 6 points since 2012.²⁷ Positive views on development and training have dropped from 63 percent in 2009 to 55 percent currently, leaving the Army in 14th place of 19 large federal agencies.²⁸ Finally, the extent to which Army civilian employees feel they are rewarded and promoted in a fair and timely manner decreased from 49 percent in 2010 to 40 percent in 2014, making it the lowest ranked category within the 2014 Army results!²⁹

Past Civilian Leader Development Studies

When Under Secretary Westphal said that “you’ve all heard this before,” he was referring to both external and internal Army study efforts conducted over the prior decade.³⁰ In the 2001 timeframe, the Army undertook a comprehensive multi-phase review of Army commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer, and civilian leader development. The resulting February 2003 final report, “The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report Phase IV (Civilian Study)” contains many recommendations that appear to be the genesis for much of the change in civilian education and leader development that has taken place between 2003 and 2015.³¹ The report contains twelve general recommendations grouped into four imperatives (accountability, lifelong learning, interpersonal skills, and Army culture). The most salient recommendations include: making Army civilian training and leader development a higher Army priority and resourcing it properly, creating a career management system that included both leader and technical tracks, developing an Army-wide system for organizations and individuals to manage training, and developing a centralized Army education system, integrating civilian and military individual training, education, and

development where appropriate.³² Then, in 2005, the SecArmy's Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) task force Civilian Team Report, relying heavily on the 2003 comprehensive study, tracked closely with the earlier study's recommendations and conclusions.³³ Notable differences included a focus on the importance of developmental experiences and focusing efforts on those individuals who are or will become senior civilian leaders, and a specific recommendation to centrally manage a competitive talent pool of GS-13 to GS-15 (and equivalents in other pay systems) who agree to be mobile and are identified as having a high potential for advancement.³⁴

Key Civilian Leader Development Programs

Civilian Education System (CES)

In 2007, the Army transitioned its legacy civilian leader development courses into a hierarchal and sequential construct called the Civilian Education System (CES), modeled on the Army's established officer and non-commissioned officer (NCO) training programs.³⁵ CES retained the online-only Action Officer Development Course, the mandatory Supervisor Development Course and the Manager Development Course. Implementation transitioned other legacy courses requiring in-residence attendance to the new CES system consisting of Foundation (online-only), Basic, Intermediate and Advanced courses (Figure 1 below).³⁶ CES, the Army's leader development program for all Army civilians (GS grades 1 through 15), allows course equivalencies for military training, and has established eligibilities and priorities for resident training attendance.³⁷

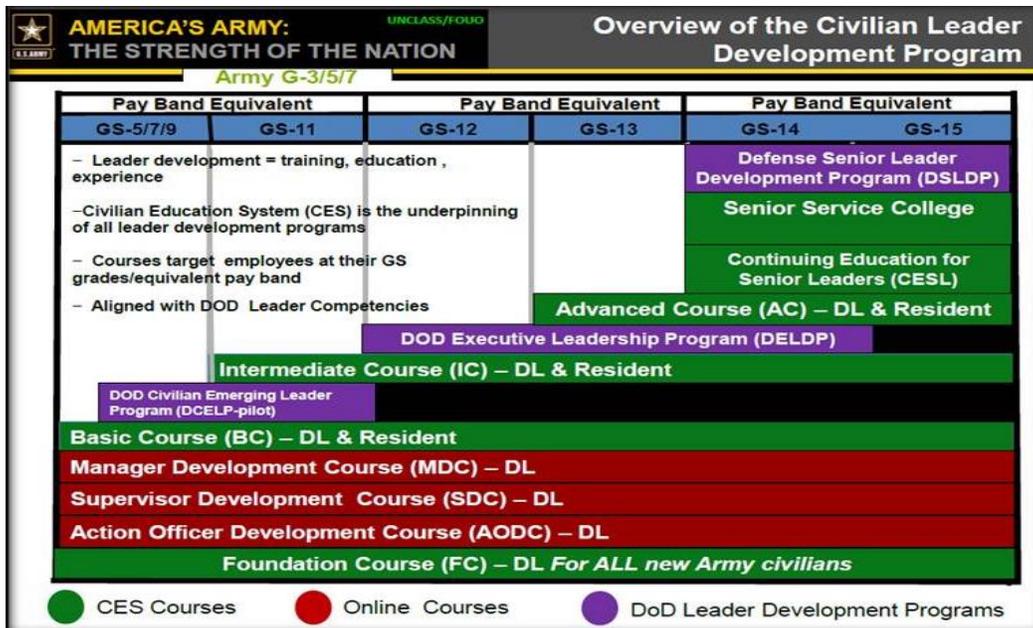


Figure 1. Army Civilian Leader Development Overview³⁸

The statistics available for CES show mixed results. By 2008, although applications exceeded CES allotted spaces at each course level, the actual attendance averaged 63 percent for the 2,264 slots.³⁹ Similarly, 2009-2011 data showed that while Basic course participation increased, attendance at the Intermediate course was 33 percent and the Advanced course was 63 percent of quota allocations.⁴⁰ More recent data for 2013 and 2014 show improvement overall, with 75 percent quota fill rates for the Basic course and with both the Intermediate and Advanced courses reaching 95 percent fill rates in 2013 before dropping to 82 percent for the Intermediate and 85 percent for the Advanced courses in 2014.⁴¹ Data available for 2009 to 2014 (excluding 2012) shows that quotas for all courses combined in a given year equal less than two percent of the total Army civilian population and that fill rates against those quotas show that the Army is training approximately one percent of the target population each year.⁴²

A 2013 survey of Army civilian supervisors and managers showed the same trend, where 64 percent had taken a CES course at some point, which left over a third of current Army civilian leaders who had not taken a single course.⁴³ Army policy states that CES is “the Army’s leader development program for all Army Civilians.”⁴⁴ Although improving, Army civilians are still not attending the required training at quota levels.

Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM)

In March 2012, the SecArmy established the Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM) program targeted specifically at the GS-14/GS-15 pay grades and equivalent positions under the supervision and oversight of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA(M&RA))).⁴⁵ SETM is codified in Army policy and includes four components: the Enterprise Placement Program, project-based SETM TDY assignments, attendance at a senior service college (U.S. Army War College or the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy), or attendance at the Defense Senior Leader Development Program, which includes as one its components senior service college attendance at one of the other service schools (Air Force, Navy, National War College, or Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy).⁴⁶ The SETM program includes a Central Student Training Account that pays students salaries while in school, funds the Permanent Change of Station to a new duty assignment, and allows the losing commands to immediately backfill the vacated position.⁴⁷

For the Defense Senior Leader Development Program, applications declined from 2010 to 2012, from 20 applications against 36 allocations Army-wide in 2010 to just 8 applications against the same 36 allocations Army-wide in 2012.⁴⁸ Senior service school applications had a slightly better record, with applications increasing from 30 out

of 45 allocations in 2010 to 35 applications against 43 allocations in 2011.⁴⁹ A further drop in senior service school allocations occurred in 2012, down to 36, but information on the number of applications and selections was not available.⁵⁰ Implementation of SETM has not increased Army civilian attendance at the U.S. Army War College. The four years since implementation show an average of 14 Army civilians per year, up just one from the 13 per year average from 2002 to 2015.⁵¹

There is no publicly available data on either the SETM-TDY or the Enterprise Placement Program components of the overall SETM effort. Civilians could apply for any of the senior service schools under programs that existed prior to the Army establishing SETM. Based on program descriptions in AR 350-1, both the SETM-TDY and Enterprise Placement Program may help provide the operational assignment experience needed to truly develop multifaceted leaders, but without any statistical or survey data it is impossible to draw a conclusion of their potential with any confidence.⁵²

Structural Issues

The Army is not taking civilian leader development lightly, as evidenced by the effort put towards the CES and SETM programs. Senior leaders suggest that the Army plans to manage civilian leader development “no different than the military.”⁵³ But three significant structural differences exist between the Army’s military and civilian personnel systems that bear directly on civilian leader development: (1) decentralized management of civilian personnel is delegated down to the immediate supervisor level; (2) there are very limited mobility requirements for civilians; and (3) there is an unbalanced civilian grade structure that is very top-heavy and virtually opposite that of the military rank structure. Each of these three issues is addressed next, including an

analysis of their effects on the two primary civilian leader development programs, the CES and SETM.

Decentralized Management

The decentralized structure of the Army's civilian personnel system places a tremendous amount of discretion in the hands of the individual supervisor and his/her manager. Civilian supervisors are responsible for "the training and education of Army Civilians, identifying capability requirements and competency gaps, recommending employees for training, coaching and counseling employees and setting performance objectives that include training and educational opportunities."⁵⁴ One resulting characteristic is the ability to hire new employees who enter civil service at any approved level—an "open" system—with no enterprise approach to missions, requirements, overall grade structure, or enterprise competency needs.⁵⁵ A second characteristic is that compliance with developmental requirements is supervisor dependent, with no real sanctions or consequences for failure to attend or support established courses.⁵⁶ A final characteristic is that, in a highly decentralized environment, the perceived effectiveness of leader development varies between supervisors as does the value they place on employee Individual Development Plans.⁵⁷

These characteristics of decentralized management have corresponding effects on civilian leader development. Because the civilian workforce is an open system, the ability to hire into any grade level and the absence of an enterprise approach results in less predictability of the overall training program requirements for individual employees.⁵⁸ Supervisors and employees lack of compliance with requirements results in low quota fill rates, as evidenced by the CES and SETM statistics provided above. Differing supervisor perceptions may account for employee survey results that show

they believe there is little correlation between development and promotion, decreasing the incentive to attend developmental programs.⁵⁹

Mobility of Civilian Workforce

As the Army continues using a CES system modeled primarily on the military officer education systems and implements SETM initiatives intended to develop civilian leaders through institutional learning and operational experience, civilian workforce mobility remains a fundamental structural difference between the military and civilian workforces. Routine moves (between duty stations, for deployments, and for directed training attendance) are a standard expectation of military life and are also both centrally managed and centrally funded. In discussing the principles of leader development, Army doctrine notes “most leader development occurs during operational assignments. In operational assignments, leaders learn to adapt to new situations and develop on the job through training and education” and further notes that experiences gained during these assignments are the “crucible of leader development.”⁶⁰

Conversely, a main characteristic of the civilian workforce is that employees are hired against a specific vacancy and position description at a specific duty location and, unless explicitly stated in the job description and announcement, civilian deployment or relocation is voluntary.⁶¹ A related characteristic is employee attitudes towards voluntary moves, and current Army-wide survey data shows they are twice as likely to not want to move or move only in their current geographic area and region as they are to be willing to relocate “anywhere”.⁶² A final characteristic is that, although some civilian developmental programs are centrally funded (such as CES, SETM, and select degree programs), relocation and other travel expenses for civilian employees are the

responsibility of the individual organization unless specifically tied to a program like CES or SETM.⁶³

Mobility of civilian employees is not needed for all or even most positions, but the limiting effects of a mobility-less culture on civilian leader development are significant. The first related effect is that, even when a civilian completes all levels of CES, the ability of the employee to experience the operational assignments Army doctrine states are critical to leader development is largely restricted to opportunities in the employee's organization unless the employee is willing to voluntarily move.⁶⁴ Another related effect is that employees who lack any desire to move may not value opportunities and this possibly contributes to the low quota fills already described. A final effect is that even civilian leader development trainees who are willing to relocate contend with the effects of the interrelated structural issue of decentralized civilian management. For example, attendance at a senior service school under the SETM program requires the applicant to sign a mobility agreement and be subject to a directed follow-on assignment that usually includes a permanent change of station move.⁶⁵

But, instead of using an ends-based approach—placing graduates in positions that best capitalize their senior service school experience—the current Army process is means-based. The Civilian Senior Leader Management Office coordinates throughout the Army to identify vacancies, freezes hiring against all GS-14 and GS-15 vacancies for approximately a month during the placement process, has students post resumes and biographies for Army organizations to review, and has both the students and program managers soliciting bids for post-graduation placement of the attendees.⁶⁶ The process is entirely dependent on bids from Army organizations and leaves many SETM

attendees questioning the effectiveness of the program in meeting the civilian leader development goal. Placement is largely student driven and random in that it is entirely dependent on a limited number of vacancies available when the short temporary freeze is enacted for the placement process to satisfy strategic program intent.⁶⁷ Instead of using a “push” system, where graduates are placed in senior leader positions that meet the intent to develop multifaceted leaders, graduates are placed wherever they can be within the limited open positions via a “pull” system from the gaining organization.

Unbalanced Civilian Grade Structure

The third structural issue that significantly differentiates the civilian from the military workforce and potentially affects the Army’s stated civilian leader development goals more than the other two structural issues is the current civilian grade structure. While data on the population and rank distribution for Army military personnel is publicly available online through the Defense Manpower Data Center, information on the civilian workforce is aggregated at total workforce levels and lacks fidelity on grade distribution, percentage of veterans, number in supervisory positions, and time-in-grade/time-in-service information. A mix of available study and survey efforts helps to fill in the gaps, but requires the use of data sets from different years to make key points.

The first characteristic of the unbalanced grade structure is that current civilian positions are grouped at the high end of the grade scale and, in 2012, civilians in grades GS-14 and GS-15 were almost double that of their equivalent ranks in the military, Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel (25,069 to 14,358).⁶⁸ This dramatic difference is even more accentuated by the fact that the reported civilian population of 258,000 is almost half that of the 2012 Army active-duty population of over 500,000 troops.⁶⁹ In other words, the high end Army civilian grades constitute almost 10 percent of the civilian

workforce whereas the equivalent high end Army military ranks constitute only about three percent of the service. Two separate Army civilian studies, one of just supervisors and one of the whole workforce, put the 2013 number of supervisors at all GS grades between 37,355 and 39,218 which equates roughly to a supervisor-to-employee ratio of about 1 to 7.⁷⁰ The desired Army civilian supervisor to employee ratio, set by DOD, is 1 to 14.⁷¹

A second characteristic of the unbalanced civilian grade structure is the length of time supervisors and managers spend in the same organization and position, which is dramatically different from the military's "up or out" progression. In the 2013 Army Civilian Leader Survey, respondents reported an average tenure in the organization of over 11 years and between 5 and 6 years in the current position.⁷² The third characteristic is the reduction in the number of days between leaving active duty military service and beginning employment in the Army civil service for the growing number of military officers transitioning into civil service. An August 2014 Merit Systems Protection Board study that examined perceptions of favoritism in veteran hiring practices found that 58 percent of those veterans hired between September 2001 and January 2013 were between jobs for 30 days or less, and 37 percent of the total were actually hired *before* retirement from active duty.⁷³ A portion of the U.S. law that required a retiring veteran to have a minimum of 180 days between retirement and being hired into civil service was suspended with the national emergency declaration following the September 2001 terrorist attacks and has not been reinstated since.⁷⁴ This change followed the elimination of the Dual Compensation Act of 1964 (commonly referred to as

“double dipping”) in the 2000 National Defense Authorization Act, which eliminated any reduction in military retirement pay for those retiring military entering civil service.⁷⁵

The effects of these combined unbalanced grade structure characteristics on civilian leader development are significant. One such effect is on the distribution of quotas between and within the CES and SETM programs. A 2006 SecArmy-directed study suggested that the limited seats allocated for civilians in senior service schools are not sufficient for effective civilian leadership development.⁷⁶ Using the same 2012 grade versus rank numbers discussed above and using academic year 2012 Army War College class demographic data as an example, the allocated slots for active-duty Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels were over 22 times greater than that of the comparable GS-14 and GS-15 population.⁷⁷ The 2012 ratio of officer to civilian quotas is not an anomaly, the trend tracks very consistently across the 14 years of demographic data available from 2002-2015.⁷⁸ A second effect is the length of time current civilian supervisors and managers stay in the same position or move between positions in the same organization, which creates a stagnation effect and a frustrated civilian workforce who are likely to devalue developmental programs as a viable path to promotion. This skepticism is reflected by the 38 percent of survey respondents satisfied with career progression opportunities and 32 percent who had favorable views of Army leader development efforts overall.⁷⁹

In addition, the growth in the number of retiring officers in supervisory and managerial positions and the reduction in time between their military service and entry into Army civil service supervisory and managerial positions has three immediate effects. The first is that as the Army downsizes the active duty force, more retiring

officers will become available to apply for a limited number of senior civilian vacancies. Secondly, given the equivalencies allowed under CES for military training and the probability that some transitioning officers completed a senior service school while in uniform, CES often reflects that retired officers already meet all current civilian leader development requirements. A more corrosive effect is that employees who perceive this “No Colonel Left Behind” paradigm as a “glass-ceiling”, as described by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection board 2014 report, are less likely to value leader development programs as career progression and promotion enhancers, especially when only 26 percent of survey respondents have a favorable view when asked if promotions are based on merit.⁸⁰

Combined Effects of Structural Issues on CES and SETM

Using the combined characteristics and effects of the three structural issues as evaluative criteria for the CES and SETM programs suggests that the efficacy of both programs is in doubt.

Although CES program quota fill rates appear to be improving, 15 to 25 percent of allocated quotas went unfilled in the latest year under a decentralized personnel management system where supervisors devalue institutional developmental programs more than operational experience and self-development.⁸¹ For a program intended to develop the entire Army civilian population, total quotas for the program are decreasing, from a high of 5,982 in 2011 to 2,829 in 2014.⁸² The inability to fill annual quotas that now represent one percent of the total Army civilian population may put continued funding at jeopardy in the current fiscal environment. Developing just one percent of the entire civilian population per year might return at least some of the desired results if that one percent was specifically targeted as future Army civilian leaders. But the

decentralized management system, when combined with collective bargaining concerns about giving any individuals or group of individuals a perceived unfair advantage, results in that one percent consisting of those who self-identified as wanting the development opportunity and those whose absence the supervisors were willing to support.⁸³ The combined effects of limited employee mobility and the stagnation in the unbalanced grade structure restrict Army civilians from obtaining the operational experience that is necessary to develop multifaceted leaders and prevents the immediate linkage of the required leader training with changes in employee grade or supervisory duties when it would be most effective.

The SETM program quotas for senior service school are one-fifth of a percent of the target audience for GS-14 and GS-15s, and not enough applicants are applying to fill those meager quotas, making it difficult to argue for more slots.⁸⁴ Whether this is due to perceptions on the value of developmental programs or because employees at the target level (GS-14 and GS-15) are unwilling to meet the mandatory mobility requirements is unclear, but one possibility is they don't see the post graduate placement process as leading to more strategic job opportunities or promotion. The Army's decentralized management of civilians prevents it from capitalizing on the developmental investment by directing graduates into strategic assignments after it has solved the limited mobility issue by making mobility a requirement of the program. And while CES is required for all Army civilians commensurate with grade levels, the program objectives for the number of desired trainees for the selective SETM program is unclear, as is the percent of transitioning military retired officers who may already have attended senior service school. As with CES, the Army ends up developing those

that have volunteered (albeit more selectively) and are willing to move, but that doesn't mean the Army is developing the best and brightest to meet the significant challenges of the future.

Recommendations

The Army has two primary options: an evolutionary approach that is unlikely to make significant progress, and a revolutionary approach. The first is to continue to try to achieve its leader development goals through the existing programs in spite of the overwhelmingly constraining structural issues identified; this option may be the easier of the two but is not a strategic approach likely to attain Army goals. The second is to reconsider how it is approaching civilian leader development on a more fundamental level.

Option 1: The Evolutionary Approach

Civilian Education System (CES)

1) Forgo the aspiration to develop everyone, which is clearly not achievable with class quotas that cover one percent of the population per year. Establish an "Enterprise Leader" cohort (from entry level to current supervisors/managers) that civilians can opt into but that carries an inherent and explicit mobility expectation. This won't solve compliance or availability requirements under decentralized management, but it focuses developmental resources on those most likely to provide the Army with a return on investment.

2) The Army should centrally fund a limited number of permanent moves for each CES Intermediate and Advanced course class to encourage both organizations and employees to increase the mobility of the civilian workforce. This won't resolve all problems with civilian employee attitudes toward mobility, but it will provide financial

incentive for those willing to be mobile to gain operational experience, assuming budget constraints and other priorities would not prevent this option in the first place.

3) The Army should establish a specific CES program for military personnel transitioning into civil service at any grade to provide an initial understanding of the cultural and structural differences between civil service and military personnel systems.

Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM)

1) The Army should canvass Army organizations for strategic leader positions for incoming classes *prior* to classes being formed and then centrally control a very small numbers of positions (currently less than two dozen) and direct post graduate assignments into them to ensure SETM graduates are truly placed in positions that will meet Army civilian leader development goals. While this addresses the less-than-strategic placement under the current process, it can't guarantee those assignments will result in a leader with multifaceted experience.

2) The Army should re-energize the SETM-TDY program to build multifaceted leaders in place through experiential assignments without the cost of permanent change of station moves. Again, it can't guarantee the outcomes, but it provides operational experience for more personnel than the dozen or two who are required to relocate under the senior service college or Defense Senior Leader Development Program mobility requirement.

Areas for Further Research

Two areas beg additional research attention. The first is the sufficiency of the questions in the current employee surveys, which identify problem areas but don't include additional subordinate questions to determine what specific factors contribute to these problem areas. The second is an objective study on the trend analysis of retired

military officers transitioning into civil service after significant law changes between 1998 and 2001. This study should include survey questions linked to other employee survey instruments but that help clarify the effects on both individual employee attitudes and organizational culture and climate.

Option 2: The Revolutionary Approach

The severely constraining civilian-related structural problems prevent the Army from effectively developing Army civilian leaders through leader development programs modeled on a centralized, closed military personnel system. These structural problems depict an extremely complex, wicked problem for civilian leader development. The Army should take a tactical pause and rethink its goals for civilian leader development and the methods and resources it is currently using to accomplish those goals.

Conclusion

The Army civilian workforce is large (23 percent of the total Army), complex, and costly. Developing civilian leaders *is* the strategic imperative senior Army leaders have declared it to be. But until the Army addresses the key underlying structural problems described or fundamentally rethinks its civilian leadership development approach, these leader development initiatives are going to continue to be more of a platitude than the professional development promise they need to be.

Endnotes

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