

Defense Report

from AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare



Transforming the Army's Civilian Workforce: A New Vision

Our Army is transforming the development and management of its Civilian Corps. We are asking more of our civilians today than ever—to lead our nation's Army through a diverse and complex environment—and we must give them the tools to meet these challenges.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren,
The Pentagon, 23 July 2008

Introduction

Persistent conflict and change characterize the 21st century strategic environment. To fulfill the requirements of today's missions, including defense of the U.S. homeland and support to civil authorities, more than 600,000 Soldiers from the U.S. Army's active and reserve components are on active duty. Additionally, approximately 250,000 Army civilians—nearly 4,000 of them forward deployed—are performing a variety of missions vital to America's national defense.

The Army's vision for civilian leaders now and in the future calls for strategic and creative thinkers and accomplished professionals who are effective in managing, leading and changing large organizations. These civilian leaders must be confident, competent decisionmakers and prudent risk takers; they must be innovative, adaptive, professionally educated and dedicated to lifelong learning and effective communication. Today's Army civilian workforce must be more agile and capable than ever before.*

While the Army has focused on moving uniformed personnel into modular deployable units, civilians have taken on roles traditionally performed by Soldiers. In support of this transformation, the civilian personnel operations and work force have served the Army well—striving to meet the Army's increased manpower requirements in the most demanding of times. At the same time, the Army is cognizant that to increase its capabilities and meet the challenges of the 21st century security environment, it must leverage current organizational strengths while institutionalizing holistic collaboration and integration.

This holistic, collaborative approach is the hallmark of the current Army senior leadership—refocusing the culture of Army decisionmaking to a corporate methodology that challenges conventional wisdom and breaks through stovepipes to link culture with systems and stated values with action. This approach is referred to as the "enterprise." The enterprise is a

* Quadrennial Defense Review Report, February 6, 2006, p. 75: "In a reconfigured Total Force, a new balance of skills must be coupled with greater accessibility to people so that the right forces are available at the right time. Both uniformed and civilian personnel must be readily available to joint commanders."



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21st century mindset that balances values; manifests long-term commitment; demands collaboration, partnering and innovation; and instills competitive passion throughout the organization—all this with the accountability for risk management and the responsibility to clearly communicate. The approach is proactive, comprehensive, cost-conscious, output-focused and opportunistic. The strengthening and restructuring of the Army Civilian Corps is a critical part of this revolutionary institution.

Recognizing the need for enterprise-wide, institutional transformation of the Civilian Corps, the Army has examined the functions and processes of the civilian workforce and its organization, training, education and development. The current decentralized administration creates pockets of inefficiencies that reduce the strength of the overall structure. The Army Civilian Corps has no central administration or visibility and, consequently, only limited oversight of capabilities and strengths.

The Army's holistic approach has one goal: to have the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time.

Background

In 1775, Army civilians were employed as clerks, skilled tradesmen, craftsmen, physicians, teamsters and unskilled laborers. Today, Army civilians serve in about 500 occupational fields and have significant responsibilities throughout all organizational levels within the institutional Army. Many of these dedicated employees have been deployed overseas in direct support of recent operational missions.

During the past 20 years, civilians have increasingly taken on positions of greater responsibility, accountability and authority at installations, commands, Headquarters, Department of the Army and other organizations. Now as never before, the Army increasingly calls upon its civilians to assume levels of responsibility that have traditionally belonged only to military personnel.

Numerous Army-specific studies and analyses over the past decade are unanimous in their prescriptions: evolution of the current civilian career programs into a comprehensive management model with broad career fields and multifunctional paths to senior levels. Integration with existing robust officer management systems for education and training is a consistent theme. Significantly adding to the case for change, Army employees are frustrated by a perceived lack of development and advancement opportunities.

The Army's senior leaders are committed to investing in the Army Civilian Corps to meet these challenges. Two foundational declarations of this commitment are the Army Chief of Staff's Army Initiative 5 and the Secretary of the Army's "Army Civilian Corps Champion" Memorandum. These declarations have led to the actions outlined here—and to the inclusion and codification of the Enterprise Civilian Human Capital Lifecycle Management System into the Army Campaign Plan in 2008 and to a larger extent in 2009. These commitments are a testament to the mission-critical nature of having the right competencies in the right place at the right time.

Army Enterprise Civilian Human Capital Lifecycle Management System

Since mid-2007, the Army has made notable strides to lay the foundation for the transformation of civilian workforce management, providing greater opportunities for Army civilians to grow and develop. These changes recognize the vital contributions that civilians make to the Army's mission and enhance the Army's ability to fully utilize its resources.

Leveraging best practices from industry and strategic partners, the Army has set in motion changes to broaden career groups, manage civilian training and create a human resource environment that is responsive to the needs of its commanders as well as to the expectations of its civilian employees. These initiatives are designed to increase the Army's capabilities directly in support of its missions and functions. Continually aligning the workforce with Army goals and missions, these initiatives will assist the Army in strengthening strategic flexibility and agility, sustaining the all-volunteer force and restoring balance.

Army Initiative 5: "Accelerate Leader Development," April–July 2007

- The Chief of Staff of the Army defines the mission to "accelerate change in leader development programs to grow leaders for the future strategic environment."
- The initiative entails a comprehensive review of previous and ongoing leader development studies and initiatives.

**“Army Civilian Corps Champion”
Memorandum, September 2007**

- The Secretary of the Army designates himself as the Army Civilian Corps Champion, committing himself and the Army Chief of Staff to “maximizing the development of the Civilian workforce and transforming the systems and structures that provide its support.”
- The Secretary of the Army appoints the Deputy Under Secretary of the Army as the proponent of the Army Civilian Corps vision as an integral and critical component of the Army team, as well as the integrator between staff elements.
- The memo states: “Our pledge to invest in the future of the Army Civilian Corps is a direct reflection of our continuing commitment of our Nation’s future.”

The institutional transformation of the current processes into an Enterprise Human Capital Lifecycle Management System to recruit, train, educate, develop, promote and retain civilian talent will take approximately three years. The culture shift that this vision suggests may take somewhat longer.

Expected Outcomes

The Army expects the Enterprise Human Capital Lifecycle Management System to:

- attract the nation’s best to serve as Army civilians;
- support today’s missions and prepare for those of tomorrow;
- sustain the civilian workforce contribution;
- provide opportunity for Army civilians to advance; and
- create interchangeable leaders.

Broad Career Groups – The Long Pole in the Tent

Currently, 40 percent of GS-7 to -15 employees are career managed, but not to a common standard. The other 60 percent of these employees have no formal career management. As a result, most Army civilians have neither a supported training and education plan nor an established career road map.

The Army is creating eight broad career groups to enable and promote the growth and development of the entire Civilian Corps. While the new organizational structure is in the approval process, the objective is firm: to move civilian processes significantly closer to the systems that support military officers and non-commissioned officers. These management systems are designed to provide employees a clear understanding of where they are in their careers. The new career paths will demonstrate the road map from recruitment to promotion and increased responsibility or specialization, including to senior executive positions. This structure will be similar to that which Army Regulation (AR) 600-3, *The Army Personnel Proponent System*, provides to the military. The broad career groups will also provide alternative career paths, enabling employees to cross-train into other specialty areas within a career group. The result will be greater opportunity and visibility of opportunity for the entire civilian workforce. The vision is for each employee’s possibility for advancement to be commensurate with his or her own potential and desire.

In tandem with the establishment of broad career groups, there will be reorganization within the headquarters personnel management structure that will build clear lines between policy and operations. This new configuration will provide centralized management of the broad career groups. The new career group structure will debut with a pilot program in late 2008.

The Army has conducted a “gap analysis” to determine necessary changes to existing laws, policies and regulations to support the move to a holistic human capital management system as well as to determine new policies, laws and regulations to accomplish that move.

Talent Management

Army Civilian Talent Management is a collaborative approach to create interchangeable, diverse senior leaders by providing opportunities for development and reassignment. The program applies to civilians in the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) upper pay band 3, or GS-15 equivalents.

The new talent management process is designed to be collaborative—incorporating an employee’s experience, skills, competencies and career desires with the requirements of the Army. It employs an annual assessment to ensure objectives are met. Central Talent Management leadership will collaborate with

commands regarding reassignments based on command requirements and maximum benefit to the Army and the employee. While the talent management institution is not unique (Installation Management Command has successfully implemented a similar program), the Army is working aggressively to develop the tools and methodology needed to implement an enterprise-wide program that functions successfully within current structures.

Another program to manage the senior civilian workforce is the Army Senior Fellows Program, established to build a bench of future Army senior executives who are innovative, adaptive, interchangeable civilian leaders. The program is designed to identify high-potential civilian GS-14–15 employees (NSPS pay band 3) through an Army Secretariat Board selection and provide them with executive experience assignments and educational opportunities. These opportunities develop Army civilian leaders who are experts in the business of running the Army and whose management and leadership skills complement those of their uniformed general officer counterparts.

The end result to both talent management programs is to produce senior civilian leaders who are experts within their core competencies, with diverse, joint, interagency vision and skills broad enough to operate interchangeably with their military counterparts in complex environments.

The Army is now defining processes, roles and populations to ready the talent pool concept for Fiscal Year 2009. It has also selected the second group of civilian Army Senior Fellows.

Centralized Training and Development

The Army Civilian University (ACU) has been established as governing headquarters for select schools where the majority of students are civilians. The Army Civilian University was created to oversee and fully integrate an enterprise approach to education for civilians, orchestrating shared services and academic processes.

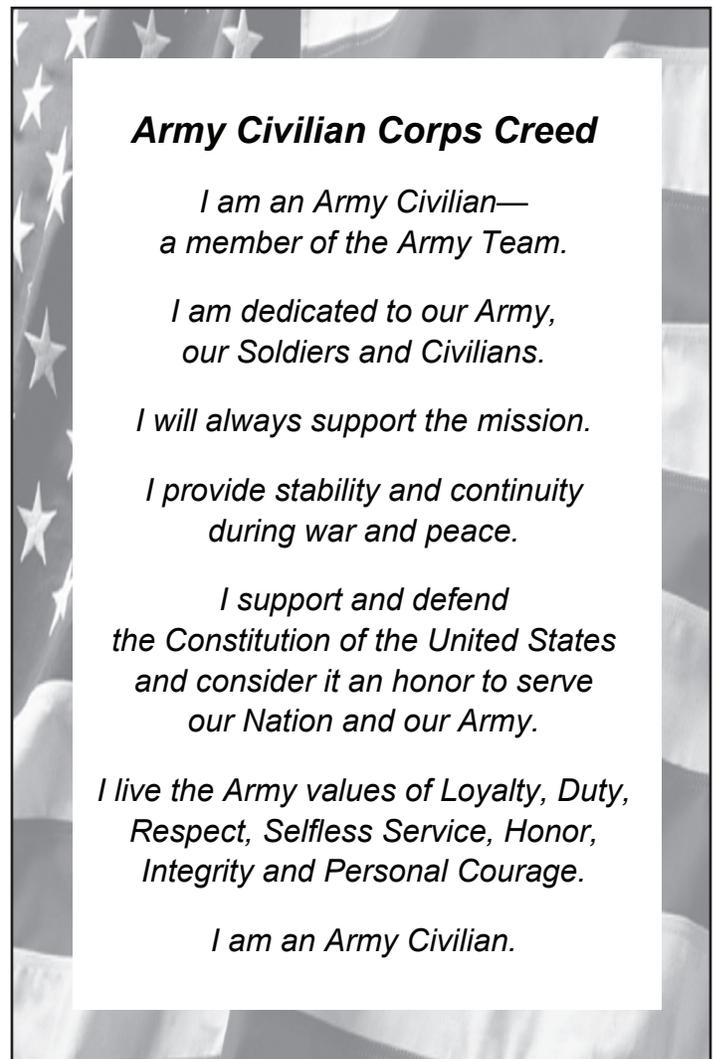
The Army Civilian University is designed to enrich civilians into Army civilians through a series of foundational courses that broaden individual competencies while building on the Army Civilian Corps Creed. Creating a network of well-integrated education and training centers, the ACU builds linkages with the larger academic community. In addition, it

also supports the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) establishment of integrated and complementary curricula with a more standardized, competency-based approach to civilian education, training and leader development initiatives.

Headquarters, Department of the Army will provide initial oversight for the Army Civilian University until the ACU moves to TRADOC's Combined Arms Command at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on or about 1 October 2008. The current expectation is for Army Management Staff College to transfer to ACU.

Civilian Recruitment

Numerous strategies (such as the Army Intern Program and the Army Fellows Program) exist to expand the Army talent pool, but until now no one agency has been responsible for broad-sweeping oversight of Army Civilian recruitment. This situation will change with the Enterprise Human Capital Lifecycle Management System's active recruitment strategy. The Army is now developing a targeted recruiting campaign aimed



Army Civilian University

Objectives

- to enhance the Army’s capability to bring training to the civilian;
- to produce trained and ready adaptive civilian leaders who are strategic thinkers capable of operating within and with foreign cultures;
- to prepare leaders to operate across the full spectrum of operations in an environment of persistent conflict;
- to build an adaptive civilian workforce and leaders trained across interconnected domains—within Army institutions and through self-development—to meet national security needs and requirements that cover the full spectrum of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational operations;
- to eliminate redundancy and to achieve synergies and efficiencies across educational organizations; and
- to increase the quality of academic delivery as determined by the customers of the included Army schools.

Efficiencies

- ensuring progressive and competency-based curricula;
- bringing education to a variety of locations and venues to reduce transportation and temporary duty costs;
- providing accreditation and quality assurance at a university level, thus improving opportunity for students to transfer credits or continuing education units to other institutes of higher education;
- improving efficiencies by consolidating standard services;
- reducing overhead by eliminating redundancies;
- increasing research opportunities directly related to broad career groups; and
- leveraging the power of the university construct to strengthen current educational curriculum and programs.

at bolstering and preserving the Army family to retain relationships, honor loyalty and sustain institutional knowledge. Initiatives will be directed primarily to the Army’s Wounded Warriors and commissioned and noncommissioned officers who have decided to leave active duty with the Army after their initial commitment expires.

The Army is also expanding the use of Career Intern Programs, which improve the Army’s ability to build a strong, sustainable Civilian Corps.

The Way Ahead

The word “revolution” is not too assertive to describe the magnitude of the transformation ahead for the Army Civilian Corps—as well as its requisite culture change. As the Army institutionalizes the mindset of the “enterprise,” striving to reach balance, sustain the force and meet the demands of national security in an era of

persistent conflict, innovative and forward-thinking change will continue to be the order of the day.

Education, development, training and career guidance is an investment that will pay high dividends in terms of cost efficiencies and cost avoidance, but the intangible benefits in the realm of the human dimension—such as creating interchangeable leaders, instilling employee loyalty, job satisfaction and sense of purpose—are no less important.

In the end, the true measure of the value of the human capital management environment within the Army should exceed the expectations of three key stakeholders: the Army, its commanders and its employees. The establishment of the Enterprise Human Capital Lifecycle Management System is a commitment from the Army’s most senior leaders to the enterprise itself—as every part affects the whole.

Key Points

- ***Civilian Human Capital Lifecycle Management:***

The Enterprise Civilian Human Capital Lifecycle Management System provides more opportunity to Army civilians to reach levels of responsibility according to their desire and potential. With increased visibility of employees, the Army can effectively shape, promote and reward its Civilian Corps.

The system balances the needs of the commanders and the Army as a whole. These changes will ensure that the Civilian Corps is adaptable, providing the right full-spectrum capability, at the right time, at the right cost.

- ***Broad Career Groups:*** Soldiers understand what they need to earn more responsibility and be ready for promotion. The creation of Army Civilian broad career groups is the Army's first step in creating a civilian career continuum for career and educational development from recruitment until retirement.
- ***Talent Management:*** Army senior civilians are among the best and brightest in government service. Talent management ensures that an employee's potential is developed through career opportunities—and that skills and talent are utilized to meet Army enterprise challenges, both today and in the future.
- ***Centralized Training and Development:*** The Enterprise Civilian Human Capital Lifecycle Management System will create opportunities for civilians to diversify their experience and education that will increase agility, innovation and leadership.
- ***Civilian Recruitment:*** The Civilian Corps is a profession. It must be fully capable, trained and competitive to attract talented people from many sources, including uniformed members of the Army team who are transitioning from military service.