

# The Defense Leadership and Management Program: Taking Career Development Seriously



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IBM Endowment for  
**The Business  
of Government**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b> .....	3
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	4
<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>Career Development in the Public Sector</b> .....	9
Defining Key Terms: Training, Education, and Career Development.....	9
The Importance of Training and Development.....	10
Important Trends in Human Resources Development .....	11
Key Authorities for Public-Sector Training and Development.....	11
<b>Department of Defense Context</b> .....	13
Overview of Defense Workforce Trends .....	13
The Importance of Jointness in DoD .....	16
<b>The Defense Leadership and Management Program</b> .....	17
Program Development .....	17
Original Program Components .....	22
Program Implementation.....	25
Assessing DLAMP .....	27
<b>Findings and Recommendations</b> .....	31
Findings .....	31
Lessons Learned and Recommendations .....	32
Exporting the DLAMP Model .....	35
<b>Endnotes</b> .....	36
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	38
<b>About the Authors</b> .....	40
<b>Key Contact Information</b> .....	41

## F O R E W O R D

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On behalf of the IBM Endowment for The Business of Government, we are pleased to present this report, "The Defense Leadership and Management Program: Taking Career Development Seriously," by Joseph A. Ferrara and Mark C. Rom.

The report comes at an opportune time. First, the Bush administration continues to emphasize the strategic management of human capital as one of the five initiatives of the President's Management Agenda. An effective executive development program is clearly a major component of a comprehensive human capital program. Second, the Department of Defense is currently restructuring the Defense Leadership and Management Program, or DLAMP, to improve its three program areas, with key changes in the civilian graduate education component. The report presents the history of the program, as well as a description of its current components. DLAMP is currently one of the largest departmental executive development programs in government, with approximately 350 participants entering the program annually.

In addition to officials within the Department of Defense, a key audience for this report is human resource officials throughout government who are currently engaged in evaluating their own executive development initiatives. It is our hope that this report can serve as a benchmark for other departments and agencies to assess their own activities. A key innovation of DLAMP, according to Ferrara and Rom, is that the program transcends individual agency efforts to create a department-wide program aimed at furthering DoD's goal of increased jointness. The DLAMP model appears clearly applicable to other large federal departments that also have strong agency components.

We trust this report will be informative and useful not only to members of the Department of Defense who are involved in DLAMP, but also to other government executives who are looking to establish executive development programs within their own departments or agencies.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The federal public service finds itself in a period of extended transition. Agencies continue to have problems recruiting new talent, as an increasing share of the federal workforce becomes eligible to retire. In recent years, graduates of the nation's top public-policy schools have turned more often to the private sector than to the government when looking for jobs. Meanwhile, the challenges facing the federal government continue to grow more complex, particularly in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. And despite the surge of patriotic emotions inspired by that horrific day, most Americans continue to hold a decidedly skeptical view of government employees.

In many ways, not much has changed since 1989, when the National Commission on Public Service lamented the fact that “this erosion in the attractiveness of the public service at all levels—most specifically in the federal civil service—undermines the ability of government to respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of the American people, and ultimately damages the democratic process itself.” Indeed, the Brookings Institution announced in February 2002 that it is convening a new National Commission on Public Service, once again to be chaired by former Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker.

Recent studies and reports have made numerous recommendations about how best to deal with the ongoing crisis in human capital in the federal service. One of the consistent themes in all of these reports is the importance of training and development for the federal workforce, and particularly for

those employees who stand at the cusp of leadership. Training and development programs promise important benefits for government employees and the agencies in which they work. Among other things, such programs:

- Enhance performance for today's job, and tomorrow's
- Establish a strong internal pool of qualified employees for future leadership positions
- Serve as a tool for organizational change by empowering employees to identify and meet emerging challenges
- Make the organization a more attractive place to work, which enhances recruiting and retention efforts

The Department of Defense (DoD) is an agency that has traditionally given high priority to training and development, in particular for its military personnel community. And, in many ways, the DoD experience of the last 10 years is a microcosm of the extended transition the entire federal workforce has been undergoing. Since the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, DoD civilian employment has declined by hundreds of thousands of positions, and the remaining workforce edges ever closer to retirement. The end of the Cold War has confronted DoD with a new international security environment and a host of new and very challenging missions. At the same time, DoD has been aggressively pursuing a “revolution in business affairs” focused on bringing best commercial practices to defense management.

And, of course, the current war on terrorism has presented DoD with an entirely new set of operational and planning demands.

In 1997, at the urging of a congressionally chartered commission, DoD established a new, agency-wide career development program for its civilian employees called the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP). This report takes a close look at the DLAMP experience in order to identify key findings and lessons learned that other federal agencies might adapt to their own career development programs.

In several ways, DLAMP is modeled on the military personnel system, especially in blending new work assignments with professional development and education. DLAMP consists of three main program components: rotational assignments, professional military education (PME),<sup>1</sup> and civilian graduate education. DLAMP focuses on the pool of employees most likely to advance into the Senior Executive Service (SES) and other leadership positions. Participants are nominated by their DoD Component office for entry into DLAMP. The DLAMP Council, a committee of senior DoD political executives, oversees the general direction of the program and, to that end, is assisted by the DLAMP Office, a full-time staff of human resource professionals. DLAMP participants work with officially designated mentors and must maintain “good standing” to continue in the program. Finally, DoD is currently identifying up to 3,000 leadership positions across the department for which DLAMP graduates would be targeted.

This report presents several findings:

- DLAMP is a comprehensive and systematic program of career development. The combination of rotational assignments, PME, and civilian graduate education make DLAMP a unique program. Few, if any, other federal agencies offer such a comprehensive program.
- The management structure for DLAMP facilitates a joint, integrated, agency-wide approach to career development, an attribute particularly important in a department as far-flung as Defense. This joint approach fosters a strong sense of shared ownership and investment in the DLAMP concept.
- DLAMP, although centralized at the policy level, is decentralized in execution, allowing the DoD Components (e.g., the Army, Navy, and Air Force) to pursue the program as they see fit within broad guidelines.
- The DLAMP participant population is broadly representative of the target audience, namely, DoD’s next generation of leaders at the GS-13, 14, and 15 levels.
- Key DLAMP stakeholders—participants, supervisors, and mentors—view the program very favorably, although there are reservations about specific program components, mostly in the area of graduate education.
- To address these reservations, DoD is now refocusing DLAMP for the future. The key change is to move from internally provided graduate courses to providing fellowships for participants to attend local degree-granting universities.
- Another area of concern was the slow pace of designating DLAMP positions. In the view of some participants, this seems to indicate a lack of full commitment to the program. As this report goes to press, DoD has announced that it will no longer officially designate certain executive positions as DLAMP positions. A related issue is that participation in DLAMP does not guarantee subsequent promotion.

Based on these findings, the report also offers a number of lessons learned and corresponding recommendations for the future. These include the following:

- The graduate education component of DLAMP is useful and valuable and is now being revised to take into account the desire of certain participants to attain graduate degrees and the fact that many DLAMP participants already have graduate degrees. DoD is now taking steps to address this issue.
- Initially DLAMP permitted too many senior GS-15 employees to participate in the program, thus shortchanging the very population the program is intended to serve. The program must focus its energies on the GS-13 and GS-14 population (and particularly the GS-13s) as the cohort representing the next generation of executives.

- Although DLAMP has addressed many of the concerns outlined in the final report of the Commission on Roles and Missions,<sup>2</sup> it was not intended to be a comprehensive solution to the issue of civilian personnel management in DoD. Indeed, such an achievement is probably well beyond the scope of DLAMP or any similar career development program. But if federal agencies are truly interested in a new approach to career development, then they, along with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), must take a hard look at the basic system of career progression. This report argues that one viable approach might be to institute a two-track system, with a “local track” for employees not interested in competing for executive positions and a “leadership track” where the emphasis is on assignment mobility and diversity—moving through a series of progressively responsible and challenging positions, complemented along the way by relevant training, education, and development.

DLAMP is a model program and it is an achievement about which the Defense Department can be very proud. It has brought together a unique and comprehensive combination of useful and rigorous program elements that provide aspiring executives with real skills for the future. The refocusing effort currently under way in DoD will make the program stronger and more useful.

But DLAMP also provides what could be a useful point of departure for a new discussion about the nature of federal careers. Too often in the past, government leaders have given lip service to reforming human resources management without really following through. DLAMP is much more than mere lip service and has been the catalyst within DoD for an entirely new way of looking at career management. But the fact remains that the underlying system of federal career development is largely unchanged.

The political environment seems receptive to a serious debate about the federal personnel system. The Bush administration has made strategic management of human capital one of the five items on the President’s Management Agenda. Numerous nongovernment organizations, including the National Academy for Public Administration,

are aggressively working on human capital issues. Government agencies continue to experiment with new ways of providing their employees high-quality training and development services. Congress seems genuinely interested in improving human capital. Programs like DLAMP can be useful case studies in this forthcoming policy discussion. The time is now for the nation’s leadership to seize this opportunity and revitalize federal personnel management for the new century.

# Introduction

The Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) was established in 1997 by the secretary of defense in response to the recommendations of the Commission on the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces. The Commission, chartered by Congress in 1994 to conduct an in-depth review of the post–Cold War military, issued its final report in May 1995. Among other major institutional changes within DoD, the Commission called for the establishment of a systematic program of career development for DoD civilian employees, with the objectives of improving civilian personnel quality, increasing the professional breadth and depth of career civilians, and preparing career civilians for positions of leadership throughout the department.

The Commission found that DoD’s career civilians suffered from two intersecting trends: first, the tendency within the DoD resource allocation process to focus more on military education and training than on civilian programs<sup>3</sup> and, second, the growing number of political appointees occupying management and leadership positions for which they often lack the requisite experience and expertise in national security and military strategy and operations. In this way, the Commission argued, the training and career development needs of DoD’s career civilians had been neglected.

To implement the Commission’s recommendations, in 1997 DoD established DLAMP, whose fundamental purpose was to improve civilian leadership by creating a systematic program of education, development, rotation, and selection within and across the DoD Components.<sup>4</sup> DLAMP was designed to

advance and develop civilians for some 3,000 key leadership positions throughout the department, which represent no more than 10 percent of the DoD’s positions at grades GS-14 and above.<sup>5</sup>

DoD civilians enter DLAMP through a nomination process managed by their home organization. Once accepted into the program, employees work to complete three required elements: professional military education (PME), a rotational assignment within DoD or even outside DoD in a national-security-related organization, and a minimum of 10 graduate courses covering a broad range of topics related to national defense strategy. The requirement to complete one or more of these three program elements may be waived if an individual possesses sufficient relevant experience or education. The first DLAMP participants entered the program in December 1997, and today there are about 1,000 DLAMP participants throughout DoD.<sup>6</sup> The first class of DLAMP participants recently graduated from the program.

This report presents a case study of DLAMP. It begins with some context. What are training, education, and career development, and why are they important for the public sector? What are the key trends affecting human resources development in the public sector? And what are the trends that characterize the defense workforce? How is the civilian DoD workforce changing, particularly in light of the end of the Cold War, the new war on terrorism, and the continuing political and fiscal pressures that are driving outsourcing and privatization?

After providing political, historical, and institutional context, the report describes and analyzes DLAMP, beginning with a review of the recommendations of the 1995 Commission on the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces. What did the Commission recommend to improve civilian personnel quality and why? What concerns drove the Commission's findings?

The report then examines DLAMP's three key program elements: PME, rotational assignments, and focused graduate education. In addition, this section also summarizes the impressions of the participants themselves, gleaned from interviews conducted by the authors as well as various DoD surveys completed over the last four years.

After reviewing the key program components, the report discusses the overall program implementation of DLAMP, focusing on the participant selection process, the creation of a system of senior executives to serve as mentors for DLAMP participants, the establishment of a DLAMP Council to provide oversight and direction, and the effort to identify leadership positions throughout the department.

Next, the report characterizes the DLAMP participants and reviews the impressions of key stakeholders. This section also compares DLAMP to other government training and development programs.

Before concluding and offering recommendations, the report briefly discusses the DLAMP restructuring effort currently under way within DoD. This effort has just begun, and its ultimate outcomes are far from clear. But it is important to understand the nature of the restructuring initiative and why DoD has embarked on it.

In the final section, the report offers several findings and recommendations. This section summarizes lessons learned from the DLAMP experience thus far and how other agencies can apply these lessons to their own training and development programs.

At a time when the federal government is facing what many believe to be a full-blown crisis in human capital, it is important to examine ongoing

efforts by federal agencies to invest in their human capital and to prepare for the future. DLAMP is an example of a major federal agency attempting to do just that. The program has had a long enough implementation experience (now a little over five years) to provide a good case study illustrating not just how to establish an agency-wide career development program but also the challenges associated with actually getting the program up and running. Indeed, the program has been in existence long enough that, as alluded to previously, it is now undergoing its first major review and revision.

### A Note on Sources

We relied heavily on a few key sources in preparing this report:

- Official DoD documents, mostly DoD Directive 1416 and the DLAMP Participant Handbook. In some cases, interviewees shared with us DLAMP-related briefing materials, which were also useful.
- Personal interviews with selected participants, mentors, and managers.
- Discussions with nearly 200 DLAMP participants over a three-year period (1999–2001), during which we taught *Regulatory Processes and Administrative Law*, one of the original DLAMP graduate courses. One of the projects we assigned student teams was to develop a management improvement plan for DLAMP. The results of those student projects were often the basis for our discussions about DLAMP. During 1999–2001, we taught this course at least three times a year.

# Career Development in the Public Sector

This section begins with brief definitions of the following key terms: training, education, and career development. Then it explores why career development is so important in the public sector, identifies and discusses key trends in human resources development, and briefly outlines the key authorities governing training and development in the public sector. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of recent trends that characterize the defense workforce.

## Defining Key Terms: Training, Education, and Career Development

Training, education, and career development are terms that most people probably think they understand rather well. And yet, like so many concepts related to organizational theory and behavior, training, education, and career development can take on different meanings for different people. For this reason, to ensure clarity and enhance understanding, the following definitions are those used in this report (Cozzetto 1996; Van Wart 1993):

- *Training* focuses on specific applications of techniques and technologies that can be of immediate use in particular organizational settings. Training usually focuses on enhancing the ability of an employee to perform in his or her current job. A good example is a one-day course on implementing a new financial analysis software program.
- *Education* is broader than training and focuses on exposing the student/employee to a wide

range of ideas, institutions, and intellectual developments in a particular field that have general, if not always specific, relevance to particular organizational settings. Education may have direct relevance to the job the employee is currently holding but usually is more relevant to preparing the employee for future positions. An example is a two-week course on the roots and origins of U.S. foreign policy.

- *Career development* is the broadest concept of all and encompasses both training and education. Career development is an (ideally) systematic process—embarked on by individual employees but (ideally) supported by their management and by a friendly organizational culture—through which the employee seeks to enhance his or her readiness for new challenges and for progression to more senior leadership positions. Career development includes training, education, and other developmental experiences, including taking on new duties in an existing job, completing rotational assignments in other organizations, and even taking new jobs that offer the potential for personal and professional growth.

Because the concept of career development includes and encompasses both training and education, this report simply uses the term “training and development” as a shorthand way to refer to all three concepts. A final point—discussed in more detail later in the report—is that DLAMP, while it incorporates training elements, is primarily an education and development program.

## The Importance of Training and Development

It is perhaps not too surprising that the United States has traditionally accorded low priority to the training and development of public-sector employees when one considers the historical and political context of American bureaucracy. While the framers of the U.S. Constitution obviously spent a great deal of their time developing ways to control government power, they neither wrote nor said very much about bureaucracy itself. Because they could not truly imagine the modern bureaucratic state, the framers did not address themselves with any specificity to the structure and powers of public-sector bureaus. As James Q. Wilson (1975) once noted:

The founding fathers had little to say about the nature or function of the executive branch of the new government. The Constitution is virtually silent on the subject and the debates in the Constitutional Convention are almost devoid of reference to an administrative apparatus. This reflected no lack of concern about the matter, however. Indeed, it was in part because of the founders' depressing experience with chaotic and inefficient management under the Continental Congress and the Articles of Confederation that they assembled in Philadelphia.

In part, this failure to address public administration in any detail was a failure of imagination. But it also reflected the relatively simple nature of American public administration in the early years of the country's history. Thomas Jefferson, for example, saw public administration as mostly the routine execution of simple government tasks (Caldwell 1949), work that would "offer little difficulty to a person of any experience." For the most part, Jefferson's vision of American public administration emphasized radical decentralization of power and authority throughout a highly federalized system. The idea of a professionalized federal public service employing men and women in literally hundreds of other specialized job categories would have been completely foreign to Jefferson and the other founders.

But today, and for many years, public administration in the United States has been anything but "the routine execution of simple tasks." Federal government employees are engineers, scientists, accountants, economists, doctors, lawyers, nurses, logisticians, intelligence analysts, operations research analysts, budget analysts, project managers, and senior executives. And these professionals operate in highly demanding organizational environments that emphasize timely action, excellent communications skills, political savvy, and the ability to build coalitions within and outside the agency. Maintaining a workforce ready for these types of challenges means having in place a robust career development system.

Training and development is important in public-sector organizations for a number of reasons. First, there is a demonstrated link between training and employee performance (Sims 1993). Training keeps employees current in their area of expertise; exposes them to management and technical issues in other disciplines that affect their main work; helps them become more flexible and adaptive in new work situations; helps them understand what technological changes are occurring and how these changes are affecting the workplace and the nature of their jobs; and also helps keep them happy and motivated.

Proactive career development programs can help public-sector agencies attract, retain, and motivate employees, among other benefits. Such programs send a powerful message to employees that the organization's leadership cares about them and is interested in their careers. They also enable the organization to build a human resources system that promotes people from within, ensuring that new leaders have a healthy balance of fresh skills and corporate memory. Training and development programs enable employees to transition from their current level of responsibility to new positions involving a wider range of duties and more responsibility. Development programs also enhance workforce retention because employees, particularly those who are ambitious and high-performing, will not have an incentive to seek career advancement with a new organization. The following box summarizes the benefits of training and development.

### Key Benefits of Training and Development Programs

- Enhance performance for today's job, and tomorrow's
- Expose employees to emerging management and technical challenges affecting their discipline
- Establish a strong internal pool of qualified employees for future leadership positions
- Make the organization a more attractive place to work, which enhances recruiting and retention efforts
- Motivate employees and build organizational loyalty
- Serve as a tool for organizational change by empowering employees to identify and meet emerging challenges

*Source: Author compilation based on various sources including OPM guidelines (see [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)), Sims (1993), Cozzetto et al. (1996), and Winkler and Sternberg (1997).*

## Important Trends in Human Resources Development

The field of public personnel administration has been undergoing significant change and evolution during the past 15 years (Ban and Riccucci 2001). This change in the human resources field reflects the larger environment of change and reinvention that has swept the public sector in recent years.

What are the emerging trends that are affecting human resources development in the public sector? First, employees today are much more interested in quality of work life and career development, and are more likely to be assertive about such issues, not simply willing to settle for whatever the agency has to offer.

Second, the ongoing revolution in information technologies is having profound effects on the modern workplace. Employees are expected to manage, organize, and process unprecedented levels of information and knowledge.

Third, although the National Partnership for Reinventing Government of the Clinton administration has closed its doors, the Bush administration is no less interested in reform and reengineering the federal government. Many of the Clinton-era initiatives, such as outsourcing and electronic government, are still being pursued, in some cases even more tenaciously than before.

Fourth, the passage of laws such as the Government Performance and Results Act has spurred government managers to place more emphasis on linking training and development efforts with performance levels and career advancement. More and more, the question is being asked: What value does this training and development program add to my operation?

A final trend is the continuing emphasis on using human resources development as a strategic management tool. The new approach is to treat human resources development as an important and relevant component of the agency's overall program to accomplish its core missions, not just as an afterthought or as mostly an administrative function focused on processing personnel actions. These trends and their potential impact are summarized in Figure 1.

## Key Authorities for Public-Sector Training and Development

The first training and development programs for federal employees were established nearly a century ago. And since then, a number of laws and regulations have been issued governing training in the federal bureaucracy. The most important documents embodying the legal foundation for training and developing government workers are the Government Employees Training Act, Title 5 of the U.S. Code, and Executive Order 11348.

The Government Employees Training Act, or "GETA" as it is known in human resources development circles, was originally passed in 1958 and created the basic framework for agencies to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate training and development programs for their employees. Before GETA, government training and development was a random patchwork of approaches and programs—some agencies did in-house training, others had specific

**Figure 1: Important Trends Affecting Human Resources Development in the Public Sector**

Trend	Impact
Greater concern with quality of work life and career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees expect organizational focus on training and development</li> <li>• Employees are more likely to seek organizations with systematic development programs in place</li> </ul>
Continued explosion of information and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees and managers face significant “knowledge management” challenges</li> <li>• To succeed, employees need continuous learning options</li> </ul>
Continued emphasis on reform, reinvention, and reengineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees are expected to understand reforms and develop winning strategies to implement them</li> <li>• To succeed, employees need continuous learning options</li> </ul>
More emphasis on linking training and development with performance and career advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and development activities are formally assessed during performance evaluation processes</li> <li>• Employees expect organizational focus on training and development</li> </ul>
More emphasis on using human resources development as a strategic management tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources divisions face increased pressure to provide proactive support to accomplishment of key organizational missions</li> <li>• Human resources divisions face increased pressure to foster future-oriented training and development programs</li> </ul>

Source: Author compilation based on various sources including OPM guidelines (see [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)), Sims (1993), Cozzetto et al. (1996), and Winkler and Sternberg (1997).

congressional authorization to conduct training, including using outside providers, and other agencies were seeking such authority.<sup>7</sup>

The basic approach of GETA is to permit agencies to fund the training and development of employees to achieve important organizational goals and improve overall performance. Congress amended GETA in 1994 and expanded opportunities for agencies to take advantage of existing training and development programs, both inside and outside the public sector. GETA and other human-resource-related laws are codified in the permanent law in Title 5 of the U.S. Code.

In addition to the statutory coverage, government training and development is further encouraged and defined by certain executive orders. The most important of these is Executive Order 11348, issued by President Johnson in 1967. This executive order amplified the basic guidance in GETA, directing agency heads to plan and budget for training pro-

grams, maximize the use of interagency training programs, and foster employee self-development as well as recognize self-initiated performance improvements.

In addition to these government-wide documents, individual agencies have issued their own training and development guidance. DoD, for example, has in recent years moved aggressively to professionalize many career fields by specifying and evaluating employee accomplishments in terms of training, education, and experience. A good example of this is the defense acquisition, technology, and logistics workforce, which comprises nearly 10 separate career fields, including program management, contracting, and systems engineering. Through regulations and agency directives, DoD mandates minimum training, education, and experience requirements in each of the career fields, and also mandates that employees receive a minimum of 40 hours of continuous learning credits each year.

# Department of Defense Context

This section provides historical and institutional context related to the defense workforce and culture. Specifically, it reviews recent trends in the DoD workforce and discusses the importance of jointness in the defense culture.

## Overview of Defense Workforce Trends

That the DoD workforce is undergoing a period of profound change is an understatement of the first order. Wherever one turns, change is under way, from the way the department manages its acquisition and logistics business to the kinds of missions it asks soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to perform.

Most observers would agree that the current era of change began on November 9, 1989—the day the Berlin Wall fell. That world-historical event set the stage for momentous political change, including the reunification of Germany, a wave of revolutions in the Eastern European countries, and, most significant of all, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the establishment, in its place, of a series of “newly independent states” from the Ukraine to Turkmenistan. Suddenly, almost without warning, the Cold War was over, and the principles underpinning the international security environment for nearly 50 years since the end of World War II seemed obsolete and irrelevant.

The bipolar world of the United States and the U.S.S.R. gave way to a new world whose dimensions were not, and still are not, clear. These

changes had important consequences for the U.S. military. For much of the 1990s, the military found itself engaged in far-flung peacekeeping operations, in places like Haiti, Bosnia, and Somalia, as well as occasional high-intensity conflicts such as the 1999 Kosovo air war.

And then September 11, 2001, changed everything again. Once again, DoD finds itself responding to momentous change—fighting battles in the mountains of Afghanistan; helping friendly countries, such as the Philippines, fight terrorists; refocusing its command structure to emphasize homeland security and upgraded intelligence-gathering capabilities; and attempting to achieve twin “revolutions” in military and business affairs to transform military operations for the 21st century with the latest technologies while simultaneously implementing best commercial practices to get the biggest bang for each defense buck.

This fluid and constantly evolving environment puts intense pressure on the department to keep up with the pace of change and, where possible, to anticipate and prepare for change. This, in turn, makes training and development even more important. Some of the most significant trends affecting DoD are summarized in Figure 2.

With about 700,000 civilian employees,<sup>8</sup> DoD is the single largest employer of civil service workers in the federal government. Several striking trends characterize the defense civilian workforce. First, there has been a significant shift in the length-of-service distribution for civilian employment. Since

**Figure 2: Current Challenges Affecting DoD**

Factor	Impact
End of the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New relationship with Russia</li> <li>• New relationships with the newly independent states</li> <li>• Focus on numerous, and sometimes simultaneous, peacekeeping operations and low-intensity conflicts</li> <li>• Focus on counter-proliferation</li> </ul>
Revolution in business affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aggressive program of acquisition and logistics reform</li> <li>• Aggressive program of privatization and outsourcing</li> <li>• Achieving the appropriate blend of military, civilian, and contractor workforces</li> </ul>
Revolution in military affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New science and technology challenges</li> <li>• Managing change in military training, doctrines, and organizations</li> </ul>
War on terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased tempo of operations around the world</li> <li>• Heightened state of alert, with increased demands on operational readiness</li> </ul>

Source: Author compilation based on review of Secretary of Defense Annual Reports to Congress.

the fall of the Berlin Wall, the median years-of-service has increased from 11 in 1989 to 17 years today. There has been a corresponding drop, nearly 70 percent, in civilians with under five years of service and a 67 percent drop in the number of civilians with between five and 10 years of service. At the same time, there has only been a 4 percent drop in the 11 to 30 years-of-service demographic. And the mobility of older workers (in particular, those who entered federal service prior to 1984) is severely constrained by their participation in the Civil Service Retirement System, a defined-benefit retirement plan that encourages workers to stay a full 30 years and to consider retirement only at or after the age of 55.

Second, the defense civilian workforce has shrunk by nearly 40 percent since 1989 (see Figure 3). While the war on terrorism may offset some of the planned decreases, it is worth noting that current budgets still call for overall decreases in the number of civilians.<sup>9</sup> Much of this decline has come in the acquisition, technology, and logistics portions of the DoD workforce. And downsizing, while it achieved the purpose of reducing the federal payroll, has produced several unanticipated negative results.

The National Academy for Public Administration's Center for Human Resources stated the following in a July 2000 report:

Downsizing occurred 25 to 30 years after a period of growth in the federal government. It was accomplished by targeting highly paid employees and supervisors and offering buyouts that appealed mainly to employees who were eligible to retire. Consequently, agencies lost a substantial part of the generation of federal employees who started their careers in the 1960s. These employees represented a disproportionate share of the knowledge and expertise that existed in the workforce. They had been mentors, coaches, and models for the employees they left behind. Succession planning, internships, apprenticeships, and other developmental programs were disrupted, or not started. Remaining employees already dispirited by the loss of these respected colleagues were asked to absorb their workload without the benefit of their experience and knowledge.

Third, the defense civilian workforce is an aging workforce. Since 1989, the median age of the defense civilian employee has increased from 41 to 46. At the same time, there has been a 75 percent decrease in the number of defense civilians under the age of 31, with a corresponding 3 percent increase in those between the ages of 51 and 60. Over 70 percent of the current civilian workforce is over the age of 40, whereas less than 6 percent is 30 or under. (See Figure 4.)

Fourth, the defense civilian workforce is an increasingly educated workforce. Since 1989, the percentage of the workforce possessing advanced degrees (bachelor's, master's, or higher) has increased from 27 to 31 percent. This indicates that the civilian workforce is interested in educational advancement. A major question, however, is whether DoD can maintain these levels of educational achievement as the current workforce begins to retire.

All these developments pose significant challenges for the DoD training and development community (Levy 2001). The revolutions in military and business affairs will require a civilian workforce highly skilled in specific business competencies. To support high-technology military forces, civilian employees will need to be competent in technology, problem solving, and communications. And the revolution in business affairs will place a premium on employees being able to work within and

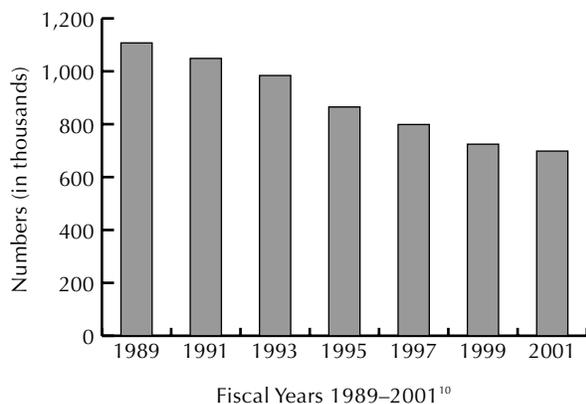
across complex organizations. These requirements will increase the demand for quality training and development programs—programs that service both the aging workforce as well as the new recruits expected to enter the defense workforce at increasing rates over the next decade.

As Roland Kankey and his colleagues (1997) put it:

In today's (and tomorrow's) fast-paced, fluid environment, DoD will need more people with the skills and tools they accrue from a focused graduate education. These include not only the technical and informational skills related to one's major course of study, but the analytical, problem solving, and rational thinking abilities one develops as part of a graduate education. These tools are essential because they can be applied throughout a career, and to a broad array of problems and situations.

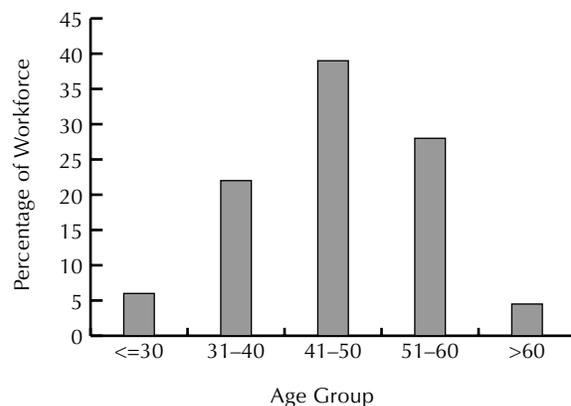
In summary, DoD faces an impressive array of challenges. The end of the Cold War and the new war on terrorism mean that the department is being asked to perform increasingly complex missions. And even with new budget authority to meet urgent wartime requirements, the department still faces sharp budgetary constraints in a number of critical areas, including infrastructure modernization and weapons acquisition. In the last 10 years,

**Figure 3: Declining DoD Civilian Employment Since the Fall of the Berlin Wall**



Source: Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress, Personnel Tables.

**Figure 4: Age Distribution of the DoD Civilian Workforce (as of FY 2000)**



Source: DoD briefing, "DoD's Workforce: Past, Present, and Future" (May 2000).

the civilian workforce has dramatically declined and the workforce is aging, meaning there is not a large corps of middle managers with the requisite professional experience ready to step in and replace senior colleagues in leadership positions as those colleagues retire. Downsizing has also translated into a more complex public service characterized by military personnel, civilian officials, and private-sector contractors. Finding the right blend of these three workforces to accomplish key defense missions is yet another challenge.

## The Importance of Jointness in DoD

Today, jointness is perhaps one of the most important values in the defense culture. From the very inception of DoD in 1947, the importance of jointness has been stressed by department managers and executives, military and civilian leaders, as well as members of Congress and academic researchers. And this emphasis has not been just rhetorical—over the years, more than one secretary of defense has expended a great deal of political capital to establish joint organizations and defense agencies. Examples abound—from Robert McNamara’s creation of the Defense Supply Agency (now the Defense Logistics Agency) to William Cohen’s establishment of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

But what is jointness? What does it mean? Why is jointness so important in the Defense Department? And how does DLAMP contribute to jointness?

Jointness is a term with different shades of meaning. On one level, it simply refers to different DoD Components working together to accomplish common goals and purposes. This sounds simple enough, but it is when one considers what “working together” truly implies that the deeper levels of meaning are revealed. For example, to work together means that the individual Components must, at some level, put aside their parochial concerns and focus on the mission at hand. That might mean the Army taking a back seat to the Air Force during the air warfare phase of a major operation or, to use a business management example, it might mean a contracting official letting a budget analyst lead a project team during the annual budget review. Working together also means having

some degree of appreciation and respect for *what* other offices do and how what they do *contributes* to the overall defense mission. After all, it is human nature to focus on our own work, our own challenges, our own successes, and, when considering where a particular project failed to produce the expected results, to look outside ourselves and our work units to place blame.

As discussed later in the report, the DLAMP implementation approach has emphasized jointness in numerous ways—for example, through conducting education and training with 10 to 20 DoD employees from different Components participating together in the same course; through rotational assignments that give DLAMP participants an opportunity to spend up to a year working in a new office outside their home organization; and through the DLAMP Council, which governs the overall operation of the program.

By building jointness into DLAMP at every stage, the program’s founders were after two key objectives: instilling in the DLAMP participants a very strong sense of shared values and shared missions, and instilling in the department’s senior leadership a strong sense of shared obligation for civilian training and development.

# The Defense Leadership and Management Program

It was with this context in mind that the DoD leadership established DLAMP in 1997. The following sections discuss the development of DLAMP.

## Program Development

This section outlines the early stages of DLAMP, focusing on early stirrings within DoD, the findings of the Commission on Roles and Missions, the establishment of DLAMP, and the DLAMP stakeholders.

### Early Stirrings

In the first months of the Clinton administration, the new team of DoD political executives began a series of reviews of defense management issues. Several studies were launched to examine the state of the defense workforce and make recommendations for improvement. Probably the most important management figure in this regard was Dr. Diane Disney, now a dean at Pennsylvania State University, who from 1993 to 2000 was deputy assistant secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (P&R).

Based on their reviews of the state of civilian training and development, the P&R study teams soon recognized that DoD had significant problems with its civilian workforce, including that civilians had less access to training and development than their military counterparts. Several senior political and career officials commented to the study teams that they perceived a “quality gap” between the average

military and civilian manager, with the military official more often than not being perceived as more capable and more competent.

P&R discovered that there was some foundation for this perception and that it lay, in part, in the 1986 passage of the “Goldwater-Nichols” legislation, which emphasized more joint training and assignments for military personnel. The military departments aggressively implemented this legislation while the civilian training and development community received no comparable boost. The result: By the mid-1990s, the military training and development system had far outstripped its civilian counterpart, both in terms of funding and quality. Not surprisingly, DoD leaders found themselves delegating more and more responsibility to the military departments.

While DoD’s military workforce had been busy implementing Goldwater-Nichols, completing joint assignments, attending senior Service schools, and pursuing graduate education, the civilian workforce was stuck in the proverbial rut—employees were not participating in any systematic, agency-wide program of development; rarely if ever rotated out of their narrow functional specialties; and almost as rarely attended senior Service schools such as the National War College.

To address these problems, the Under Secretary of Defense for P&R (then Ed Dorn) established several working groups to develop new approaches to civilian training and development. The working groups

included managers from the military departments and Defense agencies. One idea was to establish a program focused on leadership development. They found a mostly sympathetic audience, both within the department as well as on Capitol Hill.

They also found the newly chartered Commission on Roles and Missions, and particularly its chairman, Dr. John White, very interested in their message and their ideas. White, who had been a DoD political executive during the Carter administration, as well as an industry executive and university professor, felt strongly about training and development in the civilian workforce. Indeed, during his tenure in the Carter years, White was one of the key figures behind the 1978 establishment of the Senior Executive Service. In 1994, he became the chairman of the newly formed Commission on Roles and Missions.

### **Findings of the Commission on Roles and Missions**

In the Fiscal Year 1994 National Defense Authorization Act (Section 954[b]), Congress chartered the Commission on the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces. Congress directed the Commission to “review the appropriateness of the current allocations of roles, missions, and functions among the Armed Forces; evaluate and report on alternative allocations; and make recommendations for changes in the current definition and distribution of those roles, missions and functions.” That Congress established such a study effort reflects the high level of interest in the future direction of the Defense Department in the wake of the Cold War. Even before Congress established the Commission, DoD had already conducted several roles and missions studies itself, the most prominent being then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell’s 1993 study.

A major theme of all these studies was jointness. Jointness, as discussed earlier in this report, refers most typically to the combined and cooperative efforts of the four military services housed within DoD: the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. It also refers to cooperation among other DoD Components, including defense agencies such as the Defense Logistics Agency as well as the operational commands, such as the U.S. Central Command. The final Commission report focused

extensively on how to enhance jointness, emphasizing three key areas of interest:

- Strengthening unified operations by enhancing the joint structures that plan and perform missions, and by sharpening the focus of the military services to provide capabilities
- Focusing DoD infrastructure on effective support for unified military capabilities
- Improving the processes that support decision making in DoD and establishing a DoD-wide focus on missions

Upon reviewing the expansive scope of the recommendations it was urging on the secretary of defense and the Congress, the Commission acknowledged that the success of implementing these wide-ranging recommendations depended critically on the quality and motivation of the defense workforce. While the Commission recognized the overall quality and dedication of the defense workforce, it strongly recommended a series of efforts to “improve policies and personnel management to enhance the quality of career civilians and political appointees.”

Treating careerists and political appointees together was intentional. One of the Commission’s major critiques of the DoD civilian personnel management system was its poor record of developing career civilians for leadership positions. At best, Commission members argued, the existing DoD civilian personnel systems focused training and development opportunities in functional “stovepipes” such as budgeting and procurement. This was fine as far as it went, but it did nothing to broaden the organizational perspectives of individual employees, who continued to view not only the issues they worked on every day but often their entire careers through the narrow lens of their given functional stovepipe. As Andrea Garcia and her colleagues (1997) put it in a review of legislation affecting the defense acquisition workforce:

The traditional civilian career path has been functionally based. Unlike the military path, which traverses the mountain to gain the summit, the civilian path is more of a spiral staircase. It focuses on depth and expertise in narrowly defined functional stovepipes. Promotion comes

within a functional world where ever-increasing technical excellence is the basis for advancement. Lateral mobility across career fields is difficult and costly. Geographic mobility, though nominally encouraged, is not necessarily required. Advanced technical and management degrees are required. Professional military education is not. The fundamental value is technical competence and stability. Mobility and leadership [have not been] critical attributes of the career civilian.

At worst, there was no real system of career development. Employees interested in taking a serious, more systematic approach to furthering their careers were faced with an “ad hoc” of training and development opportunities that were not organized in any particular manner or accompanied by guidance and support from either the personnel management community or their own supervisors. In this scenario, all too familiar to many DoD civilians, training and development had often become a seemingly random enterprise, critically dependent on the attitudes of individual managers and the willingness of these managers to permit their employees to take advantage of professional development opportunities.

Coupled with this troubled institutional legacy is the trend toward a greater politicization of federal management jobs, as each successive administration fills more and more management positions with political appointees (Light 1994). In part, the fact that DoD had historically done such a poor job of developing its civilian employees bolstered the claims of those who argued that top management positions must be filled with political appointees because they bring a much broader perspective to the job than do career civilians who have received little professional development and have typically grown up within one narrow functional specialty. Recognizing this insidious dynamic, the Commission report recommended a “substantial reduction in the number of political appointees serving in senior leadership positions throughout the department.” The Commission report went one step further: “We recommend replacing those political appointees with military or civilian professionals.” The Commission’s key personnel management recommendations are summarized in the box at right.

### Establishing DLAMP

It was perhaps fortuitous for advocates of the Commission’s recommendations that its chairman, Dr. John White, was nominated by President Clinton to be deputy secretary of defense the same month, May 1995, that he submitted the Commission’s final report to the President and Congress. White was soon confirmed for that position and moved aggressively to put in place key Commission recommendations, including the establishment of more systematic career development paths for DoD civilians. Upon his arrival at the Pentagon as deputy secretary, White teamed with other senior officials, including the Under Secretary for P&R and then-Comptroller John Hamre, to refurbish civilian training and development.

A series of joint DoD teams developed specific implementation plans for the Commission’s personnel management recommendations. A single, depart-

### Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces Recommendations to Improve Civilian Personnel Quality

- Revise management of GS and career SES personnel
- Institute mandatory rotational assignments
- Establish an up-or-out advancement policy
- Create a structured educational system
- Facilitate access to more positions of greater responsibility
- Establish meaningful compensation incentives
- Create more opportunities for career civilians to attend military service schools and other educational institutions without penalty to their organizations
- Provide replacements for employees in training
- Encourage or require employees to move to new positions upon the completion of professional training

*Source: Final Report of the Commission on the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (May 1995).*

ment-wide program began to emerge as the centerpiece. Based on the early work of the P&R study teams, as well as the Commission's major recommendations, the new program slowly came into focus as the Defense Leadership and Management Program.

DLAMP was formally established by Deputy Secretary White in April 1997 through the issuance of DoD Directive 1430.16. The directive made explicit reference to the Commission on Roles and Missions in describing its key purposes:

- Establishes policy and assigns responsibilities for a program of civilian leader training, education, and development in DoD
- Implements the recommendations of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces
- Establishes a DoD-wide framework for developing future civilian leaders with a DoD-wide capability in an environment that nurtures a shared understanding and sense of mission among civilian employees and military personnel
- Enables each civilian leader to assume broader responsibility in an increasingly complex environment; expands his or her substantive knowledge of the department's national security mission; and strengthens communication and trust among senior military and civilian leaders

According to the directive, DoD policy is to provide for department-wide civilian leader and management training, education, and development to "prepare, certify, and continuously educate and challenge a highly capable, diverse, and mobile cadre of senior civilian managers and executives." This was the first time that DoD had established an overarching program solely dedicated to civilian leadership development.

As spelled out in the enabling directive, DLAMP has three major components.<sup>11</sup> (See Figure 5.) The three major program elements are a career-broadening rotational assignment of at least 12 months, at least three months of professional military education, and a minimum of 10 advanced graduate-level courses on subjects and issues facing defense leaders. For a participant to graduate from DLAMP,

### DLAMP at a Glance

Program created	1997, by DoD directive
Target population	High-performing GS-13s to GS-15s
Current active participants	About 1,200 career civilians
Number entering per year	About 350 participants per year
Key program components	Civilian graduate education Professional military education Rotational assignments
Number of target DLAMP positions	About 3,000
Number designated to date	About 600
Total program cost	About \$38 million annually <sup>12</sup>
Cost per participant	About \$38,000
Nomination of participants	Decentralized to review boards in each DoD Component organization
Mentors	Senior managers at the SES level who work with participants to identify key educational and developmental goals
Length of program	Anywhere from one to six years, depending on participant's credentials upon entry
Key guiding document	Individual development plan (IDP)

Sources: DLAMP Guidebook, DLAMP Council briefing papers.

he or she must complete each of the three major program elements or receive credit (waiver) for having had a similar experience. The participant must also maintain “good standing” in the program.

To ensure rigorous implementation of these basic program elements, and a joint, shared approach, the directive calls for DLAMP to be governed by a joint “DLAMP Council,” consisting of top officials from all the major DoD Component organizations. In addition, the directive establishes an active system of mentoring to ensure that DLAMP participants have a senior colleague to guide them and offer career advice. Finally, the program includes funding for “backfills” (replacement employees) to facilitate rotational assignments. After a brief discussion of the key DLAMP stakeholders, the following sections of this report examine each of these program features.

### DLAMP Stakeholders

DLAMP, or indeed any agency-wide career development program, is about more than just its participants. The participants are the foundation, but they require the support and assistance of many other members of the organization. All of these

individuals are the stakeholders and have a vested interest in program success. Who are the DLAMP stakeholders?

- *Participants*—the pool of DoD employees at the GS-13 through 15 levels who are eligible for participation. They represent the next generation of leaders and are the foundation of DLAMP. Their key roles and responsibilities include taking their career development seriously, preparing a reasonable time line for completing their developmental activities, and fulfilling the course of action laid out in their individual development plans (IDPs).
- *Mentors*—senior managers at the SES level who work with participants to identify the education and developmental experiences that will enhance the participant’s overall career development. Their key roles and responsibilities include committing to meet with and be available to the participant on a regular basis and taking the participant’s best interests to heart when advising him or her on career choices.
- *Supervisors*—the DLAMP participant’s boss. The participant’s supervisor plays a crucial role in discussing, reviewing, planning, and sched-

**Figure 5: DLAMP Program Elements**

Program Element	Key Objectives
Rotational assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden employee perspectives</li> <li>• Expose employee to the roles and challenges of other defense-related organizations</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for future employment in new positions</li> </ul>
Professional military education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain a better understanding of national security strategy</li> <li>• Examine the role of civilian and military officials in decision making</li> <li>• Learn more about the various DoD Components and how they work together</li> <li>• Develop a better sense of shared mission responsibilities with military colleagues</li> </ul>
Graduate-level education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharpen management and analytical skills in key areas</li> <li>• Gain a better grounding in the intellectual foundations and traditions of defense management</li> </ul>
Component and occupation-specific development courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate specific courses required by an employee’s organization into a more systematic program of career development</li> </ul>

Source: DLAMP Participant Handbook.

uling various DLAMP activities. In addition, the supervisor helps the participant identify funding for Component and occupation-specific training.

- *DLAMP Council*—the senior-level committee that provides strategic guidance and direction for DLAMP and makes final decisions on DLAMP participants.
- *Component Boards*—the management boards in each DoD Component that assist the DLAMP Council in implementing DLAMP on a uniform basis across the department. The board’s key roles include screening potential applicants, certifying IDPs, and reviewing candidates’ “good standing” in the program.
- *DLAMP Office*—working for the DLAMP Council, acts as the day-to-day administrator of the program. Among other things, the DLAMP Office helps provide funding for DLAMP activities, refines IDP requirements, and provides necessary program information to participants, applicants, and other interested parties.

## Original Program Components

There are three major components of DLAMP—professional military education, rotational assignments, and graduate education. There is also a formal “good standing” policy.

### Professional Military Education (PME)

One of the educational components of DLAMP is PME. DLAMP participants are required to successfully complete a senior-level course in PME, with an emphasis on national security decision making.

There are various ways that DLAMP participants can achieve this requirement. For example, the National Defense University (NDU) offers a three-month PME course specially designed for DLAMP participants. Or participants can attend the traditional 10-month programs offered by the military service schools and NDU. The special three-month alternative was designed as a way to open more PME slots to DLAMP participants because space tends to be much more limited in the traditional programs, whose main customer base consists of military officers from the various branches of the armed services.

There are seven senior PME institutions within DoD (see box below). Although the mission of each PME institution is somewhat different, they all share the primary objective of preparing future military and civilian leaders for high-level policy, command, and staff responsibilities. The PME curriculum focuses on five key components:

- *National Security Strategy* provides the participant with an understanding of how to develop, apply, and coordinate policy objectives to ensure national security goals are met.
- *National Planning Systems and Processes* provides the participant with an understanding of the systems and processes used to determine national policy.
- *National Military Strategy and Organization* focuses on the importance of developing, deploying, employing, and sustaining military resources, in concert with other elements of national power, to meet national security goals.
- *Theater Strategy and Campaigning* emphasizes how joint operations and multinational campaigns support national objectives, and the relationships between national strategic, theater strategic, and operational levels of war.
- *Systems Integration in the 21st Century Battlespace* examines the integration of joint and military service systems responsible for supporting military operations during war.

### Senior-Level PME Institutions Participating in DLAMP

#### National Defense University (NDU)

- Center for DLAMP
- National War College (NWC)
- Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF)

#### Service Schools

- Army War College
- Naval War College
- Air War College
- Marine Corps War College

The process for fulfilling the PME part of DLAMP works roughly as follows. Each year, the DLAMP Office provides PME quotas to the Component boards. Quotas are allocated among the DoD Components based on the number of eligible participants requiring PME. The time commitments and start dates vary for each institution. The Center for DLAMP at NDU provides for three-month programs starting in January, May, and September of each year. The Army War College runs from July to June, while the other senior service schools run from August to June.

According to interviews with Component administrators, DLAMP participants tend to rank PME first of the three program elements in terms of their perception of its overall value. In particular, participants often mentioned the high quality of the PME curriculum and the opportunity for joint, civilian-military interaction.

The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) and the National War College (NWC) at the National Defense University tend to get the most participation from DLAMP, while the Center for DLAMP at NDU gets the least. In interviews, participants explained that ICAF and NWC grant degrees, but the Center for DLAMP does not. Also, because it is conducted in a three-month time frame, the Center for DLAMP is considered by many participants to be too intensive.

### **Rotational Assignments**

The second major component of DLAMP is the rotational assignment. The DLAMP directive calls for participants to complete a rotational assignment outside their home organization lasting at least 12 consecutive months. This is one of the most innovative aspects of DLAMP, and it is an explicit attempt to mirror the military practice of rotating personnel through successive assignments to increase the breadth and depth of their professional experiences.

A key objective of the rotational assignment is to enhance the participant's potential to function as an executive within the department in support of joint warfighting capability. Based on principles outlined both in the Goldwater-Nichols Act and OPM's Executive Core Qualifications, the rotational assignment is specially designed to enhance the

participant's capacity to build coalitions, communicate effectively, and understand the real value of a joint, integrated approach to accomplishing the organizational mission.

Not all DLAMP participants will require a rotational assignment to round out their experience. Some participants, based on their extensive prior professional experience, including moving through numerous organizations, may be able to waive the requirement. Notwithstanding prior assignments, individual DLAMP participants, in consultation with their supervisor and mentor, may still decide that a rotational assignment will be useful for their overall career development, particularly if they have been in their current positions for quite some time.

Generally, DLAMP participants identify opportunities for rotational assignments on their own. They may talk to trusted colleagues, ask their supervisors about opportunities, or consult with their mentors. In addition, the DLAMP Office maintains a central database of available assignment openings and posts this list on its website. Assignments may be completed in another DoD office or in an external organization that works on defense-related issues (e.g., the Department of State, the National Security Council, or the Senate Armed Services Committee).

Another innovative aspect of DLAMP has been the establishment of funding to finance "backfills" (employees who replace the DLAMP participant at the home office while he or she is completing the rotational assignment) and travel and transportation expenses associated with the rotational assignment. This funding is limited and by no means covers 100 percent of the demand, but it represents a major step in addressing what has historically been a significant disincentive for federal employees to complete rotational assignments.

According to interviews with Component administrators, DLAMP participants tend to rank rotational assignments second in value of the three program elements, behind PME and ahead of graduate education. Interviews show that participants focus on a few key criteria when assessing a potential rotational assignment, including its location, joint perspective, and whether it will give them an opportunity to work outside of their functional

specialties. At this point, only about a quarter of all active DLAMP participants have completed their rotational assignments (or had them waived due to prior experience).

### Graduate Education

A key element of DLAMP is the successful completion of graduate-level courses. The general curriculum requirements are to complete 10 advanced courses in eight key areas (detailed in Figure 6).<sup>13</sup>

The graduate education component of DLAMP was conceived as an important complement to the PME and rotational assignment pieces of the program. The basic notion has been to establish the DLAMP graduate courses as a “defense MBA” curriculum, emphasizing management and leadership skills, along with technical tools, to achieve important mission objectives. Thus the curriculum includes not only policy-oriented courses such

as *The Roots of Strategy* and *Political and Legal Influences on National Defense Policy*, but also technical “tools-oriented” courses such as *Strategic Staffing and Workforce Management*, *Management Information Systems*, and *Management Accounting in Government Organizations*. The graduate coursework culminates in a senior seminar that all DLAMP participants must take entitled *Development of National Defense Policy*.

The DLAMP graduate courses were developed through a rigorous process involving outside universities (that would go on to teach the courses) and subject matter experts from within the department. Each course is offered over a two-week period to a class not exceeding 20 students from across DoD. The two-week period means that the typical DLAMP course involves 80 classroom hours, or the equivalent of a semester-long course in a traditional graduate program. But because they are offered over a two-week intensive period,

**Figure 6: DLAMP Graduate Courses**

Area	Illustrative Graduate Courses
Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principles of Microeconomics</li> <li>Macroeconomics and National Security Policy</li> </ul>
Finance and Accounting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial Accounting</li> <li>Management Accounting in Government Business Organizations</li> </ul>
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principles of Human Resources Management</li> <li>Organizational Theory</li> <li>Strategic Staffing and Workforce Management</li> </ul>
Information Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management Information Systems</li> <li>Decision Theory, Modeling, and Gaming in a National Security Environment</li> </ul>
Law and Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulatory Processes and Administrative Law</li> <li>Managing Public Information and Mass Media Communications</li> <li>Political and Legal Influences on National Defense Policy</li> </ul>
Defense Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Roots of Strategy</li> <li>International Issues in Defense</li> </ul>
Quantitative Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statistics for Managers</li> <li>Defense Resources Management</li> </ul>
Electives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systems Acquisition</li> <li>National Security Policy and Intelligence</li> <li>Logistics Doctrine and Policy</li> </ul>
Senior Seminar (Mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of National Defense Policy</li> </ul>

Source: DoD Participant Handbook.

DLAMP participants can complete more courses in one year than if the courses were offered in the traditional, once-a-week setting. A two-week period is long enough to achieve the 80-classroom-hour standard but not so long as to impose a burden on the student and his or her supervisor.

DLAMP graduate courses have been taught at five universities—George Mason University, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Connecticut, Georgetown University, and George Washington University—in two main locations, a conference facility in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and at the School of Management facility on the campus of George Mason University.

DLAMP participants receive books and reading materials before the courses convene so they can get a head start and make the most out of the two-week course period. The courses combine classroom lectures, guest speakers, and student group projects to optimize the educational experience.

A large majority of active DLAMP participants—about 80 percent—have begun their graduate coursework. But very few have finished this part of the program, including taking the senior capstone seminar. According to interviews with Component administrators, DLAMP participants tend to rank this program element last in value. The major concerns are the following:

- For those who do not already possess a master's degree, there is no degree offered through the DLAMP graduate program.
- For those who already possess a master's (or higher) degree, the graduate courses represent a potentially significant time investment whose value seems dubious given that they already possess an advanced degree.

### Good Standing

The DLAMP directive calls for a “good standing” policy to ensure program rigor and integrity. How does it work? A DLAMP participant is considered to be in good standing if all the following apply:

- The participant has successfully completed the activities identified in his or her individual development plan for that year.

- The participant has no adverse suitability determinations (as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations).<sup>14</sup>
- The participant received a minimum performance appraisal of “pass” or “fully successful,” or the equivalent, for the period covered by the most recent annual review.
- The participant meets the standards of good conduct in the program.<sup>15</sup>
- The participant completes at least the minimum level of required annual activity:
  - At least two DLAMP graduate courses, or
  - Professional military education, or
  - Rotational assignment, or
  - Component or occupation-specific requirements, or
  - Some reasonable combination of the above.<sup>16</sup>

The DLAMP Office, in conjunction with Component boards, mentors, supervisors, and participants, conducts periodic reviews of good standing. The key objectives of the good standing policy are to ensure program integrity and a reasonable rate of progression through the major program elements of DLAMP.

## Program Implementation

This section reviews the DLAMP implementation, focusing on the DLAMP Council, the selection process, the mentoring system, and the identification of leadership positions.

### The DLAMP Council

The Council is responsible for providing the overall strategic direction of the program as well as conducting periodic evaluations. The Council includes most of the department's leadership, including the under secretaries of defense, the military departments' civilian personnel chiefs, the general counsel, and the director of the Joint Staff.

The Council has a number of important duties. First, it establishes guidelines for the overall management of the program. Second, it recommends resource and funding levels and oversees the programming and implementation of these resources.

Third, it oversees the process for selecting DLAMP participants. Fourth, it ensures an adequate number of spaces for DLAMP participants in PME programs.

The key innovation in establishing the Council was creating a truly joint body consisting of leaders from across DoD to work together on improving civilian education and development. Historically, no such joint body existed. Rather, the individual DoD Components managed their own training and development programs with no unified sense of mission or direction.

### Selecting Participants

The selection process begins with the employee's preparation of an individual development plan (IDP). The IDP is the basic blueprint for DLAMP participants and describes and tracks a participant's developmental needs, accomplishments, and progress toward achieving DLAMP objectives. The IDP is a "living document" that the participant continually updates and refines. The key elements of the IDP are a description of the employee's major career goals and how DLAMP will help the participant achieve them.

After the employee has completed the IDP, the next step is to meet with his or her supervisor to discuss career development objectives. Once the supervisor and employee jointly agree on a developmental course of action (as reflected in the updated IDP), the supervisor forwards the employee's name to the DLAMP board of the specific DoD Component. The Component boards competitively review all nominations based primarily on an assessment of the employee's potential to benefit from participation in DLAMP. The Components then forward their recommendations to the DLAMP Council, which makes the final decisions on participant selection.

While the selection process is necessarily decentralized, at least in its early stages, it ultimately comes back to a joint body—the DLAMP Council—that reviews all Component nominations and makes final decisions based on a joint assessment of the selections that will most benefit the long-term future of the department.

### Mentoring Participants

DLAMP includes an active mentoring system. The purpose of this system is to link each participant with a senior-level individual to enhance the participant's leadership skills and competencies. DLAMP mentors play an important role in assessing and establishing career and personal development goals, developing an IDP for achieving DLAMP objectives, and evaluating progress (see box below).

Each DLAMP participant is required to develop a formal mentoring relationship. The mentor should be—and typically is—someone in the department other than the employee's first- or second-level supervisor who is at least two grade-levels higher than the employee's civilian rank. The ideal mentor is someone who is not only familiar with key federal career progression criteria, such as the OPM's Executive Core Qualifications for the Senior Executive Service, but also genuinely cares about helping the up-and-coming generation of defense civilians achieve their personal and professional goals.

The DLAMP Office issues an annual call to senior executives to serve as mentors and then makes available to DLAMP participants a list of potential

#### Key Roles of the DLAMP Mentor

- Serve as confidant, counselor, guide, and unbiased adviser to DLAMP participants
- Establish open, clear, two-way communications
- Help the DLAMP participant assess his or her most important developmental needs and formulate an IDP
- Sign and certify the participant's IDP
- Share experiences that contributed to his or her own success and set an example for the participant to follow
- Suggest additional training and development opportunities to further the development of the participant toward DoD leadership positions

*Source: Personal interviews, the DLAMP Participant Handbook.*

mentors. In addition, the participants themselves seek out senior men and women they know from previous assignments to serve as mentors.

Various surveys conducted by DoD Components during the last several years, as well as personal interviews with participants, show that most DLAMP participants believe the mentor system adds value to the program. Most DLAMP participants (about 60 percent) have a mentor, and most believe that their mentor is serious about their career development, actively involved in their over-all DLAMP, and willing to make time to answer questions and offer career counseling.

### **Establishing DLAMP Positions**

One of the more controversial elements of DLAMP was the effort to identify so-called “DLAMP positions.” A key founding principle of DLAMP was to advance and develop civilians for the top leadership positions within DoD. As the program was implemented, the DLAMP Council decided to set a number of approximately 3,000 leadership positions, representing not more than 10 percent of the department’s positions at grades GS-14 and above. By definition, a DLAMP position is one in which the incumbent is responsible for people, policy, programs, and other resources of broad significance.

According to the DLAMP directive, the designation of a DLAMP position would not prevent an incumbent from occupying that position even if he or she had not participated in DLAMP. However, once the position becomes vacant, priority consideration is to be given to members or graduates of DLAMP, consistent with applicable personnel laws.

The vision was that DLAMP will become one of the primary sources—if not the primary source—for filling these leadership positions. The process for identifying these positions was largely decentralized to each DoD Component. About a quarter of the potential total of 3,000 positions had been identified to date.

### **Assessing DLAMP**

Who are the DLAMP participants? What do they think of the program? What do other key stakeholders think? And how does DLAMP compare with other government training and development

programs? The following sections address these questions.<sup>17</sup>

### **Characterizing the Participants**

DLAMP is still very young. The first class of DLAMP participants only got under way in late 1997. At this point, there are approximately 1,200 active participants in the program. Almost half of them have been enrolled in DLAMP for less than two years. About 50 percent of the DLAMP participants come from the Washington area, while the other 50 percent are from the field.

Most DLAMP participants are highly educated, even before entering the program. Nearly 60 percent of DLAMP participants have a master’s degree (M.A., M.S., or M.B.A.). In addition, about 4 percent have a Ph.D. and 3 percent have a J.D. This may indicate that the participants are not seeking out DLAMP to further their education; rather they perceive it to be important to their career progression. It also indicates that DLAMP attracts highly motivated individuals, as measured by their high levels of educational attainment.

About 25 percent have completed, or had waived, their rotational assignment requirements. A larger number, nearly 40 percent, have completed their PME requirements. Most of those have attended either the ICAF or the Center for DLAMP at the National Defense University. An even larger number of participants, over 80 percent, have begun their graduate coursework. And almost 90 percent of the current participants have completed their IDPs and had them formally approved.

All DoD Components have participated at high rates in DLAMP, as measured by their quota fill rates. The highest and most consistent has been the Air Force, which each year has attained at least 100 percent of its annual quota. DLAMP participants come in almost equal shares from both headquarters and the field (although the majority, 75 percent, of DLAMP candidates work in the field).

In terms of diversity, 64 percent of the DLAMP participants are men and 36 percent are women; 71 percent are white, about 9 percent are black, and 3 percent are Hispanic. The average age of the DLAMP participant is about 45 years old. It should

be noted that the gender and race figures represent a fair distribution in DLAMP as compared with the overall DoD population. For example, whereas only 23 percent of the DLAMP candidate pool is female, women make up 36 percent of actual DLAMP participants.

The main target audience for DLAMP is the GS-13 through GS-15 population in DoD. DLAMP participants break down this way: 22 percent are GS-13s, 42 percent are GS-14s, and 34 percent are GS-15s. While this distribution still does not fairly represent the potential GS-13 population, and overrepresents the more senior GS-15 population, the trends are moving in the right direction. As the program matures, more and more participants should come from the GS-13 target population.

Most DLAMP participants have stuck with the program after enrolling. And many of the participant losses have been for positive reasons—for example, 31 percent of the losses to date have resulted from participants being promoted to the SES. Another 25 percent of the losses are due to participants leaving DoD. The largest single negative source of program loss is voluntary withdrawal. About a third of the overall program losses, or 34 percent, have been because the participant voluntarily withdrew from the program. The reasons for voluntary withdrawal are many and varied. Participants were having difficulty balancing the program requirements with their work and personal life. Some dropped out because no degree was offered. Others felt there was no clear linkage between program participation and getting a promotion.

### **Impressions of Key Stakeholders**

What do key stakeholders think about the program? This section reviews the impressions of participants, supervisors, and mentors.

Participants are mostly very positive about the program. Large majorities believe that DLAMP will strengthen their qualifications for the SES. Almost 70 percent believe that it will enhance their promotion potential, while 61 percent feel that DLAMP participation is helpful in their current positions. A full 81 percent would recommend DLAMP to others. In terms of the program elements, the participants tend to rank the PME component as the most valuable, the rotational assignment next, and

the graduate courses last. The biggest complaint about the graduate courses component has been that no degree is offered. Not surprisingly, for that reason many participants applauded the new restructuring effort, which encourages, and partially funds, participants without graduate degrees to attend degree-granting universities.

Supervisors, in general, support the program but have specific reservations. Nearly half, 45 percent, believe that DLAMP improves a participant's job performance, and nearly 67 percent believe that DLAMP improves a participant's promotion potential. But there are reservations. Many supervisors feel that DLAMP's time requirements are difficult to accommodate, and they also experience considerable difficulty in securing backfill replacements while their employees are completing rotational assignments.

Mentors tend to be very positive as well. Substantial majorities of mentors believe that DLAMP improves the promotion potential of participants and better prepares participants for leadership positions. The main reservation from mentors was a concern that some participants seem to view DLAMP too narrowly—as simply another “ticket to get punched” to ensure the next promotion, rather than as a broader experience that is about more than just getting the next job.

The box at right contains a sampling of quotations from personal interviews with participants, mentors, and managers.

### **Comparing DLAMP with Other Programs**

DLAMP is unique in the federal government's collection of training and development programs, primarily because of its distinctive combination of program elements. Few if any other training and development programs offer such a comprehensive blend of elements—rotational assignments, professional military education, and focused graduate education. Many other agency programs—such as OPM's executive courses or the development programs at NASA, the Department of Commerce, and other agencies—tend to focus more on leadership training.

DLAMP does not compare as favorably in two other areas. First, the program can be very lengthy. Many participants, particularly junior GS-13s, will

take as long as six years to complete DLAMP. This is a far longer time frame than the average federal agency training and development program. Second, the original DLAMP does not offer much in the way of leadership training, a fact that many participants have criticized.

## A Sampling of Interviewee Comments

### Participants

- “DLAMP is a way for me to get ahead in my career at DoD.”
- “The opportunity to go to ICAF was a big plus.”
- “DLAMP has given me a chance to see the big picture at DoD.”
- “I like the program, but it takes too much time to complete.”
- “DLAMP is great, but it does take a lot of time away from the office.”
- “The courses at Sturbridge are too time-consuming and don’t get me my master’s degree.”
- “I’m in DLAMP, but I’m not sure it will get me promoted.”
- “I like the new changes—getting scholarship funding for a master’s degree.”

### Mentors

- “I enjoy the opportunity to work with younger employees and help guide them.”
- “DLAMP is a great idea—we should have done something like this sooner.”
- “DLAMP makes sense, but I worry about it becoming just another ticket people have to get punched.”
- “I’m not sure we’ve done as good a job in ensuring that we are selecting the best and the brightest for the future.”

### Managers

- “I support DLAMP.”
- “I’ve had some DLAMP participants come through on rotational assignments and they have been great.”
- “It is a good program, but it takes people away from the office for a lot of time.”

## Refocusing for the Future

In December 2001, DoD announced that it will refocus DLAMP. The announcement praised DLAMP and endorsed its original mission:

Since its inception in 1997, DLAMP has served as the department’s framework for developing future civilian leaders. Through this program, over 1,300 senior civilians have gained knowledge and practical experience, in a joint environment, in a wide range of subjects and issues facing Defense leaders. Many have moved into key leadership positions throughout DoD; others continue to prepare for the challenges of the future.

But the announcement argued that it was time for a change in focus and implementation:

An assessment of DLAMP has been conducted and we believe that the original tenet of the program is valid—highly capable senior civilian executives with a joint perspective on managing the department’s workforce and programs. It is time, however, to refocus and streamline the program in line with the department’s new strategic direction for civilian human resources management. The refocused DLAMP will be more flexible, cost-effective, and efficient in meeting short- and long-term requirements for highly capable civilian leaders.

As this report is written, DoD is beginning to implement the restructured DLAMP, as summarized in Figure 7. The program will continue to have three major components: rotational assignments, professional military education, and graduate education. The DLAMP restructuring effort is being led by Ginger Groeber, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy. Groeber, a career civilian executive, is focusing on streamlining DLAMP to make it a more cost-effective program.

The key change is in the area of graduate education. Rather than mounting its own curriculum and hiring outside universities to teach at one or two central locations chosen by DoD, the new DLAMP

**Figure 7: Restructuring DLAMP**

Program Element	Changes
Civilian graduate education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon graduation from DLAMP, every participant is expected to have a master's degree in either a technical discipline or a management field.</li> <li>• Participants who already have a master's degree may decide, in consultation with their supervisors, to round out their academic portfolio with additional coursework.</li> <li>• Participants who do not have a master's degree may earn one through PME or an accredited university. To that end, 100 Master's Degree Fellowships will be awarded each year.</li> </ul>
Professional military education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing PME allocations at senior service schools and at NDU will continue.</li> <li>• The Center for DLAMP at NDU will modify its program to provide courses on national security strategy and leadership.</li> </ul>
Rotational assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint or cross-Component assignments of at least 12 months continue to be highly encouraged as part of the DLAMP experience.</li> <li>• DLAMP will no longer be able to provide funding assistance to facilitate rotational assignments.</li> <li>• DLAMP will provide backfill resources for 25 percent of participants who are away from their offices in long-term training.</li> </ul>

Source: Under Secretary of Defense Memorandum, December 21, 2001.

will encourage, and partially fund, participants to attend degree-granting universities in the geographic locale of their current duty assignments. To assist in the funding of this effort, DLAMP will establish a Master's Degree Fellowship and will award approximately 100 of these fellowships each year to participants.

This change addresses two problems that DLAMP participants had consistently complained about since the program's inception in 1997. The first problem was that the majority of DLAMP participants already had master's degrees but were nonetheless required to attend some of the graduate courses (at the very least, the senior capstone seminar). The second problem was that those participants without a master's degree could not attain one through DLAMP.

# Findings and Recommendations

DLAMP enjoys a positive reputation among all its key stakeholder groups, including the participants themselves as well as their mentors and supervisors. Participants, mentors, and supervisors all believe that DLAMP is important to career advancement. DLAMP compares favorably with other career development programs in the federal government.

As it enters its sixth year, DLAMP is clearly a program in transition. As we have seen, the current administration, while stating its strong support for the program and desire to carry it forward, is at the same time implementing major changes, mostly in the area of graduate education.

DLAMP is part of a larger trend in executive development, a field that has experienced rapid growth during the last 10 years, and not just in the government. Private firms, nonprofit organizations, and public-sector agencies alike are all encouraging—and, in many cases, requiring—their executives to participate in leadership development programs (Cozzetto 1996). Indeed, executive development programs have become a major component of the overall organizational strategic plan. And individual managers themselves have come to view such programs as one piece of a continuous learning strategy. Learning no longer ends with the attainment of a college degree or even a master's degree in a professional field such as business administration or public policy.

This final section of the report summarizes key findings and lessons learned based on the DLAMP

experience, includes recommendations for the future, and examines the “exportability” of the DLAMP model.

## Findings

1. DLAMP is a comprehensive and systematic program of career development. The combination of rotational assignments, graduate education, and professional military education makes DLAMP a unique program in the federal government. Few if any other federal agencies offer such a comprehensive program.
2. The management structure for DLAMP facilitates a joint, integrated, agency-wide approach to career development. Because the DLAMP Council comprises the department's senior leadership and is supported by a full-time DLAMP Office with corresponding offices in each DoD Component, there is a strong sense of shared ownership and investment in the DLAMP concept.
3. DLAMP, while centralized in its policy guidelines and overall conception, is decentralized in its execution. This provides for a light touch concerning program management and encourages the DoD Components to pursue the program as they see fit, but within broad guidelines.
4. The DLAMP participant population is broadly representative of the DoD target audience, but more effort is needed to ensure that the program focuses on the GS-13 pool, which represents the next leadership generation.

5. Key DLAMP stakeholders—participants, supervisors, and mentors—view the program very favorably, although there are reservations about specific program components, mostly in the area of graduate education and the length of time it takes to complete the program.
6. To address these reservations, DoD is now refocusing DLAMP for the future. The key change is to move from internally provided graduate courses to providing fellowships for participants to attend local degree-granting universities.
7. Another area of concern was the slow pace of designating DLAMP positions. In the view of some participants, this seems to indicate a lack of full commitment to the program. As this report goes to press, DoD has announced that it will no longer officially designate certain executive positions as DLAMP positions. A related issue is that participation in DLAMP does not guarantee subsequent promotion.

## Lessons Learned and Recommendations

What criteria should be used to evaluate the success of DLAMP to date? To identify lessons learned and formulate recommendations, we developed the following evaluative criteria by examining the original purposes of DLAMP.<sup>18</sup>

- First, is DLAMP giving its participants a “solid grasp of national security issues”?
- Second, does DLAMP provide participants the “depth and breadth of education and experience [necessary] to meet increasingly difficult challenges”?
- Third, does DLAMP establish a “systematic approach to developing tomorrow’s leaders”?

This section specifically addresses these three questions and provides a broader consideration of lessons learned as well as corresponding recommendations.

### Does DLAMP give its participants a “solid grasp of national security issues”?

In fact, DLAMP does do this in each of its major program components. First, the civilian graduate education curriculum has provided coursework that

explicitly addresses national security issues, including *Political and Legal Influences on National Defense Policy* and *National Security Policy and Intelligence*. Second, through their participation in the PME component of the program, DLAMP participants study alongside senior military officers in programs designed to focus on key defense management and policy issues. And finally, to some extent, the rotational assignment also provides participants additional exposure to national security issues by giving them an opportunity to work on defense management issues from a new organizational perspective.

### Does DLAMP provide participants the “depth and breadth of education and experience [necessary] to meet increasingly difficult challenges”?

The answer here is mixed—not a definite yes, but not a definite no. With regard to education, DLAMP certainly does provide a depth and breadth of resources. Participants have the opportunity for civilian graduate education (including, under the refocused program, scholarships for master’s degrees) as well as professional military education at respected DoD institutions.

With regard to experience, however, it is less clear whether DLAMP is successful. There is a rotational assignment piece, but even under the old system, where some funding was available for backfills, most DLAMP participants had not completed, much less begun, their rotational assignments. Given the overall length of the program, many participants—and their supervisors—are reluctant to spend even more time away from their home office doing rotational assignments. Given this reality, DLAMP for most participants is largely based on education and training, not experience in actual assignments.

### Does DLAMP establish a “systematic approach to developing tomorrow’s leaders”?

The answer here is also mixed. On the one hand, it is clear that DLAMP is systematic. The program is well organized, well managed, and rigorous, and the published guidelines provided to participants, managers, mentors, and other program stakeholders are clear and comprehensive.

But on the other hand, DLAMP seems to have more of an implicit—not explicit—focus on leadership. It

is implicit because, other than some of the PME curricula and the new School for National Security Executive Education, there is little DLAMP coursework primarily devoted to discussing and instilling the characteristics of personal leadership. Granted, leadership is a difficult and elusive concept to pin down, and it is not at all clear how “teachable” a concept it is, but it must be noted that other career development programs do incorporate a more explicit focus on leadership than DLAMP. At the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia, for example, federal managers take courses on leadership, are assigned leadership coaches, use the Myers-Briggs test instrument as a way of gauging their leadership styles, and are given the opportunity to lead in mock management scenarios.

Here are lessons learned from the DLAMP experience and recommendations for addressing these issues.

#### **Lesson Learned 1:**

While the “light touch” of DLAMP administration and management has facilitated the participation of the DoD Components and helped build trust, there are certain aspects of program administration that should be more proactively managed. Specifically, the placement of DLAMP graduates should be proactively managed.

**Recommendation 1:** As this report goes to press, DoD has announced that it will no longer identify certain executive positions as DLAMP positions. A principal problem with this approach was finding a way to identify positions without creating the impression that these positions would be open only to DLAMP graduates, a perception that runs counter to established personnel policy. Nonetheless, the DLAMP Office should work with the DoD Components to achieve a department-wide agreement on how DLAMP graduates can be directed toward executive management positions as they leave the program.

#### **Lesson Learned 2:**

The graduate education element of DLAMP is useful and valuable but should be revised to take into account the desire of certain participants to attain a graduate degree and the fact that many participants

already have higher degrees. DoD is now taking steps to address this issue.

**Recommendation 2:** DoD should follow through on its current refocusing effort to encourage (and fund) participants to attend local degree-granting colleges and universities. The establishment of Master’s Degree Fellowships is a good idea and should be expanded. Finally, DoD should consider retaining the senior capstone seminar as an in-house course that all DLAMP participants should take, regardless of their degree status.

#### **Lesson Learned 3:**

While the program was designed to be rigorous and comprehensive, it takes far too long to complete. Depending on the credentials of the participant when he or she enters DLAMP, it can take as long as six years to complete. This is an enormous commitment of time and represents a not-insignificant portion of one’s career.

**Recommendation 3:** As part of the current refocusing effort, DoD should reexamine the DLAMP schedule. Eliminating the graduate curriculum at Sturbridge will address this issue in part, but even under a new approach, without further streamlining, the program could still be too lengthy.

#### **Lesson Learned 4:**

DLAMP’s approach to leadership is not aggressive and should be strengthened. As discussed in this report, the DLAMP approach to leadership is more implicit than explicit. That is, participants are expected to distill the characteristics of good leadership from the three main program components, even though none of these elements has leadership as its main focus.

**Recommendation 4:** DoD should incorporate an explicit leadership component into DLAMP. This can be done in a number of ways, including requiring participation in leadership seminars or professional certificate programs on leadership; requiring that rotational assignments include a leadership component; and/or incorporating a more rigorous self-assessment component that engages participants in an honest and thorough examination of their own

leadership attributes and deficiencies. The redesignation of the Center for DLAMP into the new School for National Security Executive Education is a good step in this direction.

**Lesson Learned 5:**

Initially, the program allowed too many higher-grade individuals (particularly those at the GS-15 level) to enter DLAMP, thus shortchanging the very population the program is intended to serve. The program must focus its energies on the GS-13 and GS-14 population (particularly the GS-13s) as the cohort representing the next generation of executives.

**Recommendation 5:** Reassess participant selection procedures to ensure that GS-13s and GS-14s are not underrepresented. Ensure that supervisor and DoD Component board nominations are focused on this critical cohort and that managers are not nominating GS-15s who already hold senior positions and/or are within two to three years of retirement eligibility.

**Lesson Learned 6:**

While the establishment of DLAMP was not intended, at least initially, to supplant existing DoD training and development programs, further integration should be actively explored. If DoD is serious about creating one department-wide approach to career development, then it must achieve better integration among its various training and development programs.

**Recommendation 6:** The DLAMP Office should work with the DoD Components to conduct a review of all existing DoD training and development programs, with the objective being to keep DoD Component programs focused on specific organizational and occupational needs while DLAMP serves as the principal department-wide leadership development program.

**Lesson Learned 7:**

Perhaps the major lesson learned at this stage of the program's life is that the mere creation of a new training and development program is not enough to transform the organizational approach to leadership development. The establishment of DLAMP has been a truly innovative and valuable development and has benefited thousands of DoD employees,

and it is an achievement of which DoD can be proud. But real change will ultimately mean addressing the fundamental underlying system of human resources management. As this report has shown, the founders of DLAMP were interested in mirroring the military personnel management system, and yet DLAMP has picked only bits and pieces from this model without fully inculcating a new way of doing business.

**Recommendation 7:** DoD should work with OPM and other federal agencies to conduct a review of the career development process. Despite the substantial investment in training and development opportunities made by DoD, OPM, and other agencies, the basic system for career progression in the federal government has not changed. The existing system still does not build in progressively senior assignments in different offices and locations, nor does it centralize personnel management in such a way as to ensure that there is an agency-wide system for rotating employees in and out of new assignments. One end-state to aim for is a two-track system that permits employees to choose between a local track—where security and stability are paramount but promotion potential is severely limited—and a leadership track—where the emphasis is on: 1) holding successively more responsible assignments, 2) moving from job to job (and, yes, from city to city), 3) obtaining occupation-specific training and career-enhancing education as part of the defined career path, and 4) achieving a series of challenging positions within the upper reaches of the federal bureaucracy.

**Lesson Learned 8:**

Currently, DLAMP does not systematically incorporate distance learning into its overall approach. This severely limits the amount of education and training content that can be provided to DLAMP participants, many of whom are located at DoD facilities all over the United States and around the world.

**Recommendation 8:** As part of the ongoing restructuring of DLAMP, DoD should consider adding a distance learning component to DLAMP. This component could be particularly useful for continuous learning and refresher

coursework, even after participants graduate from DLAMP and move forward in their careers.

## Exporting the DLAMP Model

Is the DLAMP model exportable beyond the Defense Department to other federal agencies? The short answer is yes. Most other federal agencies already incorporate some level of leadership and management training into their overall human resources strategy. Indeed, DoD built DLAMP upon the foundation of training programs that already existed in the various Components.

Other federal agencies could follow this lead. In particular, this might be important for other federal cabinet departments that are large and decentralized, such as Justice, Veterans Affairs, and Treasury. In such large departments, training (and many other) activities get delegated down to the agency and bureau level. The result is often an uneven approach to training and development.

A key innovation from the DLAMP experience is the development of a department-wide focus on training and development that at once transcends individual agency efforts (e.g., at the Army or Navy level) but also retains some level of individual Component-level training so that DoD Components can tailor training and development solutions as appropriate. By establishing a DLAMP Council consisting of senior leaders from all DoD Components, Defense ensured that its new career development program would be conducted jointly.

In summary, the DLAMP model is exportable, and other federal agencies should consider adopting it. In particular, there are two key attributes that deserve particular attention. First is the department-wide focus that has been a hallmark of DLAMP. Second is the systematic approach that combines general graduate education, specialized professional military education, rotational assignments, and Component-level training to produce an integrated, comprehensive approach to career development.

# Endnotes

1. PME is a comprehensive program for senior military and civilian leaders that focuses on developing national security strategy and policy. There are several PME institutions within DoD, including the National Defense University and the War Colleges of the military services.

2. Discussed in the body of this report, the Commission on Roles and Missions was chartered by Congress in 1994 to conduct an in-depth review of the U.S. military in the post-Cold War era.

3. In part, this was prompted by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols military reform legislation (more about this in a subsequent section).

4. “DoD Components” refers to the major sub-departments and agencies of the Department of Defense. Examples include the military departments (e.g., the Department of the Army), defense agencies (e.g., the Defense Logistics Agency), and major staff organizations (e.g., the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff).

5. There are different pay schedules in the federal service, but most employees are covered under the so-called General Schedule (GS), which includes 15 grades in ascending seniority from GS-1 to GS-15.

6. This number is based on the latest available DoD personnel data.

7. The Office of Personnel Management Training Handbook summarizes the history of government training authorities. See [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov).

8. This number is an estimate based on FY 2000 budget data. Of course, in addition to civilian employees, DoD employs approximately 1.4 million active duty military personnel. Another 864,000 personnel make up the reserve component of the military. See DoD Annual Report to Congress, 2001.

9. However, there may well be increases in security-related agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the proposed Department of Homeland Security.

10. The actual numbers are 1,107,400 (1989); 1,048,700 (1991); 984,100 (1993); 865,200 (1995); 798,800 (1997); 724,400 (1999); 698,300 (2000).

11. There is another, “unofficial” element—DoD Component and occupation-specific courses already offered throughout DoD. It is important to remember that the establishment of DLAMP did not eliminate these preexisting programs.

12. As of FY 2000. This number is likely to change under the current refocusing effort.

13. This has been the graduate education requirement from program inception until 2002. Now, as discussed later in this report, DoD is restructuring DLAMP to eliminate the internal graduate program offered primarily at the Sturbridge, Massachusetts, facility and instead offer scholarships to participants who do not already possess master’s degrees to obtain degrees through either PME or accredited universities.

14. “Adverse suitability determination” means that an employee has engaged in one or more prohibited behaviors (such as being convicted of a criminal penalty), either in his or her current position or in prior jobs.

15. Defined as maintaining high standards of personal integrity while enrolled in any DLAMP developmental activity.

16. Subject to the review and approval of the DLAMP Office.

17. The data in this section and the following section, Impressions of Key Stakeholders, come from various sources, including author interviews with managers and participants, workforce surveys conducted by the DoD Components and on behalf of the DLAMP Council,

and DLAMP Council briefing papers and handouts.  
Please note that the data are current as of FY 2000.

18. The original purposes are spelled out in the enabling DoD Directive as well as in the DLAMP Participant Handbook.

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