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DEOMI will always be needed!

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A former DEOMI Graduate and Class President from EOAC 18-1, spent some time serving as the Guest Speaker for Equal Opportunity Advisor Reserve Component Course 19CD held here Oct., 4, 2019.

They listened.

Between his studio interview and directly speaking to the students in the DEOMI Auditorium, SGM Sylvester

Ishmael, left, Army Reserve Equal Opportunity Sergeant Major, United States Army Reserve Command, wasted little time expanding on the importance of Equal Opportunity Advisors and the impact they have on the readiness of the people in the Department of Defense.

“I’ve often said that if we don’t get after any discrimination of our service members in the Department of

Defense, it is a direct effect toward the readiness of that organization,” he said.

“Soldiers will not trust their leaders if they feel like they have been discriminated against ... they will not trust the command,” he said emphatically.



“They will not have full faith and confidence in the mission. It becomes a true trust factor and can crack the foundation of an organization,” he said.

Speaking directly to the soon-to-be Equal Opportunity professionals, he foot-stomped there was one characteristic he sees in an effective EO program.

“The most common characteristic I have seen from very successful EO professionals shouldn’t be a surprise – they are the ones who always make themselves available. They are there when the commander needs them, everywhere the soldiers are, everywhere the civilians are,” he said. One thing is certain ... they are NOT there just to receive complaints, or do the Command Climate Assessment or DEOCS.

“They do everything they can to make themselves accessible and always doing what we try to teach them -- and that’s to listen,” he said with emphasis.

He was then asked when a leader needs to form a team to finish a project or solve a problem, what are some different aspects of diversity that should be considered—other than what we look like?

“Now that’s a great question,” he said, “and I have another leadership philosophy that goes with diversity, and not just diversity concerning a person’s physical characteristics, and that’s diversity of thought. It’s freedom of expression, in the most professional manner of course because we are in the military.”

“So that diversity of thought, being able to exchange new ideas openly, also assists in all of us accomplishing our mission” he said.

Later, he was asked if there was anything he wanted to say to the staff, faculty – and particularly to all the joint-service civilian and military students that have studied here (more than 51,000 since 1971).

“DEOMI is an outstanding institution ... outstanding ...I can’t say that enough,” he said.

“The Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airman, Coast Guard personnel and civilian staff here are top notch. All of the students, and the graduates who have come through this great institution, have all become

better service members ...better people ... since they’ve come through here,” he said.

“For me, this is personal, I greatly appreciate this Institute. DEOMI will always be needed. Just like a fingerprint we are all different,” he added.

And with that, these students here now – and in the future will continue to impart that wisdom they received from the great staff and leadership here at DEOMI in their day-to-day jobs as Equal Opportunity Professionals,” he said.

