

# DEOMI NEWSLETTER

DEFENSE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

4TH QUARTER, 2023







# GREETINGS TEAM

Photo: Michael Marks

**T**his past August 20 marked my two-year mark as DEOMI's 18th Commandant. WOW! What an amazing experience to serve with and alongside such a professional group of military and civilian teammates, both internally and throughout the DoD and other federal agencies. Each and every one of you are truly family to me.

As I shared in my initial "Greetings" as Commandant, everyone here at DEOMI is a valued team member, and we must always perform every task with integrity and accountability, always maintain readiness and commit all efforts to our force-multiplying mission. The Department of Defense and our nation require it, our leaders depend on it, and our forces demand it.

All of you, the entire DEOMI Family, hit it out of the park and surpassed my high expectations. It is an honor and privilege to carry out DEOMI's mission with our phenomenal team that trains our DoD subject matter experts to identify and help correct human relations issues, be the force multipliers for positive change and reinforce human dignity and respect.

From the day I arrived onboard DEOMI, I have felt the most respected, valued, and equal. This is a true testament of the DEOMI, DMOC, DHRA, and OUSD (P&R) teams who reinforce that everybody has equal opportunities, regardless of our physical and cultural differences.

So, since this is my final "Greetings" before DEOMI's Change of Leadership Ceremony and my retirement from active duty, December 1, 2023, I want to share that I am truly indebted to you, the DEOMI Family, our partners and stakeholders, for your significant roles in creating an environment of integrity and inspiration, where we embrace the opportunity to learn and grow, and continually strive towards excellence.

Most importantly, please always remember that we do not just make a living – we truly make a difference!

I genuinely thank you and your families for your selfless sacrifices, noble devotion, and duty to our great nation.

*-U.S. Navy Capt. Delmy Robinson, DEOMI Commandant*



# DEPUTY TO THE COMMANDANT

Dr. Dan McDonald

Photo: Michael Marks



As I begin my tenure as Deputy to the Commandant / Executive Director, I am truly honored, humbled, and thankful to have been afforded the opportunity to continue to serve on the DEOMI team. For the past 18 years as DEOMI's Research Director, it is just remarkable, the dedication to service I have and continue to witness from our DEOMI team, that makes such a difference in the lives of the people and all organizations we serve.

DEOMI's success has been driven by implementing cutting edge research and by providing consultation and just-in-time field support to our leaders to ensure they are equipped to help better

embrace the full potential of their diverse teams.

The DEOMI team has once again been called upon to assume an even greater role in our pursuit of an ever increasingly effective, agile, and adaptive force. DEOMI's transition as the Department of Defense's Center of Excellence takes us to a new level as the Department's authority on all matters related to human relations.

Our updated human relations focus is centered around four programmatic domains: Military Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Inclusion, Civilian Equal Employment Opportunity, and Integrated Prevention. These changes are imperative to taking

our Institute to the next level.

Lots of change, and it's an exciting time at DEOMI. But in all of this, many key things remain the same. Our incredible people, our spirit, our commitment, our belief in the transformative power of collaboration to help make the world a better place. It's why I come to work inspired every day. It's why we've evolved before, and why we're evolving now. Because we're not done.

Thank you for your devoted support of our mission, and we will continue to work toward delivering innovative human relations solutions and outstanding service today and into the future.



# DACODAI

## VISIT

Photos: Michael Marks

Over a two-day visit, DEOMI was honored to host leaders from the Defense Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (DACODAI). Composed of prominent civilian leaders appointed by the Secretary of Defense, DACODAI provides independent advice and recommendations on matters and policies relating to improve the racial/ethnic diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity in the Armed Forces of the United States. DACODAI gathers information from multiple sources, to include briefings and written responses from Defense Department, service-level military representatives, and subject matter experts. In addition, the committee collects qualitative data from focus groups and interactions with service members during installation visits. To evenly distribute the research, the committee is structured into three subcommittees: (1) Racial/Ethnic Diversity; (2) Racial/Ethnic Inclusion and (3) Racial/Ethnic Equal Opportunity and Treatment. Based upon the data collected and analyzed, the committee submits recommendations and continuing concerns to the Secretary of Defense.





# SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS EXPECTED FOR MILITARY EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

*ODEI Makes Strides to Standardize MEO Across the Services*

The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) hosted a workshop, Aug. 14-18, where key leaders within the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) and the Diversity Management Operations Center (DMOC) discussed the future of the Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Program and other Department of Defense (DoD) programs they facilitate.

The workshop built upon a previous workshop held in July, when ODEI and DMOC leaders came together to analyze collected data and identify ways to standardize the MEO program across the Services and throughout the entire DoD enterprise.

In this workshop, ODEI and DMOC leaders also discussed what new roles and responsibilities ODEI will assume, because of their merger at the end of this fiscal year.

"We are going through an evolution right now," said Dr. Rachel Castellon, policy director for DoD MEO at ODEI.

Castellon stated synergy was created between ODEI and DMOC, when DMOC stood up in 2018, but it also created some bifurcation and confusion because the two led separate charges—DMOC managed operations and ODEI managed policies.

"That will soon be a thing of the past," said Castellon. "As we work towards reuniting these efforts."

"We are going to have one organization—ODEI—that will maintain the policy arm and will now take on the operations piece. We are still working out the details and are very excited to be able to have a greater impact for our Service members," said Castellon.

On the topic of greater impact, Castellon said one of ODEI's big areas of concern was with the MEO program and the current, "lack of standardization amongst the Services."

"The Air Force has a career field of MEO professionals. They are the only one, and the other Services are situated differently," said Castellon. "Just that alone creates a lot of variation amongst the Services," she added.

"We're concerned about standardization of training, ensuring

that all service members are receiving the military equal opportunity message that the department intends for them to have," said Castellon.

According to Castellon, ODEI is currently developing an online case management system that enables Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA) to process complaints, to include reports of prohibited discrimination, hazing, bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment.

"The case management system will be a game-changer for us. Up to this point, we haven't had a standardized way of obtaining complaint data and we have congressional requirements to submit that information. By providing a platform that every Service can use, that again provides us with the standardization that we need. And ODEI intends to fund this platform for authorized users throughout the DoD enterprise," shared Castellon.

She added that DEOMI is an integral part of the process because it is the Center of Excellence for all things MEO, and it only makes sense to leverage DEOMI's capabilities to train EOAs on how to utilize the new platform.

"We want to provide [EOAs] with the absolute best foundational training and educational training that they need to do their jobs well, because that will give them the confidence and self-assurance that they are handling their jobs well and representing military equal opportunity," said Castellon.







## DEOMI LEVERAGES SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH TO DESIGN RAPID ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR EO PRACTITIONER

The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute was recently awarded a grant through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program to help develop and support future, innovative human-relations training.

The SBIR program is a highly competitive program that encourage domestic small businesses to engage in federal research/research and development (R&D) with the potential for commercialization. The program's mission is to support scientific excellence and technological innovation through the investment of federal research funds in critical American priorities to build a

strong national economy.

Through a competitive awards-based program, SBIR enable small businesses to explore their technological potential and provide the incentive to profit from its commercialization. By including qualified small businesses in the nation's R&D arena, high-tech innovation is stimulated, and the United States gains entrepreneurial spirit as it meets its specific research and development needs.

The benefits of the program include: 1) it's a safe way to try out R&D and improved modernization decisions;

2) you leverage budgeted dollars; 3) small businesses are often more cost effective and

innovative than large primes (i.e., agile, niche); 4) it allows a second source/method to augment ongoing programs (risk management); 5) it aligns with the National Defense Strategy and DoD's mandate to utilize innovation in contracting; and 6) it shortens the acquisition timeline.





DEOMI's goal is to develop a methodological approach to utilize modular simulation learning to create realistic synthetic representations of adverse human relations issues for use in training Equal Opportunity (EO) practitioners to appropriately respond to with increased proficiency.

***“Modernization of DEOMI's education and training is necessary to ensure that future EO practitioners are fully equipped with the necessary tools and skills to address and prevent complex human relations issues,”***

shared Navy Lt. Jayson Rhoton, a DEOMI researcher and co-submitter of the SBIR package. “Recent advances in simulation learning will help fill the gap in current education and training approaches. The learner can progress at a pace that encourages mastery over completion. This is

accomplished using realistic synthetic representations of adverse human relations events which promote creativity in the learner to develop new solutions; think critically (i.e., reflection); formulate one or more solutions; establish or recall strategies to implement the solution(s); discover new possible solutions; explain the problem (i.e., understanding); and provide a realistic and actionable solution (i.e., evaluation).”

Simulation learning is an effective learning approach as it increases knowledge structuring for human relations topics, and it also provides a tailored and adaptive approach to problem-solving skill development. It also increases confidence and knowledge, skills, and abilities by providing a training environment on how to communicate conversations topics. For example, fear of reprisal for addressing or confronting problematic behaviors (e.g., toxic leadership). Simulation learning would

provide a learning environment wherein the learner is able to practice the skills.

Additionally, DEOMI-offered simulation learning would provide an opportunity for EO students to have a grounded, but safe, discussion. In the current training environment in a group setting, covering sensitive topics (e.g., sexual harassment, suicide prevention, SAPR, etc.) may sometimes cause discomfort and reduce participation in the discussion, interrupting the learning process.

Ultimately, simulation training offers the DoD an ability to train and educate a broader audience in a variety of locations, with potentially fewer human resources. It leverages already-funded technologies in development by other research organizations, saves millions of dollars, advances the methods currently utilized in training and education in human relations domain, and provides readily accessible and realistic refresher training for EO practitioners.





# DEOMI Workshop Highlights

## Mentorship Benefits

Story/photo by: DEOMI PAO



DEOMI held a mentorship workshop July 5-6, to highlight the benefits and consequences associated with mentorship to all its staff and faculty members. The workshop also served as a platform to formalize DEOMI's mentorship program.

Leading the workshop was DEOMI Academic Standards and Evaluations (ASE) Training Specialist, Fikisha Marée, who served as a military instructor/facilitator at the institute in 2016 until she retired from the U.S. Army in 2021.

Marée said DEOMI's mentorship program was an informal process within the Education and Training Directorate when she first arrived but was formalized in 2018 to better support the onboarding of new instructors/facilitators and enable them to effectively perform their duties. However, the mentorship program reverted to an informal process due to COVID-19 in 2020.

Marée said she returned to DEOMI as government civilian employee in April 2023, a time when the ASE department, "was revitalizing the formal mentorship program."

***"The structure of DEOMI's formal mentorship program allowed me to effectively integrate into the organization and my department," said Marée.***

The workshop is part of DEOMI's quarterly in-service training for instructors and has been an ongoing and integral part of the institute's faculty development program, according to DEOMI Senior Training Specialist Tim Glines.

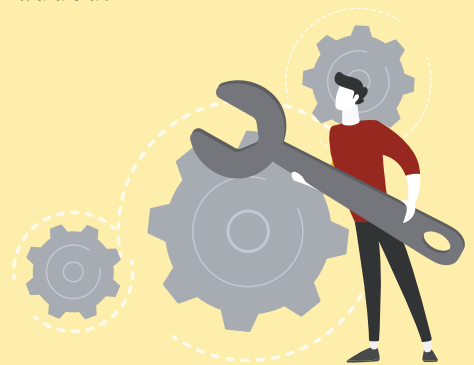
"Our faculty development program ... offers our instructors additional training on relevant topics outside of the normal instructor training cycle," said Glines, who added that while the mentorship workshop traditionally catered to instructors, the decision to open the program to all staff and faculty members broaden the applicability of mentorship across the institute.

As the Department of Defense's premiere Center of Excellence (CoE) for Military Equal opportunity, Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Prevention, the institute employs top-performing civilian, active-duty and reserve military, and contract personnel from a wide range of career fields

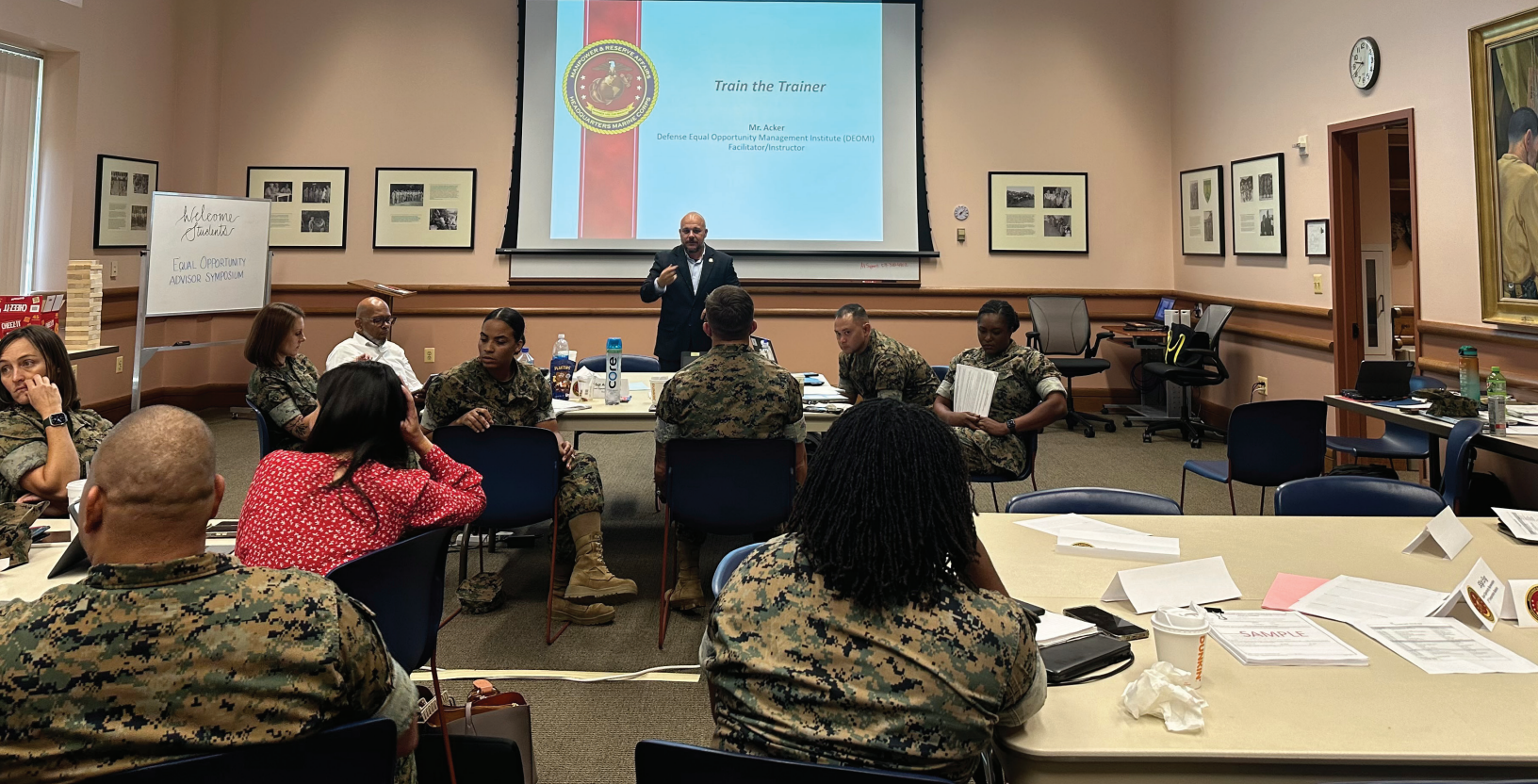
to support its DoD, Services, and partnering organizations. By proxy, these individuals provide DEOMI with organic access to a wealth of knowledge and experience.

***"The purpose of a mentorship program is to facilitate the transfer of technical and professional knowledge and expertise; recognize skills and competencies needed for success; and find developmental opportunities needed to develop those skills," said Glines.***

"A strong and formal mentorship program is essential to the development of our faculty," he added.







## DEOMI Expert Shares Knowledge at USMC EOA SYMPOSIUM

Story by: DEOMI PAO

Mathew Acker, an instructional systems specialist the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), facilitated a Complaint Intake Interview class and a Train-the-Trainer class during the U.S. Marine Corps Annual Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) Symposium, held August 23-25, 2023, at the Gray Research Center in Quantico, Virginia.

DEOMI offers a variety of programs to include in-resident, distributed learning, and mobile training teams. The Institute designs each program, course, and seminar to deliver hands-on application of proven theories and techniques to meet the requirements of specific target audiences.

"The Complaint Intake Interviews is a class on basics of conducting an initial interview with individuals reporting allegations of prohibited activities and/or conduct," said Acker. "The Train-the-Trainer class focused on the importance of delivering approved training plans that have been developed for Equal Opportunity Advisors to effectively educate service members assigned to Marine Corps units," he added.

Acker said the classes impact the U.S. Marine Corps because they, "reenforced the importance to EOAs on providing commanders with appropriate recommendations on how to best proceed with an allegation or report."

Acker stated that his background and expertise, as a former Marine EOA and DEOMI EOA instructor/facilitator, made him the ideal expert to represent DEOMI on these topics at the symposium; and, that he was eager to instruct the classes because the majority of attendees were former students of his.

"It was an honor being asked to be a guest speaker at the Marine Corps EOA Symposium. It actually provided me with sense of closure of my 20-year Marine Corps career while allowing me to begin a new chapter as a DoD Civilian employee," said Acker.

"The opportunity to speak to over 30 EOAs that I have had the privilege to train during the EOA Course Marine Corps Service Specific Training is invaluable. I hope to get more opportunities to do it again in the future," added Acker.



# Workforce Recruitment Program:

## A Force Multiplier for DEOMI & DoD

Story by: DEOMI PAO

In the short span of two years, the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute has garnered a huge return on personnel investment through the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP).

Managed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy and the U.S. Department of Defense's Diversity Management Operations Center, the WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private-sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to demonstrate their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs. Candidates must also be U.S. citizens who are eligible for the federal Schedule A Hiring Authority.

***"The Workforce Recruitment Program has been a huge success by providing DEOMI a phenomenal pool of talent with the right skills at the right time." shared U.S. Air Force Capt. Juan Ayala, DEOMI's WRP coordinator. "To date, we've been very fortunate to hire several full-time top performers. It's truly and win, win!"***

For many individuals, the WRP serves as a first step to a long-term federal career. In this way, the WRP is a tool that can help federal agencies in meeting the goals of [Executive Order 14035](#), Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce.

***"I joined WRP in Jan. 2022 and transitioned to a permanent status in Nov. 2022,"***

stated Melissa Wells, a DEOMI instructional systems specialist.

***"The WRP program offered me a seamless transition from healthcare/higher education to government service. My time as WRP was a great way to display my skills and dedication to build trust with the DEOMI team. Although I could not continue my career of 18 years due to a disability, the WRP program gave me the opportunity to use my new skills learned in my master's degree program, working remotely."***

Candidates apply to the WRP each fall through participating campuses managed by a School Coordinator and can receive elective informational interviews with federal employees who serve as volunteer recruiters. Candidates represent all majors and range from college freshmen to graduate- and law-school students. Information from candidates is compiled in a searchable database that is available through this website to employers.

For current and future WRP candidates, Wells also shared, "When completing your WRP application, be sure to include every skill you can do competently. While you can apply for jobs which meet your interests, you never know when a job (where you least expect it) will search the

database for your skill set and reach out to you. When hired as WRP, I recommend being humble, willing to learn, and find ways to connect with your team especially when remote."

WRP is recognized by the Office of Personnel Management as a model strategy in its guidance to federal agencies regarding the recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities. Since the program's expansion in 1995, thousands of students and recent graduates have received temporary and permanent employment opportunities through the WRP.



**Students  
Register Now!**

Registration deadline: October 12, 2023

### Registration Notice

**New and returning students and recent graduates with disabilities:** Please click "Students Register Now" to register with WRP for fall 2023 applications and wait for an approval email from WRP before creating or signing in with a Login.gov account.

**Visit  
Us On**

**You Tube**



# Happy Birthday

Happy Birthday United States Coast Guard. For the past 233 years, the men and women of the Coast Guard have been diligently safeguarding coasts and waterways at home and abroad. The Coast Guard has proudly participated in every major conflict our nation has faced, and they continue to patrol the waterways, keeping our citizens and seafarers safe. Today, they perform missions supporting the homeland, including securing America's ports, waterways, and coasts; maritime law enforcement; and defense readiness. On an international level, the Coast Guard supports search and rescue, environmental protection, and marine safety operations.



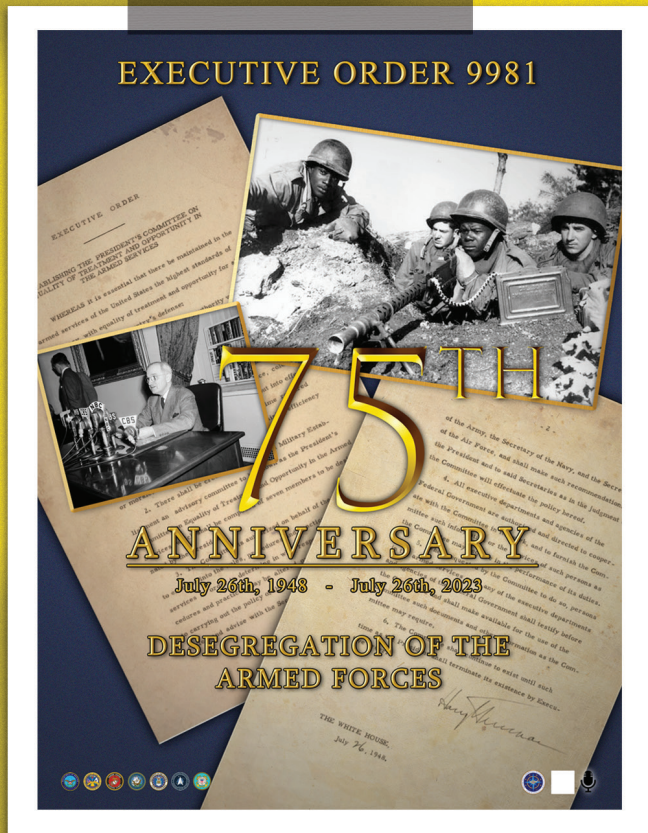
Happy Birthday United States Air Force. Since 18 September 1947, the United States Air Force has controlled the skies and projected airpower throughout the globe in defense of the United States and our allies. Professionalism, courage, and cutting-edge innovation have defined the men and women of the Air Force in combat, deterrence, and humanitarian assistance throughout its history. As you celebrate 76 years of excellence as an independent service, all of us honor your sacrifices and are proud to stand with you in service to the Nation. America depends on our remarkable Total Force of Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, and Civilian Airmen who have never failed to answer our Nation's call. We thank you and your family for your service, sacrifice, and commitment to the defense of our Nation. Today and every day, we salute you! Aim high – fly, fight, and win!





# SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

- DESEGREGATION OF THE ARMED FORCES,
- WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY
- HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH



CLICK HERE TO BE DIRECTED