

2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER, 2024















### **GREETINGS TEAM**

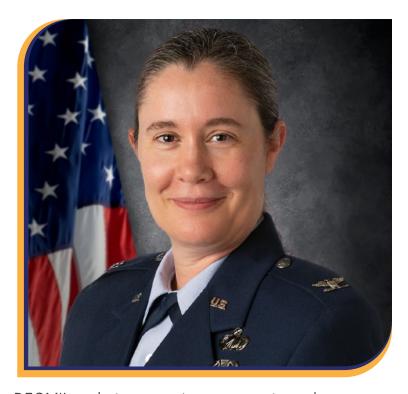
Dear DEOMI Team, Colleagues, Partners, and Stakeholders,

Welcome to the latest issue of the DEOMI Center of Excellence Newsletter! As we reflect on the second and third quarters of this year, we are thrilled to share highlights from a diverse array of events that took place throughout our Institute.

#### In This Issue:

- Board of Advisors (BOA) Meeting:
   We engaged in insightful discussions with our
   esteemed advisors, exploring innovative
   approaches to foster a culture of excellence.
- DEOMI's 53rd Anniversary:
   Celebrating our rich history, we honored our roots as the Defense Race Relations Institute, recognizing the transformative journey we've undertaken since 1971.
- IDEA Guest Speaker Series:
   Thought-provoking talks inspired us to embrace a culture of wellness, enhancing team dynamics and promoting healthy work-life balance habits.
- DEOMI's Summer Internship Program: During the summer months, cadets from West Point and the Air Force Academy, as well as STEM students from the Office of Naval Research, collaborated with DEOMI's Applied Science & Analytic Team on research, analyzed data, and produced reports on various topics, such as fostering a culture of excellence and the impacts of hazing.
- VIP Visits: Distinguished guests graced our halls, providing fresh perspectives and reinforcing our commitment to excellence.
- Community Outreach Engagements: We actively connected with local communities, amplifying our impact beyond our walls.

These highlights underscore the profound influence we wield within our halls, local communities, and partner organizations. Our expertise spans multiple platforms and programs, all aligned with our mission: to foster cultures of excellence through learning, research, and integrated knowledge management to optimize Total Force readiness.



DEOMI's enduring commitment to equity and respect remains unwavering. We stand as a testament to the power of unity, nurturing crosscultural understanding. Our modern, interactive curriculum and instruction, accredited by the Council on Occupational Education, equips us to address contemporary challenges head-on.

To the DEOMI team, your dedication fuels our success. Whether training, educating, researching, or inspiring the next generation of MEO/EEO practitioners, your contributions matter. Thank you for creating an environment of integrity and inspiration, where growth and excellence thrive.

As we look ahead, we embrace the opportunities before us. I am confident that we will continue to put forth our best efforts, knowing that our work has meaning, purpose, and positive impacts to our great Nation.

To you and your families, thank you for your selfless sacrifices and noble devotion. Together, we can shape a brighter future.

Warm regards,

U.S. Air Force Col. Michelle Nash DEOMI Commandant

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## **EVENTS**

#### **DEOMI Visits UCF's Simulation Labs**



On June 17th, DEOMI's leadership and research team visited the University of Central Florida (UCF), Human Factors and Cognition (HFC), Psychology department to meet with leading experts researching human performance through the utilization of simulation technology. HFC Graduate Director, Dr. Mustapha Mouloua, graciously introduced DEOMI to four simulation lab spaces, currently being used in his department.

The experience enriched DEOMI's understanding of existing simulation technology, how the technology relates to DEOMI's research efforts, and its applicability as a future mode of training and education at DEOMI.





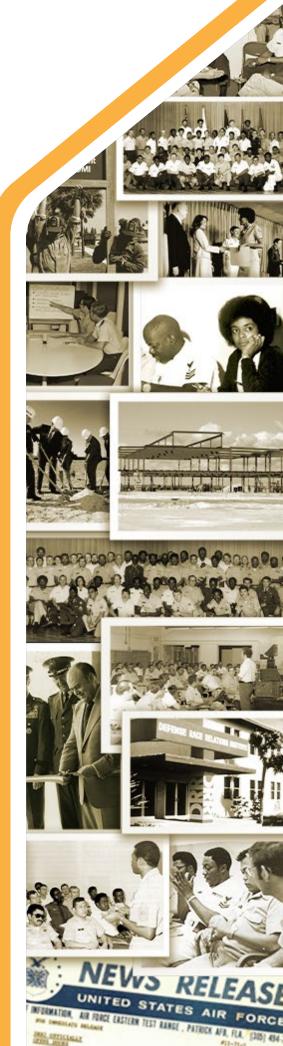
On June 24th, we celebrated our 53rd Anniversary, and what an amazing celebration it turned out to be! This year, DEOMI Commandant U.S. Air Force Col. Michelle Nash, invited several former faculty members and alumni to join in the celebration.



Among our special guests were Eugene Johnson, one of the original Defense Race Relations Institute (DRRI) faculty members in 1971, and Robert Watts, former DEOMI Commandant from 2001-2005. It was truly inspirational to have them celebrate this occasion with us.

Their stories are our history, and what better way to experience that history than from those who lived it! Throughout the month of July we highlighted not only those who attended our anniversary, but also many more former faculty members and alumni who were unable to attend, as part of our #DEOMI4Life social media campaign. This campaign honors those who helped DEOMI become the DoD's premiere Center of Excellence for Human Relations research, training, and education. Special thanks to everyone who helped make this year's anniversary one to remember!





## KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY CLEAN

#### **Adopt-A-Road & Beach Cleanup**



On Feb. 24th, DEOMI held two simultaneous cleanups as part of our ongoing community outreach program. One cleanup was held at DEOMI's adopted road, where several volunteer staff members and their families collected six large bags of debris. DEOMI has consistently kept this road clean since April 2022, removing over 700 pounds of debris in that time. The other cleanup was held at Hightower Beach, not far from Patrick Space Force Base. There volunteer students from our Equal Opportunity Advisors Course (EOAC), Class 24-1, collected debris along the shoreline. These are but two examples of how DEOMI is working with our local City and County leaders to reduce litter, recycle, beautify, and sustain the environment.

On April 6th, we again helped support our local community during the Keep Brevard Beautiful 41st Annual Trash Bash event, which was held in conjunction with The Great American Cleanup. The City of Melbourne reported that eight site locations and six Adopt-A-Road organizations, totaling 267 volunteers, participated that day. For that, they earned first place among all other participating cities. The volunteers also collected 233 bags of trash, plus many larger items like car parts and wood, for a total of 5,713 pounds of debris removed from our community. For that, the city earned second place. It really was amazing to see just how much we were able to get accomplished when we work together!

# SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED

#### **EOAC 24-1 Donation Drive**

On Feb. 29th, students of our Equal Opportunity Advisor Course (EOAC), Class 24-1, held a donation drive to collect health and wellness items for the Genesis House, a nonprofit organization that provides shelter for pregnant women, their children and long-term housing for student mothers and their children.

"Assisting women and children in need was one of the most impactful things we could have done," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Corebrians Abraham, EOAC 24-1 class leader.



On April 17th, students attending our EOA Reserve Component Course (EOARCC), class 24-1, followed suit by hosting a donation drive of their own. In just two-weeks, these students collected several large containers filled with food, hygiene, and clothing items, essential to the health and welfare of the children in the care of The Haven for Children, a local non-profit organization.





#### EOAC 24-2 Volunteerism and Donation Drive

On June 15th, Students from our EOAC, Class 24-2, volunteered their time to help the Genesis House, Inc., with some area beautification tasks. Less than two weeks later, the students from this class donated back-to-school items to support the children of Saint Stephen's Way, a local non-profit organization. Either through time or donation, these students definitely embraced the spirit of giving!



# FACILITATING LOCAL OBSERVANCE EVENTS

#### **Letters of Appreciation**



DEOMI does more than develop Special Observance products, we support them by facilitating events on our local installation! Support that has not gone unnoticed. On March 19th, Space Launch Delta 45 (SLD45) Vice Commander, United States Air Force Col. Anthony Graham, visited DEOMI to present a letter of appreciation to DEOMI Instructor/Facilitator, U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Sidney McSwain, for his leadership and support during a base-wide Hispanic Heritage Month event and his partnership with SLD45's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Office on several 5k Run/Walk events.

Graham returned to DEOMI on June 26th, to present additional letters of appreciation to: DEOMI Social Scientist, Jason Chizek; Library Technician, Lola Mhun-Lara; and Academic Standards and Evaluations (ASE) Training Specialist, Fikisha Maree, for their support of a base-wide Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month event. Certificates were also provided to DEOMI Social Scientist, Dr. Kimberly Hamilton-Wright, and Equal Employment Opportunity Program Manager, William Hayes, both of whom were not able to participate.

Supporting events like these not only strengthens our ties with other organizations and leaders, but it also provides our staff the opportunity to experience first-hand the cultural traditions and heritage of the observances we support.





#### **AANHPIHM Luncheon**

On May 28th, DEOMI's Commandant, United States Air Force Col. Michelle Nash, served as guest speaker for the Space Launch Delta 45 (SLD45) Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month Luncheon, hosted by the #SLD45 Special Observance Committee at the SeaSide Chapel on Patrick Space Force Base, Florida. In addition to celebrating #AANHPI history and heritage, the event offered a lumpia wrapping class, free food sampling, and cultural booths.

Events like this are great ways to learn more about those around us, to share stories, and celebrate that which makes us all extraordinarily unique.

## IDEA Speaker Series

#### **Guest Speakers**

The IDEA Speaker Series is a professional development series for our staff and faculty that showcases the knowledge and experience of scholars and leaders in the fields affecting our mission.

The research, scholarship, and advocacy of the guest speakers highlighted in this series will enhance our efforts to present diverse ideas, perspectives and viewpoints that inspire a greater understanding and appreciation of human relations for its staff, students, and partners. We hosted these two absolutely wonderful guest speakers during 2nd and 3rd Quarters:



#### **Andy Core**

Resiliency Researcher, Speaker, & Author, gave a phenomenal presentation on, "Change Your Day, Not Your Life: A Realistic Guide to Sustained Motivation, More Productivity and the Art of Working Well."



#### **Janice Litvin**

An award-winning workplace wellness speaker and author of Banish Burnout Toolkit, gave a very enthusiastic presentation on, "Banish Burnout: Move from Stress to Success."





The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) hosted its first in-person Board of Advisor (BOA) meeting since before the COVID-19 pandemic, on May 2, 2024. Deputy Director of the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) Mr. Michael Sorrento, Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Equal Opportunity, & Policy (OCREOP) Dr. Lisa Arfaa, and DEOMI Commandant U.S. Air Force Col. Michelle Nash, led the BOA as tri-chair members.

The BOA, as outlined in DoDI 1350.02, is a forum for senior leaders to exchange information and collaborate on the adequacy of DEOMI staffing, resources, plans, and strategies influencing support of DoD requirements for diversity management, civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) programs. In addition, the BOA provides senior leaders the opportunity to discuss recommendations for efficiencies, allocation of resources, and coordinates military department, service-specific, and total force requirements for education, training and research.

First-time DEOMI BOA chair member, Sorrento opened the meeting by acknowledging the hard work that has been done thus far by the various Department and Service experts in attendance and briefly addressing DHRA's recent restructure.

"All of you have been working in this space for a long time, and you are all experts in here, but this is a fast-moving train, and things are shifting," said Sorrento, referring to the recent dissolution of the Diversity Management Operations Center.



Sorrento called the BOA both "timely" because it brought key stakeholders together into one room to discuss current and future plans, and "committed" because each attendee has a role to play in achieving workforce success.

"DEOMI provides excellent support to the Services in training, education, research, and consultation and we have an opportunity to expand this across similar mission spaces," said Sorrento. "We believe, strongly, that there is a huge value proposition here," he added. "What we are after is the commitment," Sorrento said to the BOA attendees. "So that we can improve the workforce pipeline... So that DEOMI can plan effectively and execute their mission... So you all can benefit from the services they provide as a center of excellence."

Also a first-time DEOMI BOA chair member, Arfaa shared Sorrento's sentiment towards workforce success. Arfaa added that the partnership OCREOP has with the DHRA and DEOMI was wonderful because, "there is nothing more important than ensuring that those who are willing to stand up for the dignity, respect, opportunities, and wellbeing for all, are properly trained and educated." She then asked attendees to consider what they could do to help DEOMI meet the needs of an increasingly challenging environment.

Like Sorrento and Arfaa, this was Nash's first time as a DEOMI BOA chair member. Nash spoke about DEOMI's transformation to a Center of Excellence (CoE) and the Institute's expanding mission.

"Right now, DEOMI is in a transition. Our mission set is expanding. I am really excited to have you all in the room to help make sure that we are heading in the right direction," said Nash. "I am grateful for your continued support for DEOMI, as we work together to get after really hard problems," she added.

Nash gave a brief overview of DEOMI's history, which dates back 1971, when the institute was called the Defense Race Relations Institute.

Since then, DEOMI has continuously helped to shape the attitudes, behaviors, and policies that foster environments of dignity, respect, and equal treatment in the military and beyond.

Nash continued with an overview of DEOMI's reputation as an institute of higher learning. Initially accredited in 1983 by the Council on Occupational Education, the American Council on Education recommends that each DEOMI course be worth college credit. In May, the COE renewed DEOMI's accreditation.

She then talked about how DEOMI's mission set as a CoE is expanding to include four distinct program domains—Leadership Cross-Cultural Competencies, MEO, EEO, and Prevention.



Deputy to the DEOMI Commandant and Standards, Programs, & Requirements (SPR) Director of the CoE Dr. Daniel McDonald, elaborated on the genesis of DEOMI as a CoE using excerpts from various documents published by the DoD and Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, dated as far back as 2018.

"The intent behind transforming DEOMI into a CoE is to establish a dedicated hub for research, development, training, education, and consultation to prepare leaders at all levels of professional development on matters pertaining to dignity, respect, opportunity, teamwork, leadership, well-being, and cross-cultural awareness," said McDonald.



"In the past year alone, DEOMI made great strides towards meeting the CoE intent," said McDonald.

McDonald then discussed DEOMI's core functions, which now include: Standards, Certification and Accreditation; Learning Management; Science and Technology Applications; Training Needs, Competencies, and Evaluations; Outreach, Partnerships, and Consultations; and Communities of Practice and Field Support Products.

"We really hit the ground running!" McDonald said, referring to Sorrento's previous comment about DEOMI having a huge proposition value. "DEOMI's foundational attributes will have immediate value, such as an expert multi-disciplinary team, established instructional systems, ready access to military and civilian subject matter experts, and so much more," he added.

"The integrated multi-disciplinary expertise approach, which DEOMI uses to deliver excellence across the DoD, is powerful because it leverages the collective expertise of all our departments," said McDonald, reemphasizing the propositional value of one attribute.



### **Visitors**

#### **Council on Occupational Education**

On May 29th, volunteer evaluators from the Council on Occupational Education (COE), evaluated DEOMI for re-accreditation. The COE is a national institutional accrediting agency for the accreditation of non-degree-granting, applied associate degree-granting, and post-secondary occupational education institutions. Receiving an accreditation is a requirement for institutions like DEOMI. Once accredited, institutions must be re-accredited every five to six years to ensure the quality and integrity in career and technical education. An accreditation means that an institution meets a standard set by the U.S. Department of Education, and DEOMI has proudly held its accreditation since 1983.





#### Investigations and Resolutions Directorate

In the last week of April, we welcomed the amazing professionals from the Investigations and Resolutions Directorate (IRD), here to conduct their annual training symposium. The IRD, one of several organizations within the Defense Support Services Center, Defense Human Resources Activity, is responsible for investigating Equal Employment Opportunity discrimination complaints for Department of Defense agencies. We are always happy to support our partner organizations.

#### **DHRA Managerial Training**

In the last week of February, we hosted the Defense Human Resources Activity's Managerial Training course for senior leaders. The 3-day training course focused on topics, such as engaging in difficult conversations, preventing toxic leadership, and managing intergenerational differences in the workplace. DEOMI held several of these training courses in the past, and looks forward to supporting DHRA's professional development efforts well into the future.





#### Hon. Alex Wagner Visit

On June 28th, Hon. Alex Wagner, the Assistant Secretary if the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, met with DEOMI leadership to discuss how the Institute's work is changing and remaining relevant in the face of new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) laws, as well as recent developments in combating discrimination and harassment. During his visit, Hon. Wagner also met with leadership from Patrick Space Force Base, Cape Canaveral, and the 92oth.

#### Cadet/Intern Research Program

On June 13th, interning Cadets from the U.S. Military Academy-West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy presented DEOMI leaders with their research findings. Their study, which utilized validated measures, aimed to address gaps in existing hazing and cyberbullying research within military populations. Additionally, the Cadets supported Applied Science Analytics by contributing to ongoing Equal Opportunity Advisor Course (EOAC) research efforts. This involved leveraging the expertise of EOAC students to explore critical questions related to leadership behavior. Furthermore,

the Cadets facilitated connections between future leaders and experienced enlisted leaders from various Services, allowing interns to gain practical experience through focus groups and experiential learning. Major Stephen Motta, a West Point Instructor, visited DEOMI on June 25th. During his visit, he discussed how qualitative social scientific perspectives and methods intersect with military leadership training. Motta's insights and the Cadets' research was informative to DEOMI's leaders and research staff and strengthened ties between West Point and the Institute.





## **Culture of Wellness**

DEOMI is dedicated to promoting a Culture of Wellness that aligns with the Department of Defense's goals (e.g., protecting the nation, taking care of our people, succeed through teamwork). To achieve this, DEOMI has implemented strategic initiatives focused on the physical, mental, and social well-being of all its personnel.

#### The Vital Role of Internal Communication at DEOMI

In our journey to evolve a Culture of Excellence at DEOMI, one pivotal element often takes the spotlight - our internal communication. Here's why it's critical to assess and refine our internal communication for the perfect strategic plan.

**Alignment & Clarity:** Strong internal communication ensures everyone understands our mission, vision, and goals. It aligns our team toward a shared purpose, empowering them to contribute their best.

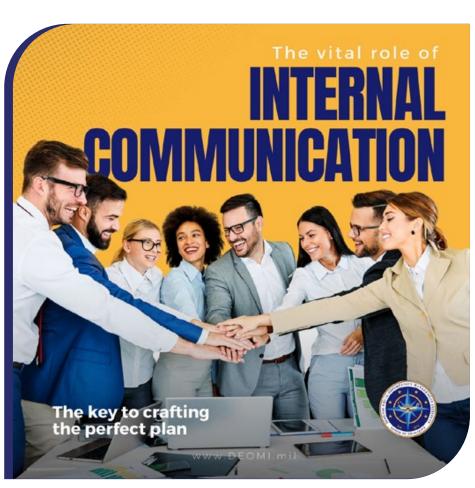
**Innovation & Collaboration:** It nurtures an environment where ideas flow freely, and cross-functional collaboration thrives. When team members communicate effectively, innovation flourishes.

**Cohesion & Engagement:** Healthy communication builds trust and camaraderie among team members. Engaged employees are more likely to go the extra mile and embrace the Culture of Excellence.

**Adaptability & Resilience:** In today's ever-evolving landscape, strong internal communication helps us adapt swiftly to changes and build resilience as an organization.

So, what's the key to crafting the perfect internal strategic communication plan?

- **Assessment:** Start by assessing our current communication channels, processes, and effectiveness.
- **Goals:** Define clear objectives for your communication strategy that align with your mission.
- Audience: Understand your diverse team members and tailor messages to resonate with them.
- Feedback: Create avenues for two-way communication, encouraging input and feedback.
- Consistency: Maintain a consistent and reliable flow of information.
- Innovation: Explore new communication tools and techniques to stay ahead.





In the heart of DEOMI's commitment to fostering a Culture of Wellness, we recognize that the wellbeing of our team members goes beyond just physical health. It encompasses every aspect of our lives, including our work environment. One often overlooked but immensely valuable practice in this regard is regular stretching during work hours. Incorporating stretching into your daily routine can make a difference.

**Elevated Productivity:** In the fast-paced world of work, productivity is key. Yet, long hours of sitting can lead to decreased focus and energy. Short stretching breaks can recharge you, increase blood circulation, and help you maintain peak productivity.

**Stress Reduction:** We understand that work can be demanding, and stress can creep in. Stretching is a simple yet effective way to reduce tension and alleviate stress, leaving you more composed and ready to tackle challenges.

**Mind-Body Connection:** DEOMI encourages a holistic approach to wellness, recognizing the profound connection between physical and mental well-being. Stretching fosters mindfulness, pulling you away from your tasks and allowing you to reconnect with your body.

**Posture Improvement:** Sitting for extended periods can lead to poor posture, potentially causing discomfort and chronic issues. Regular stretching can counteract these effects by enhancing posture and minimizing the risk of musculoskeletal problems.



Did you know that DEOMI created an Effective Conversations Strategies guide?



The DEOMI Effective Conversations Strategies guide can be applied to most any topic where there may be differences in opinions, perspectives, or experiences within a group or unit?

The structure of the effective conversation framework helps participants learn about themselves and their group members, clears up misunderstandings, and give voice to unheard or misunderstood feelings and emotions.

Click <u>here</u> to view and download this guide, or visit our website at <u>www.deomi.mil</u>, select the "*Center of Excellence Portal*" tab at the top of our home page, select the "*Leadership*" tab on the left side of the page, and scroll until you see "*Leader's Conversations*" about halfway down the page.

## Meet the **Professionals**

#### **DEOMI's Meet the Professionals Series**

Our "Meet the Professionals" social media series is designed to highlight the remarkable talent we have here, improve workplace comradery, and facilitate networking growth. In January, we highlighted four of our talented individuals who work remotely. Remote work is a workplace flexibility that helps us meet our goals and objectives while providing opportunities for improved work-life balance.

In April and June, we highlighted two of our Airmen Instructor/Facilitators. Our Instructors/Facilitators are vital to our mission because they are charged with delivering our curriculum to those who will become EO practitioners in the field, fleet, wing, and delta.



#### **Heather Meyers**

Deputy Director of DEOMI's Standards, Programs & Requirements (SPR) Directorate



Dr. Karen Kelley

Instructional Systems Specialist with DEOMI's Curriculum Design and Development (CDD)



#### **Dr. Emma Sunnassee**

Senior Social Scientist with DEOMI's Applied Sciences and Analytics, Hope Research Center



#### Sarah Sanchez

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. DEOMI Instructor/Facilitator



#### **Muhammad Waheed**

Digital Accessibility Coordinator with DEOMI's Multimedia & Technology Development Department



#### **Sidney McSwain**

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. DEOMI Instructor/Facilitator

### **Town Halls**

We celebrated much during 2nd and 3rd Quarters. Each month, with the exception of March, we held a Town Hall to present awards, welcome our new arrivals, deliver a few shout-outs, wished our departing personnel farewell, and so much more!

#### **January**

We celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day, honored the life and legacy of Dr. Richard Oliver Hope, and recognized our DHRA FY23 Annual Culture of Service Awardees:

- Junior Civilian: Ms. Lokelani Aipa
- Senior Civilian: Dr. Conrad Gamez
- Senior NCO: Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Diana Valdez
- Field Grade Officer: Army Maj. Robert Fales

#### **February**

We celebrated Black History Month, covered health and wellness through our DNA program, discussed initial Pulse Survey results, and recognized our DEOMI/DHRA FY24 1st Quarter Awardees:

- Mid-Career Civilian:
   Ms. Rebecca Utecht
- Senior Civilian: Dr. Conrad Gamez
- Senior Noncommissioned Officer: Army Sgt. 1st Class Amanda Torres
- Field Grade Officer: Army Maj. Robert Fales

#### **April**

We celebrated Women's History Month, congratulated U.S. Army Maj. Robert Fales and Maj. Roshonda Gilmore on their selection to Lieutenant Colonel, and received a phenomenal presentation on the Military Family Life Counseling Program from Ms. Annette Soldini, a Military Family Life Counselor with Space Launch Delta 45.



#### May

We celebrated Days of Remembrance and Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month, ensured our staff and faculty are ready for Florida summers with hurricane preparedness and summer safety briefings, and recognized our DEOMI/DHRA FY24 2nd Quarter Awardees:

- Junior-Career Civilian: Mr. Pedro Rivero
- Mid-Career Civilian: Mr. Alberto Crespo
- Noncommissioned Officer: Army Sgt. Juan Montes
- Senior Noncommissioned Officer: Army Sgt. 1st Class Erika Cokley
- Field Grade Officer: Army Maj. Richard Landreneau

#### June

We celebrated Pride Month and Juneteenth, updated our staff on 508c compliancy standards, brought in local fitness experts who provided health and nutrition information, and recognized our new and departing members.



## **JET Booster Club**

Huge thanks to our JET Booster Club volunteers and all those who supported the Club's activities! During 2nd and 3rd quarters, the Club held a Burger Burn, Pizza Party, and an Appreciation Day, all of which brought our staff and faculty together. These activities helped to promote more engaging conversations, enhancing comradery, and reinforced a sense of belonging throughout our institute.



## **Promotions**

We celebrated the remarkable accomplishments and career advancement of these three amazing individuals during 2nd and 3rd Quarters:



U.S. Army Capt.
Norman Singleton

Director of our Personnel & Student Services department, is promoted to Major



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Duane Venticinque

NCO in charge of our Information Technology department, is promoted to Sergeant First Class



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Joshua Wilson

Instructor/Facilitator with our Education and Training Directorate, is promoted to Master Sergeant

## **Retirements**

We celebrated the remarkable achievements and dedicated service of these three amazing individuals during 2nd and 3rd Quarters:



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jon Harris

Instructor/Facilitator, Education & Training Directorate



Mr. Mark Smith

EEO Specialist and Mediation Course Manager



U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jameka Goodwin

Instructor/Facilitator, Education & Training Directorate



## GET CONNECTED















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