



**Ms. Michelle LoweSolis**  
Human Resources Functional  
Community Manager

## Message from the Human Resources Functional Community Manager

### Aspiring Future Senior Leaders

Some of you may aspire to be senior leaders in HR in the federal space, either within or outside DoD. If so, there's something that you should be thinking about now, and that's the Executive Core Qualifications or ECQs. I didn't learn about the ECQs until I was a GS-15 applying for a senior executive position they are a key element of the SES hiring process. Regardless of whether you want to be a senior executive or not, understanding these competencies will serve you well in any leadership position.

There are five ECQs – Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions.

**LEADING CHANGE** involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, in order to meet organizational goals. It includes the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a changing environment. It also includes all the change management elements required to implement the change, i.e., communication to stakeholders, training if required, etc. You may be your Component's lead for configuring/testing DCHRMS or you may be implementing a new policy or Executive Order at your installation or you could be leading a process change effort at your Center. You don't need to be a supervisor to Lead Change. In our HR community, there are plenty of opportunities to acquire this competency.

**LEADING PEOPLE** involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. A lot of people get this ECQ and Leading Change confused. This ECQ is focused on making sure you develop your team, facilitate cooperation and teamwork, provide a safe and inclusive workplace, and support constructive resolution of conflicts. This competency is primarily acquired through supervising or leading a team. But it can also be acquired through leading work groups or union negotiations or leading training sessions.

**RESULTS DRIVEN** involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks. This competency means exactly what it says. Understand your customer's mission, what they need to be successful, and support them if you can legally do it.

**BUSINESS ACUMEN** involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically. While not always, this competency is typically gained as a branch or division chief trying to ensure they have adequate resources (people, money, systems) to execute the mission. Typically, an idea will only remain an idea unless it's adequately resourced. So find someone who understands spend plans, budgets, and even the POM process and learn all you can.

**BUILDING COALITIONS** involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals. That's the Office of Personnel Management definition, but I think DoD is big enough that you can build coalitions across Services, MAJCOMs, Fourth Estate Components, and even across installations.

In future newsletters, I'll delve further into these competencies. Again, I want you to be familiar with these areas for your professional development. Until then, take care and stay safe! ■

*Michelle LoweSolis*  
Director, Defense Civilian  
Personnel Advisory Services

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## Partners in the Climb to Data Dominance



As stated in the Personnel and Readiness Strategy for 2030, “data dominance through digital modernization, seamlessly connecting all our data in real-time” is not only critical to the efforts of meeting the challenges of today, but it is also the cornerstone of the vision to creating a technologically dominant force that is strategically ready, globally relevant, and flexibly sustainable. DFAS is a proud partner in this climb towards data dominance.

As with most HR operations, DFAS HR has a suite of critical operational reports that deliver “just in time” data to leadership on key HR processes like recruit timeliness, number of new hires, attrition, training budgets, and award utilization. An average of over 9,000 such reports were run each month during the first quarter of FY21. While the reports are a critical component of the collective approach, customer business needs often require deeper analysis.

A cadre of analytic subject matter experts including James Hylton and Eric Burns are helping to lead the DFAS HR efforts. James describes the scope of the efforts: “Improving our maturity in analytics requires more than a single activity or use of a new tool. Mindsets need to be changed about HR data relationships; the data needs to be reliable; customers need to have input into the product and it needs

to answer questions that are meaningful to them; and the data needs to be accessible and easy to interpret. There is a lot of work that goes into tackling these seemingly easy objectives.” While the work is not easy, Eric explains how it is both important and personally gratifying: “Partnering with customers to make these improvements is the part of the job that I love the most. I like being able to apply problem solving skills and logic to help our customer base have the tools to make better decisions. Finding a way to fit the pieces of the puzzle together is exciting and it makes the hard work worth it when we walk away knowing the customer is in a better place than before the project began.”

While DFAS HR plans to continue refining its predictive and prescriptive models moving forward, a key component of its analytics strategy is maximizing integration with and utilization of Advana, the Department’s enterprise-wide analytics platform. DFAS HR is excited to partner with DCPAS and others to integrate analytic solutions into the common platform to deliver more comprehensive and timely insights across the enterprise. ■

## Employee Benefits Advisor Credentialing Program Study Session

Over the last three years, the Employee Benefits Advisor Credentialing Program has fostered professional learning for more than 1,450 Human Resource (HR) Professionals both internal and external to the Department of Defense. Participation levels have continued to increase, but some HR specialist have had difficulty passing the Level Credential I Exam resulting in a need for additional reinforcement. As a result, on February 24, 2021, the very first virtual credentialing study session was held to assist individuals with preparing to take the Level I exam.

During the inaugural hour and half study session, participants reviewed many of the key concepts that are most frequently missed on the Level I exam. The group worked through practice questions, discussed test taking tips and strategies, and had thoughtful discussions during the open question and answer period. Because of the excitement generated by this experience, the first study session was deemed a true success! The schedule for future study sessions will be announced in the next few weeks. We encourage all eligible candidates to participate in upcoming sessions. ■



**Benefits**

## HR Staffing Credentialing Update

DCPAS' Employment and Compensation Line of Business is finalizing their review of the courses for the Level I Staffing Curriculum. We have drafted a plan that covers both the pilot and full implementation. During the pilot, the curriculum and assessment materials will be rolled out and evaluated, tentatively scheduled for the week of 12 April. The pilot credentialing exam is tentatively scheduled for 29 April. The feedback received during the pilot will assist the team in evaluating and revising any content or the exam before the full implementation which is scheduled for Q4 FY21. The curriculum for the courses are as follows: ■

HR Staffing Credentialing Program	
<b>Course 1: Application and Interpretation of HR Guidance</b>	Module 1: Regulatory Guidance Module 2: Appointing Authorities Module 3: Probationary Periods and Tenure Module 4: Veterans' Preference
<b>Course 2: HR Staffing Advisory Services</b>	Module 5: Workplace Flexibilities Module 6: Priority Programs Module 7: Military Spouse Hiring Module 8: Strategic Outreach and Recruitment (SOAR)
<b>Course 3: Recruitment and Placement</b>	Module 9: Job Analysis and Crediting Plans Module 10: Rating, Ranking, Referral Module 11: Category Rating Module 12: Recruitment Flexibilities
<b>Course 4: Personnel Action Processing</b>	Module 13: Guide to Processing Personnel Module 14: Service Computation Dates Module 15: Setting Pay for New Appointments

## Lifetime Achievement Award DON HR & EEO Awards for Excellence Recipient Mary Foley



Mary Foley is the only HR professional to serve as Director of the Navy's Civilian Benefits Center (CBC). Her 38 years of dedicated federal service with the Navy is the cornerstone of the care and passion she and her team provides to over 220,000 civilian employees and their families. Ms. Foley's selection as the Department of the Navy (DON) Agency Benefits Program Manager occurred in 2003 and she was named the Director of all DON Civilian Benefits in 2005 when the benefits program was centralized. She is responsible for both benefits policy development and operations, a unique combination. Ms. Foley is a recognized leader in federal benefits and retirement, and is known as an industry leader across the DoD and OPM for her innovation and excellence in executing DON's benefits program. Congratulations to Ms. Foley on this prestigious award! ■

## Spotlight on Training



### Ms. Jimmie Vaughn

*Career opportunities and job satisfaction are consistent themes woven throughout Ms. Vaughn's HR career. Her personal experience spotlights HR as a functional community that intentionally and deliberately cultivates talent, and offers career choices and options.*

Jimmie Vaughn is a teacher at heart. It's connected to who she is; it's her core and more important, it's her PURPOSE and she gets to live it every day.

She believes that PURPOSE comes from the heart. It's the core of who you are and it makes you unique for the PURPOSE set before you.

Ms. Vaughn's years of experience in civilian Human Resources Management with the Department of Defense has included operational, tactical, and strategic levels of civilian human resources management.

As a native Texan, she earned an undergraduate degree from West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) and started her professional career as a school teacher in the great Lone Star state, which later led to an opportunity gaining experience and training in civilian personnel operations for a Texas municipal government. Within three years, Jimmie was participating in a Federal/State/Local Government Rotational

Program that led her to Salt Lake City, Utah and a few months later, she was on special assignment to the U.S. Army Depot in Tooele, Utah working in its Civilian Personnel Office. Ms. Vaughn has always considered herself mobile and adventurous, so she never considered these job and geographical moves as unusual for a young, single female at that time. 3 years later, Ms. Vaughn was enroute to the Washington, DC metropolitan area after being recruited by the Military District of Washington (MDW) as a result of an assessment team visit to the Depot. And after 2 years at MDW, Ms. Vaughn was off to the Army Materiel Command (AMC).

While at AMC, Ms. Vaughn had the opportunity to work on several strategic initiatives which expanded her experience and made her even more competitive for selection to the US Army Staff College (AMSC). Having excelled as a student and graduating from AMSC, she was selected as one of a 6-member team, representing the US Army Civilian Personnel Center, to assist in reproducing AMSC, as a one-time offering for U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). This opportunity was the convergence of her passions for learning and teaching, along with her dedication and respect for the mission of DoD, and it occurred during a memorable time in world history: the fall of the Berlin Wall. To this day, Ms. Vaughn is still very proud to have been recognized as a member of the staff and faculty responsible for reproducing the high caliber learning and developmental experience, a noteworthy achievement for the Army.

Ms. Vaughn fell in love with Europe, so when asked to consider being an HR Specialist with the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (ODCSPER), she accepted. DoD was experiencing its greatest reduction of forces since the Cold War and ODCSPER was at the helm of this massive change effort so she recognized that these were challenging times and that there would be a tremendous amount of work due to the magnitude of these events. Because Ms. Vaughn had some knowledge of the geo-political landscape, she was asked to work strategic operations as an HR Specialist, along with her military counterparts during Operation Desert Shield just prior to the beginning of Desert Storm. "Unforgettable," she says "and what a humbling experience it was as a civilian HR professional working in the War Room on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day prior to going into Operation Desert Storm!"

Later on, she was a member of the Command team that helped to standardize and consolidate DoD HR business operations and work processes, which ultimately led to the restructuring of HR functions across DoD. Ms. Vaughn called it the era of "Regionalization and Systems Modernization" and Army Europe was considered the "pilot" for DoD. With multiple and separate civilian personnel data systems stacking high in the 1980s and much of the 1990s, the idea was to have only one corporate civilian personnel data system providing DoD managers and supervisors, as well as HR professionals, with a world-wide corporate management information tool – known as the Modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) – which launched in 2000-2001.

Working in Army Europe continued to provide opportunities for Ms. Vaughn to expand her portfolio. She became the U.S. Army Europe's Human Resources media spokesperson on American Forces Network-Europe. Her love for speaking offered another career opportunity where her passion and her purpose of being a teacher intersected. During this challenging period of major over-haul in DoD HR and the subsequent down-sizing of U.S. forces, she provided radio and television broadcast news information regarding major workforce issues that were relevant to civilian and military audiences working in Army Europe.

## Spotlight on Training



### Ms. Jimmie Vaughn (Continued)

Ms. Vaughn's work experience in Army Europe gave rise to another career opportunity and an offer for a position with the Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service (CPMS). The Regionalization and Systems Modernization effort was now underway within all of DoD, so her experience was relevant, timely and beneficial for the Department's overall effort.

The move to CPMS, now the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS), was the right decision, according to Ms. Vaughn. She believes that having had a broad range of strategic experiences at the Department's corporate HR office has proven to be very valuable and even life-changing. In particular, Ms. Vaughn's participation in a leadership development program opened the door for being selected as a student to attend the U.S. Army War College, which was the highlight of her career, as a HR professional. She stated, "If ever I thought I was strategic-minded before, there would be no doubt that I would be strategic-minded after having experienced and graduated from the War College. It was an honor to have acquired the level of education and the ability to earn a Master's in Strategic Studies, as a civilian employee, and to have studied along-side my military counterparts for whom I had, and still have, the utmost respect."

Currently, Ms. Vaughn is an Associate Director and Division Chief in the Talent Development Directorate of DCPAS, and what she does every day still speaks to her calling and her purpose. She manages a Division that shapes the DoD learning landscape through policies and strategies that support training, education and professional development. Moreover, her division oversees the use of developmental tools such as coaching, mentoring, and broadening initiatives to include rotational programs, all of which support "continuous learning," which she believes provides the foundation for one of DoD's most strategic and important missions – developing its people. "HR is the bedrock, and is imperative for the success of any agency, especially for DoD. Once you understand the importance of what HR professionals do, it will give you a deeper sense of purpose, knowing how important you and your work are to DoD. It really gives you a sense of pride. As a civilian, I am truly honored to Serve."

One of Ms. Vaughn's special passions is developing young people. She was previously honored with a very special opportunity as the first African American to give the commencement address at her alma mater's Centennial Commencement, celebrating the University's 100th anniversary. Whether speaking to young adults like those college graduates or working to develop DoD employees, Ms. Vaughn affirms, "I continue to see the alignment and benefits of knowing your heart and living your purpose." Her advice to anyone who asks, is to "know your craft; it will serve you well; be prepared and take advantage of the mobility of assignments to create a synergy and foundation for your expertise; be flexible and seek opportunities to learn about other HR specialties; be willing to take risks in your career to learn more, and to do more." Like her, you will be better for it.

*Ms. Jimmie Vaughn has also earned a Master's in Public Administration from American University and recently celebrated 40 years of Federal Service as an HR professional. ■*



## Defense Civilian Emerging Leader Program (DCELP)



Dédra Allen

Tiffany Carter

DCELP awards entry-level and emerging leaders in grades GS-7 to GS-12 from the Department of Defense and outside agencies an opportunity to gain the tools needed to successfully lead themselves and others, excel in a joint, total force environment, and thrive in a challenging and uncertain world.

Led by Tiffany Carter and Dédra Allen, this federally-mandated leader development program is comprised of four one-week seminars designed to help future leaders enhance self-awareness, strengthen communication skills, understand the complexities of leadership, and practice behaviors that inspire trust, strengthen collaboration and create high performing teams. To achieve these goals, DCELP participants are immersed in a variety of learning opportunities; including but not limited to reflection exercises, leadership assessments, peer and individual coaching, experiential activities and a final Capstone project.

Due to the pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions that prevented the program from executing in the traditional classroom environment, the program team incurred an unexpected challenge while executing Cohort 11 (and currently Cohort 12) – making the pivot to the remote environment using e-Learning technology while being mindful of resource constraints and

retaining the high quality and value of the learning experience.

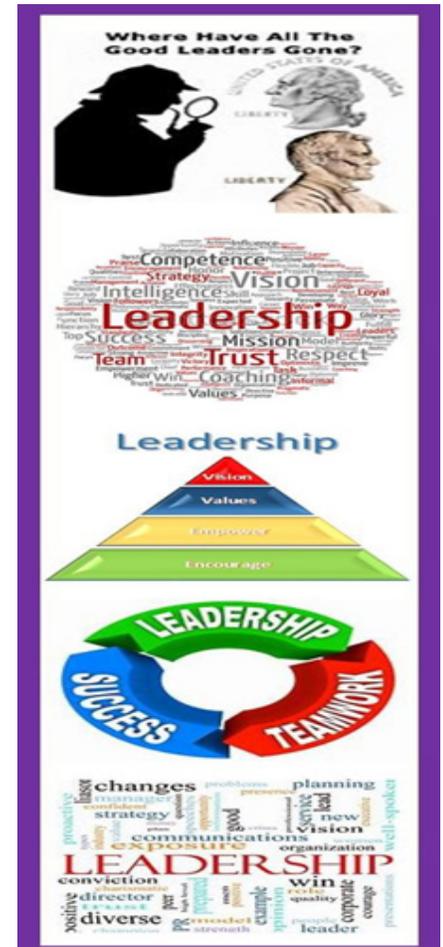
With support from dedicated professionals within the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA), the DCELP Program team made the necessary adjustments to meet the moment, resume activity in September 2020 and graduate its first 100% remote cohort of 103 emerging leaders from the Acquisition, Financial Management and Human Resources functional communities in November 2020.

In a course evaluation survey, a recent graduate’s reflection shows the program’s impact:

“I came into [the Seminar] thinking it was going to be difficult trying to get through this virtually but it didn’t affect the learning environment.”

Many other comments with positive reactions to the remote environment show the dedication, flexibility and commitment exhibited by Ms. Allen (a graduate of DCELP herself) and Ms. Carter to shift the program’s delivery method and embody the motto of the graduating class – “adjust, adapt, and overcome”

For information on all DoD Enterprise Leader Development (LD) program, please visit <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/CTD/Training..>



## Spotlight on Human Resources Interns



### Mr. Drake Goddard

*Interns help DoD Human Resources professionals while helping themselves*

The internship with the Department of Navy (DON) was the perfect opportunity for Mr. Goddard to learn and experience the breadth of Human Resources (HR). He credits his selection for the internship to self-confidence and belief in his abilities and potential which he developed at The Maret School in Washington D.C. Through the diversity of people and opportunities there, Mr. Goddard learned to become comfortable with being uncomfortable, a concept reinforced by his parents during his upbringing.

Since entering the DON HR/EEO program, Drake has rotated through several HR and EEO functions. He started in Labor and Employee Relations with USMC at the Pentagon. Drake also completed a rotation in Staffing at OCHR Stennis. Mr. Goddard worked at Marine Corps Base Quantico as well, completing Classification and HRO Staffing rotations. Recently, Drake spent time with Diversity Management Operation Center's Diversity and Inclusion team at Defense Human Resource Activity. While there, his contributions were vital in creating D&I occupation

competencies and long-term training. Drake was also instrumental in assessing the department's engagement strategies with HBCUs and was able to brief an SES, the Director of DMOC, on an assessment and recommendations on an NDAA report to congress.

Working in most of the HR specialties enabled Drake to confirm for himself that HR was the right direction for his career. Mr. Goddard gained a broader focus and understanding of HR, using the experience to develop both horizontally and vertically, honing his skills and competencies. Moreover, the internship jumpstarted Mr. Goddard's skills in working with leadership which created networking and contributions that have been valuable to his team.

Communication, hard work, and curiosity were an important part of school and the internship program. Mr. Goddard's leadership felt that his flexibility and willingness to do any type of work made him stand out from his peers. His proficiency and team-oriented mindset helped him establish collaborative working relationships with school colleagues, coworkers, and internship classmates. In fact, the more his skills were utilized, the more opportunities became available. In fact, Mr. Goddard trusts that the skills gained through this internship will benefit the rest of his career.

*Drake Goddard graduated from Wheeling Jesuit University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Marketing and Management in 2018. Drake currently resides in Fort Washington, Maryland, a suburb of D.C and is currently back with USMC in Labor and Employee Relations. ■*

## Upcoming Assessments

The HR Classification and HR Employee Relations competency models will be assessed in Defense Competency Assessment Tool (DCAT) Cloud from March 22 through April 30. The primary purpose of the assessment is to validate the competency models to their prospective workforces. The assessment collects data to give the competency team and customers a better idea of the criticality of each competency, competency gaps, whether the competency will be needed in the future, if the competency is needed at appointment, and how to best develop each competency. These questions not only provide the competency team the data to validate a competency model, but are foundational to developing the associated curricula and credentialing program once a competency model is finalized. ■



## Human Resources Leader Development Program



Congratulations to following selected to participate in the Human Resources Leader Development Programs:

Jazmin Garcia (Navy). Defense Civilian Emerging Leaders Program (DCELP) Cohort 12

Amber Tucker (DCPAS). Defense Senior Leader Development Program (DSLDP) Cohort 2021 ■

## Credential Recipient

Congratulations to Mr. Ismael Diaz, Air Force for receiving his Employee Benefits Advisor credentials on 2/1/21. ■



## Do You Know Where to Go to Find the Latest News About the Human Resources Functional Community?



Be sure to check out milSuite and look for the DOD Human Resources Functional Community page (<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/dodhrfc>). This page is continually updated with the latest data decks, DCPAS messages, and other useful information. We hope you will visit soon, get to know your community, and join the conversation! ■