

U. S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commandant  
United States Coast Guard

2703 Martin Luther King Jr.  
Ave, Stop 7618  
Washington, DC 20593-7618  
Staff Symbol: CG-0921  
Phone: (202) 372-3500  
FAX: (202) 372-2311

**TESTIMONY OF  
ADMIRAL KARL L. SCHULTZ  
COMMANDANT OF THE COAST GUARD**

**ON  
“Building the Coast Guard America Needs:  
Achieving Diversity, Equity, and Accountability within the Service”**

**BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JUNE 23, 2021**

**Introduction**

Good morning Chairman Thompson, Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Katko, Ranking Member Comer, and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss Coast Guard efforts to develop a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and accountability. Since assuming my role as Commandant in 2018, I have made it a top strategic priority to establish the Coast Guard not only as a premier maritime Service, but as an employer of choice that reflects the public we serve. I agree with our Commander in Chief when he said that equal opportunity is the bedrock of American democracy and diversity is one of our country’s greatest strengths. Furthermore, I believe it is critical to foster a culture of inclusion where we focus on achieving fair and equitable outcomes for all that serve and accountability for wrongdoing that is swift and transparent. In coordination with this committee and the Congress, we have made significant strides to recruit, retain, and advance a diverse workforce, create lasting and powerful change, and enhance the culture and climate of the Service. I look forward to discussing our shared successes, and my vision of how we will continue this necessary work to evolve as a Service.

In order to be a premier maritime Service and an employer of choice, we must be the world’s most inclusive and diverse Coast Guard. A Coast Guard where every member can contribute the full power of their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and thoughts. Anything less, and we will fail to garner the talent, innovation, creativity, and performance necessary to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex and technologically sophisticated maritime operating environment.

Advancing and sustaining the Diversity and Inclusion acumen of a 55,000-person organization requires strategic direction and sustained focus and engagement from all levels. The Coast Guard's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) identifies tangible actions to improve Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), measure outcomes, hold leadership accountable, and most importantly, equip unit commanders with a standard set of resources to promote a diverse and inclusive working environment.

Our plan guides the development of individual and organizational understanding and skills through dialogue. The guiding principles found in the DIAP aid leaders and members in understanding responsibilities, tools, and capabilities of the Coast Guard to culminate in strengthened, inclusive leadership, diversity, and improved accountability. The DIAP formalizes the Coast Guard's continued dedication to the assessment and development of policies and procedures. It also develops workforce training to help drive organizational change and lead to more inclusive behaviors. To facilitate these efforts, we prioritized the training and deployment of Diversity Change Agents. These Change Agents provide diversity and inclusion training, coaching, and support to the total workforce; provide command cadre coaching and counsel; and support the fostering of an organizational culture that values respect, diversity, equity, and inclusion. By the end of this summer, the Coast Guard will have 125 Change Agents fully trained and able to lead unit-level training.

While the DIAP represents bold steps to promote diversity and inclusion, we continue to assess our programs for equitable outcomes. Recent improvements to our College Student Pre-Commissioning (CSPI) program were implemented to create more diversity within the officer ranks. CSPI targets minority serving institutions (MSIs), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions. MSIs set up a pathway for a larger pool of candidates to be exposed to the Coast Guard and the CSPI program. They provide visibility of Coast Guard missions to students who are eligible for the CSPI program, open doors for recruiters to develop relationships with students and staff at colleges and universities and provide financial support through the Student Loan Repayment Program. The Coast Guard recently created a new officer recruiting branch which will stand up this summer. These active-duty officer recruiters were added to offices in key locations around the country including Washington, D.C., Hampton Roads, Atlanta, Miami, and New Orleans to specifically enhance the CSPI program.

The Women's Retention Study and Holistic Analysis, delivered in March 2019 and undertaken in partnership with RAND's Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center, included 191 focus groups with 1,010 active-duty women and 128 active-duty men. The study results identified several factors impacting retention of women and the entire workforce. Based on recommendations from the study we quickly implemented several workforce initiatives to improve equitable outcomes for women. We updated our parental leave policy allowing for up to 114 days of leave (up to 30 days of prenatal leave, 42 days of medical convalescent leave, and 42 days of primary caregiver leave) to be granted to the primary caregiver, and created a program where Coast Guard Reservists can be called to backfill Active Duty members when they go on prenatal, maternity convalescent, and primary caregiver leave. This program sustains unit readiness while best supporting our members with parental responsibilities. We improved uniform and grooming standards, capturing changes recommended from women serving in front line operations.

We adjusted assignment policies, to facilitate the co-location of dual military families, and modernized the body composition program resulting in a new compliance method.

While these changes represent positive steps forward, front line leadership must focus on building organizational climates where everyone can contribute the full power of their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and thoughts. Organizational climates must be free from conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance. We must eliminate incidents of harassment, bullying, and retaliation that create intimidating, offensive, or hostile work environments within the Coast Guard. These behaviors erode mission readiness, are in direct violation of our core values of *Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty* and are simply not tolerated in the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard is committed to responding to and investigating all allegations of harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, and retaliation, while holding offenders accountable. Our updated Anti-Harassment and Hate Incident (AHHI) policies ensure Commanders address and respond to every allegation, and we continue to take decisive action to improve Service-wide accountability. We implemented all 16 recommendations from the December 2018 DHS Inspector General Report of Investigation, the December 2019 "Righting the Ship" majority staff report, and the June 2020 DHS Inspector General Audit. This includes development of robust guidance for our field commanders, investigators, and legal advisors. Updated guidance demands refinement of investigative procedures and enforcement of process timelines and enhancing complaint adjudication. To maintain the highest levels of professionalism, we mandated additional training and enhanced selection criteria of investigators. To ensure fairness and transparency of process, we instituted policy that requires investigators be selected from outside the chain of command. All final actions are reviewed and approved by the next level in the chain of command to ensure accountability.

Two years ago in June 2019, we published *The Coast Guard's Strategic Vision for the Coast Guard Academy*. This document established clear direction to the Superintendent to foster an inclusive environment that enables students and faculty to reach their greatest potential. As part of the strategic plan, within our Mission Support enterprise, we created a DCMS-Deputy for Personnel Readiness (DPR) position. DCMS-DPR is a two-star admiral responsible for oversight of the Service's Human Resource directorate, our Force Readiness Command, and the Coast Guard Academy. In addition to the creation of DCMS-DPR, a Coast Guard Academy Program Manager position was created within the Mission Support organization at Coast Guard Headquarters. The purpose of these additional positions is to improve general oversight at the Coast Guard Academy and to carry out the published strategic vision.

The Academy prioritized the caring, ethical, and inclusive treatment of its people—as well as diversification of the faculty, staff, and cadet corps—central elements of the Academy Strategic Plan. These efforts were recognized by external entities including the National College Athletic Association (NCAA), which recognized the Academy as an Honorable Mention recipient of the NCAA Minority Opportunities Athletics Association Diversity and Inclusion award. The Academy is one of three honorable mention awardees and the only Division III institution recognized. Additionally, the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) recognized the Academy with the Bronze Award for Diversity and Inclusion—the highest level of recognition provided by ASEE that was presented to only 21 Colleges and Universities across the Nation.

These accolades speak to the Coast Guard Academy's efforts to create an inclusive learning and training environment that prepares cadets to become Service Ready Ensigns and Leaders of Character. Their important work continues as they strive for excellence while on-boarding each new class.

In 2020, we launched another study with the RAND Corporation to identify barriers in recruitment and retention, and underrepresentation of women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups in the active-duty Coast Guard. The Underrepresented Minorities study will be delivered later this summer. At our request, RAND provided preliminary survey findings, and we have already begun initial efforts to implement policy changes as a result of RAND's interim findings. Placement of new officer recruiters in Washington, D.C., Hampton Roads, Atlanta, Miami, and New Orleans was inspired by these preliminary findings. Also, the study indicated access to mentors is important. In response, the Office of Leadership launched a new "mobile enabled" mentoring program to better connect mentors with mentees through traditional "one on one" mentoring. The "app based" mentoring program allows flexibility to foster inclusion and connection within and across our many Coast Guard communities. We look forward to sharing the results of this RAND Underrepresented Minorities study with the committee, and implementing initiatives to ensure members from underrepresented minority groups can thrive in the United States Coast Guard.

In collaboration with the Coast Guard, the Department of Homeland Security recently entered into a contract with the National Academy of Public Administration to conduct a study on the cultural competence of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, as required by Section 8272 of the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020. We look forward to the insight and recommendations from this study in order to advance the diversity, equity, and inclusion acumen at our Service Academy.

## **Closing**

The Coast Guard is hard at work to create lasting change and is committed to working closely with Congressional members to enhance the inclusiveness of the Service. The ability to recruit, train, and retain a diverse workforce is critical to Coast Guard readiness, and I seek your support and commitment to attract a talented and diverse workforce, ready to protect and defend America's maritime domain. Being the world's most inclusive Coast Guard is what I call or term "Commander's Business" and a strategic priority for our Service capturing the full attention of our leadership team.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to your questions.