Research Task 121/104
Army SE Career Development Model

Status Report
SERC Sponsor Research Review
December 4, 2014
Drs. Val Gavito and Michael Pennotti
“In response to the ASA(ALT) SOSE&I research request, review and assess Army Engineering Career Development Model (CDM) efforts to date and recommend an approach to produce a baseline model for developing Army civilian engineers.”

• Period of performance: November 2013 – March 2014
“The SERC is to provide an executable model for developing the Army civilian systems engineers.”

Inputs
9000+ ENG ACF Engineers

Outputs
Pool of qualified candidates for 22 Engineering KLPs

Army Career Development System
Five requirements essential for selection to KLPs:

- **Education**: Supervisors should seek candidates with advanced or related college degrees relevant to their functional area to fill KLPs.

- **Experience**: All KLP candidates must be Level III certified in their respective functional area prior to assignment. A minimum of 8 years of Acquisition experience or equivalent demonstrated proficiency as determined by the selection authority is required. However, for ACAT II Program Managers and ACAT I Deputy Program Managers, 6 years of Acquisition experience is required.

- **Cross-functional competencies**: KLPs benefit from broad experience within the following cross-functional competencies: Executive Leadership, Program Execution, Technical Management, and Business Management. These cross-functional competencies are defined.

- **Tenure**: Each assignment to a KLP shall be supported by a written tenure agreement based on the unique requirements of the program or effort to be performed, such as significant milestones, events, or efforts. KLP tenure agreements shall be between individuals and the Component Acquisition Executive (CAE). For PM/DPM positions of an MDAP/MAIS, the tenure period is 4 years and should begin approximately 6 months prior to a major milestone, and for non-major programs the tenure period is 3 years. All other KLPs require a 3-year tenure agreement. All KLP tenure agreements may be tailored by the CAE based on unique program requirements.

- **Currency**: All workforce members assigned to KLP positions must be compliant with the AT&L continuous learning policy, which requires successful completion of 80 hours of continuous learning points (CLP) every 2 years. Within the 80-hour CLP requirement, all workforce members assigned to KLP positions must complete learning in specific areas as outlined in the currency row at Attachment 1.
Army Career Development System

Inputs
- Education
- Experience
- Tenure
- Currency

Outputs
- Cross-functional Competencies

Mentorship

Elements to be coordinated, integrated and actively managed
Army Career Development System

**Inputs**

9000+ ENG ACF Engineers

**Career Management**

- Education
- Experience
- Tenure
- Currency

**Cross-functional Competencies**

**Mentorship**

**Outputs**

Pool of qualified candidates for 22 Engineering KLPs

More effective leaders in ~1000 ENG Critical Acquisition Positions
**Education**: More than 80% of ENG ACF engineers have Bachelor’s degrees and one-third have advanced degrees. The Army Acquisition Education, Training, and Experience (AETE) program and the Acquisition Tuition Assistance Program (ATAP) provide support for acquisition personnel who wish to pursue additional educational opportunities.

**Experience**: Today’s career development system reliably produces competent Level III certified ENG ACF engineers to fill positions at the GS 13 level. At GS 14/15, the Army's Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM) program is designed to prepare participants for positions of greater responsibility through advanced senior-level educational and developmental experiences.

**Tenure**: While rotational assignments for career development are provided, formal agreements are not commonplace and where they exist, are more often time-bound than based on the achievement of specific program and developmental milestones.
• **Currency:** The AT&L continuous learning policy requires 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) every 2 years and 95% of acquisition professionals are estimated to regularly meet that standard.

• **Cross-functional competencies:** While KLP leaders have certainly developed a broad range of cross-functional competencies, anecdotal evidence suggests that these competencies were acquired in an ad hoc fashion, rather than through a formal, systematic and actively managed process.

• **Mentorship:** The Army Mentorship Program appears to be excellent and has been in existence for nearly a decade; however, only 13% of the civilian workforce recognize that they have had help from a formal or informal mentor.

• **System Integration:** The Army already has most of the components required to build an effective career development system, but these elements have been separately developed, are separately administered, and need to be refined, coordinated and integrated into a coherent whole.
“Expand the RT-104 model for developing Army civilian systems engineers in the Army’s Engineering Acquisition Career Field (ACF) to assist in developing Lead and Chief Systems Engineers for Key Leader Positions (KLPs).”

• Specific Research Tasks:
  — **Subtask 1 - Education & Experience**: Recommend a productive link amongst the multiple databases that comprise Army Career Acquisition Management such as the Career Record Brief and Army Career Tracker
  — **Subtask 2 - Tenure & Cross Functional Competencies**: Recommend a Personnel Rotational Model as an expansion on the RT 104 Tenure and Cross Functional recommendations
  — **Subtask 3 - Army Mentorship**: Recommend how best to incentivize the Army Mentorship Program amongst the Engineering ACF workforce
  — **Subtask 4 - Currency & Continuous Learning Modules**: Prioritize Continuous Learning Modules (CLMs) for KLP development and provide a recommended CLP catalogue

**Period of Performance**: June 2014 – January 2015
Caveats to this Status Report

- The RT-121 research plan ‘reduced’ the task to four subtasks
- As discovery proceeded, it became increasingly clear that the subtasks overlap and are closely coupled
- This status report is limited to interim findings for each of the subtasks individually
- The final report will also address the coupling between the subtasks and provide recommendations within a more holistic framework
• **Subtask 1 - Education & Experience**: Recommend a productive link amongst the multiple databases that comprise Army Career Acquisition Management such as the Career Record Brief and Army Career Tracker

  — Understand DACM’s overarching Acquisition Career Management System databases and interrelationships
  
  o What are the databases & what do they contain?
  o How are they maintained? Managed? Linked?
  o Is the data analyzed and/or measured against mandates and/or planned education and/or experience roadmaps?
  o Are there expected/presented responses to the measurements?
  o Are there education/experience elements within supervisors/leaders performance appraisals?

  — Define the terms and context of a ‘Productive Link’
Subtask 1 Interim Findings

Strengths

- CAMP provides an effective interface for aggregating and consolidating data from numerous relevant databases and making them available to both individuals and their organizations
- CAMP also provides a convenient means for acquisition personnel to maintain their Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB) and prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Limitations

- CAMP is primarily transaction-oriented
- It supports a highly distributed, individual development approach that may not be adequate to meet overall organizational needs
- It facilitates the “how” of preparing an IDP, but does not address the “why”
- It captures the positions an individual has held and the roles they have played, but not the competencies they have acquired or the accomplishments that demonstrate them
• **Subtask 2 - Tenure & Cross Functional Competencies:** Recommend a Personnel Rotational Model as an expansion on the RT 104 Tenure and Cross Functional recommendations
  — Are there representative sets of desired and/or measureable outcomes of rotational assignment programs?
  — Are there representative sets of KLP qualification requirements, board processes, and/or qualification criteria?
  — How would PEO & KLP requirements differ?
Strengths

• The Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM) program offers GS 14/15 personnel opportunities to broaden their skills and prepare for greater challenges through short-term or longer term rotational assignments.

Limitations

• Rotational assignments appear to be focused on the position to be filled, not the competencies to be demonstrated or the value to be created.
Subtask 3 - Army Mentorship: Recommend how best to incentivize the Army Mentorship Program amongst the Engineering ACF workforce

— Understand the DACM’s mentorship initiatives to assess application to the Engineering ACF workforce
  o Are there ongoing Formal/Informal mentorship initiatives?
  o Are there Mentorship ‘communities of interest’ with a list of mentors?
  o Has DACM conducted Mentorship focus group sessions? Data available?
Subtask 3 Interim Findings

Strengths

• The Army Mentorship Program appears to be an excellent mechanism for establishing and sustaining voluntary, developmental relationships between a person of greater experience and one of lesser experience.

Limitations

• Despite the existence of the Army Mentorship Program for nearly a decade, only 13% of the civilian workforce recognize that they have had help from a formal or informal mentor in planning their career paths.

• Mentoring appears to be treated as an end in itself, not as a component of a comprehensive career development culture.
  – As an example, the Army Mentorship Program is housed on the MyArmyBenefits website.
Subtask 4 - Currency & Continuous Learning Modules: Prioritize Continuous Learning Modules (CLMs) for KLP development and provide a recommended CLP catalogue

- Where is the current catalog of FIPT approved CLMs?
- What are the DACM’s thoughts forward vis a vis assessing the CLMs against KLP requirements?
Strengths

• DAU offers a large number of Core Plus courses for expanded training beyond the basic requirements at each DAWIA level
• KLP requirements and preferences are included in the DAU Catalog along with certification standards and recommended CORE Plus training for each DAWIA Level

Limitations

• Both the required and recommended courses address individual topics or functional skills, not the holistic perspective required of technical leaders
• Formulate a set of specific recommendations to address the identified limitations for each of the four subtasks

• Define the coupling between the subtasks to provide a more integrated perspective on improvement opportunities

• Develop a set of top-level recommendations within this more holistic framework

• Incorporate all findings and recommendations in a final report to be delivered to ASA(ALT) SoSE&I by January 31, 2015