

## Farewell from Ms. Anita Blair, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Civilian Personnel Policy



Ms. Anita Blair,  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
of Defense,  
Civilian Personnel Policy

I am extremely grateful to the whole DoD HR community for your extraordinary patience, tolerance, and forbearance as I have prattled on endlessly for the past 3-1/2 years.

I almost retired in 2016, but decided to take on one more tour, which I always knew would be my last. So I confess that I've "over-communicated" because there's a lot I've learned over the years that I wanted to make sure to tell you before I go.

One of the things I will always treasure is the wonderful partnership among CPP, DCPAS, and our HR community throughout DoD. You've been generous and gracious collaborators.

- Generous in sharing knowledge, experience, and talent;
- Gracious in receiving the perspectives of others and supporting a joint way forward.

Together we have accomplished some impressive, almost miraculous, things.

- **Strategic Alignment:** We produced and implemented first DoD Human Capital Operating Plan – the HCOP – hitched to the National Defense Strategy. As proof of its staying power, we are now turning to the second biennial update of the HCOP.
- **Data/Evidence:** To highlight priorities and keep our eyes on the ball, we built DoD-wide HR metrics. We established regular quarterly reviews of component and program performance.
- **Regulatory Reform:** "Simplify. Streamline. Standardize. Share." We successfully advocated for new legislation to combine dozens of separate HR authorities under a single policy. Now we're streamlining the policy issuance process.
- **HR IT:** In implementing DCHRMS, we are the first federal agency to take on and conquer the challenge of moving from a legacy ERP system to a modern, Cloud-based, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) system integrating both human capital transactions and talent management.
- **Digital Workforce Modernization:** We are applying the learning from our other accomplishments – strategic alignment, data/evidence, regulatory reform, and HR IT – to design and build the critical workforce of the future.

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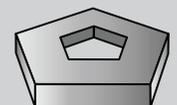
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U.S. DEPT OF DEFENSE

## *Farewell from Ms. Anita Blair, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Civilian Personnel Policy (Continued)*

I'm proud of these accomplishments, but the thing I'm really proudest of is YOU.

Some of you surely attended the 2018 World-Wide where I said to DoD's civilian HR community: "I want to liberate you."

I meant it.

- I want you to know you are contributing your best to the most important goals of DoD. That's Strategic Alignment.
- I want you to have proof that what you're doing is productive and valuable. That's using Data and Evidence.
- I want to free you from tedium and bureaucracy. That's Regulatory Reform.
- I want your time – which is, after all, your life – and your intelligence to be respected and not wasted. That's HR IT.
- I want you to fully appreciate your own ability to learn and grow, to create and innovate, and to meet new changes and challenges with confidence. Right now, that's Digital Workforce Modernization ... and who knows what the next new thing will be called? But you will be ready!

All the projects I've pursued in my time here have been aimed at cultivating an environment in which each and every person can do their best and be their best.

Only you can say whether you are doing and being your personal best.

But I can tell you that, from where I stand, you've been just the best group of people to work with.

I'm proud of your accomplishments, and most of all, I'm proud of YOU. Thank you for making my Farewell Tour so fulfilling! ■

## ***DoD Talent Development - A Community Developing HR Professionals DoD's Got Talent!***

The Defense Chief Learning Officer Council (DCLOC) is the Department's community for civilian Learning and Development (L&D) professionals and those interested in this HR niche. Monthly meetings provide opportunities to hear from a variety of speakers on a wide range of topics. It is also a forum for rich discussion and sharing across the L&D community itself. Over the past several months, we have benefitted from having speakers such as Dr. Ortega at OMB who spoke about digital literacy, and Dr. Sae Schatz at Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) who provided a demo of the upcoming Enterprise Course Catalog. More recently, DLA presented their Learning Management System and its functionality, while the Air Force shared their transformational instructional re-design for pilot training and their Digital University concept leveraging Udemy. With an extra DCLOC session in December, we heard from experts at The Conference Board about technology and the 3 key problems in Talent Acquisition, Learning and Talent Management.

When COVID-19 changed the way we lived and worked last March, the DCLOC established a short-term Technology Working Group (TWG). The initial focus of the group was to survey and identify technology and tools that could be used to deliver learning and training remotely while we all adjusted to a new normal. While it appeared that the TWG would stand down after completing that task, we inadvertently discovered a deep disparity between those organizations with tools and technology, and those without. The TWG seized the opportunity and has been focused on solving the more strategic and long-term issue: addressing the inequities across the Department and increasing our influence with technology-related policies and decisions.

Over the summer of 2020, members of the DCLOC community formed a working group to conceptualize and develop an annual meet-up on L&D for DoD civilians. The group's efforts will advance peer learning and problem solving, enable the sharing and application of lessons learned, and further the professional connections that are vital to our mutual success. It will also provide the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the great work, results and achievements made across the L&D community as we institute a formal recognition program. Plans for the inaugural civilian L&D remote gathering are in the works for a 2021 launch so be sure to stay tuned!

This fall, the DCLOC established a Coaching Working Group (CWG) to concentrate on expanding and suffusing a coaching culture at DoD. Their work encompasses a range of objectives from increasing opportunities for training to become a certified coach or for the general workforce to gain some basic coaching skills, to acquiring an International Coach Federation (ICF)-accredited coaching training program to establishing a robust DoD-wide coaching network. The CWG is an active and vibrant subset of the community who are determined to connect and bolster the pockets of great coaching programs and training for the benefit of the Department and our workforce.

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## ***DoD Talent Development - A Community Developing HR Professionals DoD's Got Talent! (Continued)***

In early December, the Council formed a Metrics Working Group to collaborate on measures that capture and convey the effect that learning, development and training is having on the workforce and our productivity. With the P&R 2030 strategy homing in on data dominance, and updates coming to the Human Capital Operating Plan (HCOP) for FY2022 - FY2023, the DCLOC, knowing the importance of this work, embraced the opportunity to work together across the enterprise to identify and recommend metrics to demonstrate the effects and outcomes from the learning and development perspective.

While the DCLOC made substantial progress in 2020, there is more terrain to cover and more initiatives on the horizon. In 2021, Dr. Jim Kirkpatrick, a global expert in training evaluation, will speak to us in January about evaluating and measuring the effect of learning and development, while Dr. Anant Agarwal, Professor at MIT and Founder of EdX, one of the pioneers of online learning, will share his insights on innovating through challenging circumstances like COVID and share his thoughts on the future of online learning. In March, we will turn our attention as a community to discuss certification and credentialing of the development technical specialty area of HR.

If you are interested in joining us for DCLOC meetings (3rd Thursdays at 1300 via MS Teams) or serving on a working group, please email the CLO mailbox at [dodhra.mc-alex.dcpas.mbx.td-clo@mail.mil](mailto:dodhra.mc-alex.dcpas.mbx.td-clo@mail.mil). ■

## ***Career Broadening Highlight Air Force career broadening develops leaders to answer tomorrow's challenges***

The Career Broadening Program is an integral part of Air Force's formal leadership development framework. Vicki Fragomeli, Chief of the Force Support Career Field Team at Air Force's Personnel Center illuminates a program that focuses on strategic and operational career development requirements within functional communities.

"To effectively respond to tomorrow's challenges, the Air Force must grow strong leaders today," said Kimberly Toney, Air Force's Personnel Center executive director. Therefore, we must invest in our civilians and develop talent across the enterprise so we have the right people in the right place to care for our Airmen and their families. Career broadening deliberately expands the skills and capabilities of high-potential Department of the Air Force employees while enhancing their leadership perspective."

Career broadening targets mid-level Air Force employees, GS-12 through GS-14 or equivalents, and GS-15 or equivalents by exception. Experiential opportunities and building occupational and institutional competencies, affords individuals opportunities to pursue career advancement.

The duration of an Air Force career broadening position is 30-36 months. Participants alternate through the assigned organization and do no more than 12 months per rotation. The rotations offered at Air Force, done outside the career broadener's area of expertise, are at Headquarters, base level, Major Commands, Combatant Commands, Joint Staff, and Air Force Field Operating agencies.

High-caliber civilian applicants and priority leadership development and succession management from collaborative senior leaders is the reason for program success. Over the years, the program has grown to a portfolio of more than 350 career-broadening positions Air Force wide.

Invited by various Career Field Teams, package submissions are requested during open periods held annually or bi-annually for interested employees. Through vetting of applicant experience/resume, career goals and leader endorsements, the applicant is guided to educational development or career opportunities.

To be considered for the Air Force Career Broadening programs, applicants must commit to being geographically mobile upon completion of the program. Career broadening participants can also actively initiate their own outplacements by applying to Air Force job announcements. ■

## Spotlight *on Success*



Ms. Deb Ray

### Ms. Deb Ray

#### *Analytics Leads to Success as a Senior HR Advisor*

**Q. What experiences and behaviors are noted by your leadership that make you a recognized leader?**

One of my greatest strengths is an ability to communicate effectively with peers and executives. My communication skills developed early on as an operations research analyst assigned to the Center for Army Analysis. It was there that all analysts were required to “brief” their analytic projects to a board of directors. This helped build public speaking confidence and focused messaging. Additionally, I’m able to see HR as a network of critical programs that must function well together. Many of the projects and efforts I oversaw as a manager (such as establishment of the first DoD Civilian Human Capital Operating Plan and executing the 2018 Worldwide HR Training Event in Southbridge, MA) required me to look across all of the HR programs and strengthen my ability to think “integration” across HR.

**Q: How did you acquire these experiences and behaviors?**

Getting to know HR was a bit more complicated, so I had to seek out efforts that helped me build a foundation in civilian HR. Many of those “behind the scenes” efforts (i.e., volunteering to participate in DoD and federal-wide working groups/panels, reading professional journals and texts on HR, engaging with my HR peers on working groups and special projects); however, all of them held value to me professionally. It also gave me opportunity to “get my feet wet” in areas that I wasn’t familiar with initially.

**Q: What attributes from your professional journey helped you with your decision to become a Senior Strategic Advisor?**

Because I didn’t grow up in HR like many of my peers, I worked harder to gain an understanding of how HR programs support each other and how they are part of a larger web of business processes and policies. It took personal courage to be open about my limitations with my new HR peers, but it helped gain credibility with them. I entered the HR community through the workforce analytics door, then quickly transitioned over to strategic planning.

Coming from an analytic background as an operations research analyst, I take a quantitative approach to problem solving. To some degree this forces me to over analyze, which helps me lay out relationships across programs and links to strategic goals and objectives. It helps me see the big picture in lieu of looking at problems in a stovepipe. HR performance and analytics allows me to bring quantitative discussion to a qualitative-focused business.

**Q. What technical competencies are the most important for HR Senior Strategic Advisors (SSA)? Will these competencies be necessary in the future?**

DoD has really taken notice of the critical role of HR strategic advisors. Hooray! We have a golden opportunity to articulate why we are critical and what makes us valuable to our customers and to our HR leaders. Taking an analytic perspective on why and how things operate the way they do in HR is important. We have to be able to communicate well and be comfortable negotiating. We need to be okay (aka “thick skinned”) when all of our work goes in the “no thanks” bucket. We can’t take things personally in this business. There’s no room for being shy and stand-offish. Be confident but not arrogant in our communications with others. Know when being politically savvy is important. Effectively applying these competencies will contribute to our critical role in the future of HR.

**Q: What are the most rewarding aspects about being a Senior Strategic Advisor?**

I love that SSAs are able to dissect problems and determine what works well and what isn’t working so well. I also like that this position gives room for risk taking...in the aspect of being able to spend time considering approaches that end up not being that successful, but still provide valuable insights. With more opportunity to experiment, we could be a wiser community.

**Q. Do you have advice for anyone striving to become a Senior Strategic Advisor?**

Be open to innovative ideas. Learn to stretch your ideas outside of HR. Discovering how your findings/recommendations impact other areas such as budget, IT, or other areas of business acumen. These impacts are important when you bring a recommendation or proposal to leadership...trust me, they will ask! Grow your circle of advisors. Don’t work in a vacuum and include insights and feedback from your peers so they can help you find weak spots in your work.

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## Spotlight: Ms. Deb Ray (Continued)

**Q: Did you gain any non-Human Resources skills that helped you with your role as a Senior Strategic Advisor?**

How many times have I mentioned communications and negotiation? Being able to confidently communicate your work and react appropriately to debate will take you far! Also, a good SSA should not be afraid of numbers. You don't have to have a degree in math, but being confident in using data to support your analysis and recommendations is a HUGE value to being an SSA. Find classes that explain the role of analytics and how to use data to highlight program performance. When data is discussed in meetings, don't glaze over...ask questions!

One of the biggest takeaways from my previous professional development and leadership courses has been the value in aligning what we do in HR to DoD's priorities. Read the National Defense Strategy and the National Defense Business Operations Plan! Then, for those of us in HR, take time to see how it aligns to the USD(P&R)'s Strategic Plan and DoD's Civilian Human Capital Operating Plan. As an effective SSA, you need to recognize how we in HR are contributing (or how we should be contributing) to DoD's priorities.

*Ms. Deborah Ray is currently serving as Senior Strategic Advisor to the Executive Director of the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service. Her responsibilities include managing, directing, overseeing and conducting complex high-level cross-cutting studies and projects related to the Department's civilian human capital management. In this role, Ms. Ray supports senior leadership in the development and oversight of civilian human resource plans, policies, and programs for more than 900,000 defense employees worldwide. Her efforts result in impacts to critical and time sensitive strategic matters encompassing the full spectrum of Human Capital Management.*

*Prior to her current assignment, Ms. Ray served as the Director of Planning and Accountability at the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service; Chief of the Planning, Analysis and Evaluation Division at US Army G-1 for Civilian Personnel (AG1CP); and Chief of the Infrastructure Support Division at US Army Manpower Analysis Agency.*

*Ms. Ray holds a Master of Science in Operations Research from George Mason University and a Master of Science in National Resource Strategy from the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at National Defense University. ■*

## Spotlight on Technical Success



Adam Daulton

### Mr. Adam Daulton

Mr. Daulton has been with the Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS) Human Resources (HR) for the past 12+ years. His federal HR position allowed him to facilitate others achievements. He also implemented standardized work tasks as a service provider within the Federal HR space. Challenges helped him become resilient and he learned how to navigate customer service. Mr. Daulton is a people person who understands people behavior.

Mr. Daulton works in HR to assist people with issues and questions. He supports the right people in the right place to establish a solution that helps real people – the employees and customers who do the mission to help the warfighter. When customers ask to do something, provided it is legal and ethical, the job is to find their requirement and serve that need. Building long-term relationships with organizations and meeting customers' essentials allows HR to accomplish their mission.

Technical and functional competencies are a big part of an HR career and being a strategic advisor. To highlight this, Mr. Daulton shared an example of the use of technical and functional competencies to improve customers' hiring experiences. DFAS leadership consistently received complaints from customers about hiring and staffing lag time. In other words, it took too long to hire personnel. Mr. Daulton and his team met with DFAS customers' senior leaders to gather the frustration points. DFAS HR used data to gather hiring and staffing employment cycle times. Mr. Daulton's analysis of the data accounted for timing of job announcement, hiring certificate turn-around, clearances, and personnel who declined job offers. The resolution was to have a 90-day job announcement cycle.

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## Spotlight on Technical Success: Mr. Adam Daulton (Continued)

The lead-time reduced time of announcement advertising and certificate submission. This allowed for current and accurate candidate availability and removed a large segment of time in the hiring process. The result is timely hiring by hiring managers. The process took three to six months to come to fruition and resulted in positive reviews from senior leadership to DFAS HR.

According to Mr. Daulton, if you want to be a strategic advisor, you need to be a problem solver. Even if you do not know the solution to a particular problem, find the right people, processes, or ways to solve it...and involve your customer in the solution. A good attitude throughout problem solving opportunities will not only make customers walk away with a solved problem, but walk away with a good experience as well.

*Adam Daulton is the Chief of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) Human Resources (HR) Regional Services Center (RSC) and has been in that role since July 2016. The RSC provides staffing support to other DoD agencies and to the Department of State. Adam has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management, an MBA specializing in Human Resources, and is both PHR and SHRM-CP certified. Adam lives in Indianapolis, IN with his wife Krista, their three young daughters, and a rascally dog name Gimli. In his free time Adam enjoys serving with his church, fishing, hunting, basketball, and board game design. ■*

## Credentialing/Certification Highlights

The Labor and Employee Relations (LER) Line of Business (LOB) is progressing toward the anticipated LER credentialing program.

The tiered credentialing framework includes an introductory, intermediate, and advanced level. The introductory course will outline principles of both Labor Relations (LR) and Employee Relations (ER) for an introduction to the LER field. The curriculum for this tier of credentialing is with course developers. A comprehensive review by subject matter experts (SME), consistent with legal and regulatory changes, endorsed the competencies to construct suitable course content. A prototype introductory course is scheduled for field-testing in March 2021.

The curriculum for intermediate and advanced tiers are currently being developed. Component involvement ensures course-related interests are addressed. Once the curriculum is ready, it will be provided to the course developers. The credentialing course development process ensures that Department of Defense LER practitioners acquire standardized, up-to-date, and professionally developed materials to help navigate this challenging field. The LER LOB looks forward to meeting this challenge in coordination with leadership, components, SMEs, and course developers. ■

## White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP)



This program is open now! Take advantage of a great leadership development program.

The WHLDP, sponsored by Executive Office of the President and supported by the President's Management Council and the Performance Improvement Council, provides a unique growth opportunity focused on developing high potential career GS-15 and equivalents poised to enter the next generation of career senior executives. Participants will work on the Federal government's high impact challenges that require the coordination of multiple federal agencies to succeed.

For more detailed information on the WHLDP, consult the Program Manual and Nomination Guidance on the DCPAS website: <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/CTD/Training>. ■

## Spotlight on Human Resources Interns

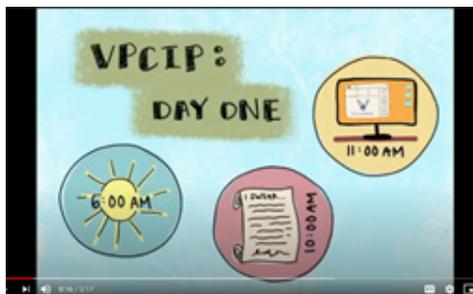
### College Students Participate in Virtual Civilian Internships

By Toni Whaley, Air Force's Personnel Center Public Affairs

*We will be including a new highlight in future HRFC Newsletter editions, regarding interns who serve in HR. Professional development is the mission of HRFC. In future editions, we will highlight intern programs and interns who have made a great impact to the mission. This month we highlight the Air Force internship program.*

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas** – As COVID-19 continues to shape a new normal for Air Force and Space Force operations, several hundred college students virtually on boarded as Air Force civilian summer interns on June 15th.

Civilian personnel staffs across the Air Force enterprise in-processed approximately 500 college students participating in the Air Force's Personnel Center virtual Premier College Intern Program, vPCIP.



“Our team worked hard to put together a viable program with meaningful experiences for the participants,” said Dave VanSteenburg, Director, Civilian Personnel Operations. “They took an in-residence program and translated it into a virtual one in less than 90 days, which is simply amazing. It was important to do because we made a commitment to these interns.”

Interns participated in a weeklong symposium that included a welcome from Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower Gwendolyn DeFilippi, an overview of civilian service, and the professional opportunities civilian service with the Air Force offers, said William Cavanaugh, AFPC Force Renewal Branch Chief.

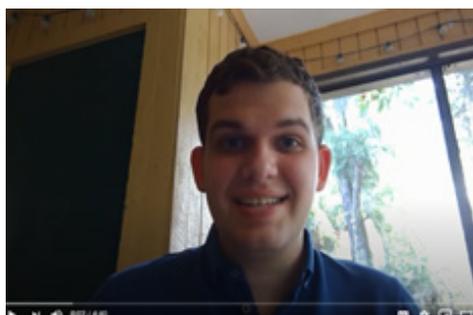
The virtual internship ran for six weeks and consisted of an acculturation week developed by Air University, a group project spanning the entirety of the program, four senior mentor small group sessions with 50 Air Force civilian senior leaders from across the enterprise, and a career field specific functional experience. For those installations that could support it, a weeklong in residence session was provided for interested interns.

“In addition to partnering with Air University, we also incorporated a “Chat with an Airman” day as part of the symposium where active duty guest speakers from various professions give interns first-hand knowledge and a better understanding of what the Air Force does,” said Cavanaugh.

“We made a commitment to these interns and that means something to the Air Force,” said Cavanaugh. “We work hard to build relationships with the universities they attend--relationships that allow us to have access to their campus and to share Air Force civil service opportunities. We want to cultivate a reputation as the organization of choice with these universities and their students.”

“The Air Force depends on this summer internship to produce candidates for our Palace Acquire and Copper Cap programs, ensuring we are able to meet future demands in STEM, Cyber and other critical specialties,” said VanSteenburg.

“If after the experience they feel the Air Force is right for them and their supervisors feel they are right for the Air Force, they will be given an opportunity to convert to a three year extended internship that could lead to permanent placement,” said Cavanaugh.



Feedback for vPCIP is overwhelmingly positive with overall satisfaction levels exceeding prior entirely in-person PCIP sessions. The virtual environment increased individual participation levels in projects and briefings which enriched the experience for all. Additionally, the peer and senior leader mentorship sessions were noted as extremely valuable additions. ■