



Diversity Advisory Council Report

To
National Auxiliary Commodore

October 2005

The fall convening of the Commandant's Diversity Advisory Council consisting of representatives from Active Duty, Reserve, Civilian and the Auxiliary took place the third week of October.

DAC is a principal group of men and women who meets bi-annually and serves as the eyes and ears for the Commandant on diversity issues pertaining to recruitment and retention for the Coast Guard as it strives to become the employer of choice.

After receiving a warm welcome and introductions from Captain Jean Butler from the Office of Diversity CG-12B, the Council members had an in-depth discussion of our weekly goals, objectives, roles, responsibilities and important deadlines for the week.

With the steady tracking of past DAC activity we spent a little time discussing the previous two years issues reviewing progress and noting unfinished work. We began our toil with a *Child Care Needs Assessment* briefing by staff from the Office of Work-Life, covering their work on this issue identified by one of the previous councils.

A part of each meeting of DAC is training, so we were presented with an alluring trial of a training component titled "**Just Be F.A.I.R.**" from Vision Point Productions Inc.

Diversity is about recognizing and responding effectively to the similarities and differences among all groups that make up the organization. **Just Be FAIR; A Practical Approach to Diversity in the Workplace** is designed to help you recognize and respond to those similarities and differences and understand what diversity really is and when it matters most in the workplace. Diversity is about understanding the unique characteristics of the various groups who make up your business environment – i.e., customers, employees, suppliers and other stakeholders.

In order for the Coast Guard to stay competitive, deal with change, and become an employer of choice, both people and organizations must be culturally competent. One of the ways cultural competence can be developed is by using the **FAIR Approach**.

The USCG Office of Diversity has already purchased a copy of this training component and hopes to provide this training to all of the Active Duty, Reserve and Civilian work

forces. Members of DAC will eventually be able to borrow the training component for use among our members.

For the first time, DAC was asked to submit its full and complete list of unscrutinized issues to the Commandant for his eyes only even before we prioritized and screened for our working purposes. Having done this gave ADM Collins an opportunity to note every issue brought before DAC even though some of them would not be receiving our attention for understandable reasons.

An abbreviated listings of some of these issues are as follows: *Minority assignment issues due to social climate, Reserve Diversity Plan, Auxiliary recruitment concerns, Changes to the CGA AIM program, Update on recruiting trends, DAC involvement in EO reviews, Hiring of women and minorities in civilian jobs, Mentorship concerns for women and minorities, a lack of minorities Officers in command cadre positions afloat, Career ladder concerns for civilian hires, Temporary separation and recruitment, and the high attrition rate of Junior Officer from the Coast Guard.*

As a majority of our issues were Gold side and civilian workplace issues, nevertheless the Auxiliary gains the opportunity to further align itself with the principals and practices of recruitment and retention as the Coast Guard.

In the interest of time we prioritized our list and assigned each issue to the respective subcommittees to be looked into. This meant that we had to hustle and arrange meetings with interested personnel, Department heads, other staff, and dig for data to uncover a resolution within the next three days. Sometimes our days were ten to twelve hours long as we pursued and uncovered all the facts and data needed to lay an issue to rest.

As we worked ourselves closer to the end of the week we focused mainly on our report and power point presentation we'd be making to the Commandant and his Flag Staff of Officers Friday morning in the Command Center briefing room.

Some thirty-fourty Flag staff, Heads of Departments, Civilians, Consultants and other invited guest would find themselves seated around the room and Command table while the DAC members briefed the Commandant on our work and presented him with a proposed resolution for each issue or a timeline for further study.

The existence of a Diversity Advisory Council in addition to investigating diversity issues sends a clear message throughout the Coast Guard that our organization understands the importance of diversity among our people. Blending unique cultural backgrounds with individual qualities under the umbrella of one common goal, "to be the employer of choice" is what this is about. With open minds and open doors, we create an environment where engaged, productive people work together for the benefit of all. ADM Collins encouraged DAC to keep kicking the tires of this organization.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Lloyd, USCG Auxiliary