



Eclipse Legacy Fund Governance Committee

From: Eclipse Legacy Fund Governance Committee (ELFGC)
To: Superintendent, U.S. Coast Guard Academy; Admiral James Rendon
Thru: Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association
Subj: Recommendations on Recruiting and Retention of URM students at the Coast Guard Academy
Ref: (a) The Semi-Annual Eclipse Legacy Fund Newsletter, Summer Edition, 2017

On June 9th, 2017 the Baltimore Sun published an article titled “U. S. Coast Guard Academy Blindly White.” The article was drafted by Connecticut State Representative Chris Soto, who is also a distinguished alumnus of the Coast Guard Academy; one who has been on the front lines attempting to combat the issues addressed in the article and that have plagued Coast Guard Academy for many years. The article garnered attention from the Coast Guard as well as Coast Guard supporters and many Academy Alumni across the country. Including an immediate response by the Coast Guard Academy which was also published in the Baltimore Sun later that same week. The articles, while in disagreement about the current state of the Academy’s underrepresented minority recruiting and retention, both agreed that the recruiting and retention of underrepresented minorities has been and continues to be a challenge. This challenge is exactly why the Eclipse Legacy Fund and Governance Committee was established. The challenge of recruitment and retention is also why Eclipse Legacy Fund supporters give/participate and it is also why many Academy Minority Outreach Team (AMOT) volunteer their time and resources. In an effort to ensure that we maintain the full support and commitment within both groups, we chose to begin this dialogue with the Coast Guard Academy.

Recently the Eclipse Legacy Fund Governance Committee (ELFGC) and Academy Minority Outreach Team leadership met to discuss the article and the issues of recruiting and retention of underrepresented minorities. Consistent themes dominated the discussion because we’ve had to address these very same arguments in the past. These themes are the lack of African American cadets entering the Coast Guard Academy, the lack of African American cadets graduating from the Coast Guard Academy, and the lack of African American staff members at the Coast Guard Academy. The Coast Guard Academy is considered a college or university with an overall student population with an above average ethnically diverse population (<https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/united-states-coast-guard-academy/student-life/diversity/>).

However, the undeniable fact remains that the Coast Guard Academy doesn’t attract African American talent in large or consistent numbers that mirror the U.S. population. There are 66 African American cadets (there are also 22 cadets who declare 2 or more categories including African American) at the Coast Guard Academy in a cadet population of approximately 1053 (as of 2021 reporting in day). According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, African Americans comprise nearly 12% of the entire U.S. population and the Coast Guard Academy’s African American cadet composition is 6.3% (2% of declare 2 or more categories including African American). Considering that the Coast Guard Academy remains the primary source of Coast Guard Officers by nearly 3 to 1 ratio, the lack of African American cadets will translate to a lack of future Coast Guard Officers.



Eclipse Legacy Fund Governance Committee

The Coast Guard's Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan for 2018 calls for the Coast Guard to be an employer of choice. Though other ethnic groups are near the national average for their demographic composition at the Coast Guard Academy, African American students continue to pass on the opportunity to attend the Coast Guard Academy. This is significant but unfortunately, in each case within just a few years the numbers significantly dropped including the 2% of African American cadets in this year's class of 2017. The Coast Guard Academy has never experienced sustained success. We believe the only way for success to be sustainable is if it is structured and systematic, not sporadic. The efforts, programs and strategic priorities must be supported with adequate (not minimal) resources and receive adequate organizational support including policy and instructional documentation.

In the recent Eclipse Legacy Fund newsletter released on June 29th, 2017, we responded to the article and declared our intention to provide recommendations to the Academy on how to continue improving the recruiting and retention of students at the Coast Guard Academy. All recommended solutions will be based on the three objective pillars found in the Coast Guard's Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan (2018): **Workforce Diversity**, **Workforce Inclusion**, and **Sustainability**.

The following recommendations are in accordance with the mission and established principles of the Eclipse Legacy Fund to strengthen Underrepresented Minority recruitment and retention at the Coast Guard Academy and within the Coast Guard. The commitment our leadership has made to all its contributors, participants and to the Cadets and Officers we serve is to be a voice of change and impact; to stand up for the Core Values of the Coast Guard and to represent those in uniform (now and future) who deserve an unhindered opportunity for success in this organization. The Eclipse Legacy Fund Governance Committee request to receive your response to the recommendations be provided within 120 days of receipt, which would allow the response to be included in the Eclipse Legacy Fund's Winter Newsletter in December 2017.

Workforce Diversity: AMOT has been a very successful volunteer organized and led recruiting initiative that is dedicated to identifying African American candidates for the Academy. The activities include assisting families and candidates in successfully negotiating the Academy application and acceptance process, and providing a unique level of personal contact rarely experienced with other Service recruiting efforts.

1. The Academy or the Coast Guard should provide sustained resources dedicated to the AMOT program, which will establish and promulgate the policies necessary to implement AMOT and be sponsored by the Coast Guard.
2. Address sustained recruiting production by transitioning the AMOT Volunteer Leadership position to a Civilian Position at either the Coast Guard Academy or Coast Guard Headquarters; depending on funding/accountability source.

Workforce Inclusion: The first criteria to take into account in the evaluation of cadet retention is environment and culture where people of diverse backgrounds feel included, valued, and respected. The climate at the Coast Guard Academy is the dominant factor affecting retention of underrepresented minority cadets:



Eclipse Legacy Fund Governance Committee

1. The Coast Guard and/or Academy should contract external experts to document and assess whether its existing climate reflects the Coast Guard's espoused culture of respect and action.
2. Provide a copy of the last three (3) Coast Guard Academy climate studies to Eclipse Legacy Fund GC of (ELFGC). The members of the Eclipse Legacy Fund (ELFGC) represent a diverse population and may be able to offer suggestions and recommendations not previously considered using our knowledge and experiences as former cadets, current cadets, and commissioned officers (Active, Reserve, Retired, Separated).
3. Please provide a copy of the board of trustees action items on Community of Inclusion goals for public viewership; request permission to post this information on the Eclipse Legacy Fund website.

Sustainability: Mentoring, in all its various forms, has shown to be an effective and positive influence on the successful professional development and progression of both cadets and officers. However, mentoring efforts have relied largely on informal organizations and volunteers. Implement a more structured mentoring organizational structure and provide adequate resources and policies to the Coast Guard's informal mentoring networks. There should be an active promotion for inclusive participation to ensure a diversity of mentors of all rank and eliminate a tendency to be exclusive in developing mentoring relationships; and not limiting future professional experience and wisdom one might receive through only one singular view.

1. Provide a list of all implemented systemic changes that ensure sustained recruiting efforts to transcend transfer season and volunteer dependence.
2. Provide the number of the cadets divided by race, ethnicity, and gender who were offered appointments (full & conditional), the number who accepted appointments and their retention rates since 2001.
3. Request to review all past Coast Guard and 3rd Party diversity and Climate studies with recommendations on how to improve climate and culture at the Academy.
4. Provide a list of all implemented systemic changes that ensure sustained cadet retention of underrepresented minorities that transcend transfer season and volunteer dependence.
5. Provide the number of Academy faculty and staff by race/gender for 2017 (including company officers and chiefs) and compare to the 2009 strategic plan to increase/promote a diverse faculty and staff by 25-30% (race/gender) by 2020.

#

Copy: Deputy Commandant for Mission Support
Assistant Commandant for Human Resources