

INTERAGENCY EXCHANGES AT MILITARY UNIVERSITIES: DO CONCERNS
ABOUT FINANCES, CAREER PROGRESSION AND ASSIGNMENTS
AFFECT FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS AND SPECIALISTS'
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE?

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2015

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 12-06-2015		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2014 – JUNE 2015	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Interagency Exchanges at Military Universities: Do Concerns About Finances, Career Progression and Assignments Affect Foreign Service Officers and Specialists' Willingness to Participate?				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Thomas M. Kreutzer, US Department of State				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT This thesis posits that some members of the Foreign Service (FS) are opting out of interagency exchanges at military universities due to concerns over finances, career progression and assignments. To determine the validity of this assumption, a survey was sent to all 89 FS alumni of interagency exchanges at military universities from the 2011 through 2014 year groups. 39 responses were received and analyzed via mixed methodology. The results show that financial concerns had very little impact on FS personnel's willingness to participate in the program but that there is some dissatisfaction among the alumni in regards to the program's effect on the career progression and assignments.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Foreign Service, Interagency, exchange, military university, Command and General Staff College, CGSC, FSO, Department of State, Department of Defense					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 132	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Thomas M. Kreutzer

Thesis Title: Interagency Exchanges at Military Universities: Do Concerns About
Finances, Career Progression and Assignments Affect Foreign Service
Officers and Specialists' Willingness to Participate?

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

INTERAGENCY EXCHANGES AT MILITARY UNIVERSITIES: DO CONCERNS ABOUT FINANCES, CAREER PROGRESSION AND ASSIGNMENTS AFFECT FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS AND SPECIALISTS' WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE?, by Thomas M. Kreutzer, 132 pages

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people without whom this thesis could not have been completed and I gratefully acknowledge their assistance. First among them are the members of my thesis committee, Dr. David A. Anderson, Mr. Wilburn E. Meador Jr, and Mr. Douglas G. Stephensen. The input of these men was critical to ensuring a quality product and their steady encouragement throughout the writing process is the reason this work is a completed product rather than an unfinished draft. Additionally, I must acknowledge my appreciation for the assistance of Dr. Rhoda E. Risner, who helped me to better understand the actual process involved in writing a quality thesis, and make special mention of my gratitude for the extra efforts of Mr. Ralph P. Reed who spent a great deal of time and effort helping me prepare the survey this thesis so heavily relies upon.

I also feel compelled to acknowledge my classmates for the past academic year, the members of Staff Group 14C, and our instructors Dr. Anderson, Mr. Meador, and Mr. Stephenson, all of whom are noted above as members of my thesis committee, and Lieutenant Colonels Schotzko and Warninghoff who worked hard to educate me in both Army Tactics and the very complex world of Sustainment. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my wife Makiko, son Harley and daughters Maiko and Yuriko, who kept the home fires burning during “the best year of my life.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
TABLES	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Research Questions.....	5
Assumptions.....	6
Definitions	7
Limitations	8
Scope and Delimitations	9
Significance	9
Summary and Conclusion.....	11
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	12
Acts of Congress	13
The Foreign Affairs Manual	18
Foreign Service Officer Career Candidates	20
Foreign Service Specialist Career Candidates	24
Promotions for Mid-Level FSOs and Specialists.....	27
Assignments for Mid-Level FSOs and Specialists	29
Allowances, Differentials and Locality Pay	33
Studies on Long Term Training within the Foreign Service	34
Government Accountability Office.....	35
The Henry L. Stimson Center, The American Foreign Service Association, and The American Academy of Diplomacy	40
A Qualitative Case Study on How U.S. Army Officers Attending the Command and General Staff College Decide to Attend Graduate School	42
Conclusion	43

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	45
Data Collection	48
Methods of Analysis	56
CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS	58
Demographic Data on Respondents.....	59
Demographic Data: Analysis	62
Monetary Issues	63
Monetary Issues: Quantitative Data.....	64
Monetary Issues: Qualitative Data.....	67
Monetary Issues: Analysis	68
Promotion.....	69
Promotion: Quantitative Data	70
Promotion: Qualitative Data	71
Promotion: Analysis.....	73
Assignments.....	74
Assignments: Quantitative Data.....	74
Assignments: Qualitative Data	77
Assignments: Analysis.....	81
General Analysis and Conclusion.....	81
CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	85
Introduction.....	85
Conclusions: Monetary Issues	86
Conclusions: Promotion.....	87
Conclusions: Onward Assignments.....	88
Conclusion: Primary Research Question	88
Suggestions for Further Research	89
Conclusion	91
APPENDIX A SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

ACRONYMS

CDA	Career Development Office
EL	Entry Level
ELO	Entry Level Officer
FAH	Foreign Affairs Handbook
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FS	Foreign Service Institute
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FSOs	Foreign Service Officers
FSOT	Foreign Service Officer Test
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HR	Human Resources
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, Abilities
LES	Locally Employed Staff
USOPM	US Office of Personnel Management

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Perceptions on Assignments: Before/After.....	76

TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Total number of program alumni by job specialty and Military University.....	50
Table 2. Total FSO alumni by cone and rank	51
Table 3. Total FSO alumni by military university and rank	52
Table 4. Total FSO alumni by university and cone	53
Table 5. Total FS Specialist Alumni by job specialty and rank.....	54
Table 6. Total FS Specialist alumni by university and rank	55
Table 7. Total number of FS Specialist alumni by university and job specialty	56
Table 8. Total number of responses by FSO/Specialist and university	60
Table 9. Reasons for Decision to Bid an Interagency Assignment.....	61
Table 10. Prior consideration of monetary issues	64
Table 11. Importance of locality pay	65
Table 12. Actual Assignment Cross Referenced with Locality Pay	66
Table 13. Perception of career progression in relation to peer group	70
Table 14. Post attendance perceptions of program effect on promotion	71
Table 15. Recommendation Based on Promotion.....	71
Table 16. Assignments: Perception of Success Prior to Program.....	75
Table 17. Assignments: Perception of Success After Completing Program.....	75
Table 18. Recommendation Based on Assignment	77

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every year, through the auspices of an interagency exchange program, military universities, including the command and staff colleges of every branch of the armed forces, offer a number of seats to employees of various government agencies, among them the Department of State. The education these institutions offer is tuition free and, assuming a student meets all the requirements, most courses of study included in the program culminate in a nationally recognized master's degree.¹ The Department of State looks upon these assignments as a full-time job and participating employees are assigned to the universities as full-time students. Families and household goods are relocated at government expense and, for the duration of the course of study, employees continue to receive their full salaries and benefits.²

Being paid to earn a master's degree at a prestigious institution would seem to be a great deal but, surprisingly, some Foreign Service Personnel may be choosing not to apply to these programs.³ This thesis posits three possible reasons for this. First, they may be choosing to remain overseas and opting out of stateside assignments due to

¹ US Army Combined Arms Center, "Interagency Students," 2015, accessed May 8, 2015, <http://usacac.army.mil/organizations/cace/cgsc/cgss/ia>.

² US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*, 2015, accessed March 20, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/>.

³ Henry L. Stimson Center and The American Academy of Diplomacy, *Forging a 21st-Century Diplomatic for the United States through Professional Education and Training* (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, February 2011), accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/publications/Forging%20a%2021st%20Century%20Diplomatic%20Service%20-%20Full%20Content.pdf>.

monetary issues. Second, they may be avoiding long-term training assignments because they fear a negative impact on their career progression. Third, because participating in an interagency exchange at a military university may place them at a disadvantage when bidding on follow-on assignments.

The financial issues are easy to quantify. A review of the *Foreign Affairs Manual* (FAM) shows that Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and Specialists returning to the United States from overseas posts are often forced to take a de-facto pay cut by giving up any post-specific differentials they may have been receiving while posted overseas.⁴ These differentials, monetary incentives added to an employee's base-pay by the *Foreign Service Act of 1980*, and codified in 3 FAM 3900, with the intent of compensating employees for serving in dangerous or especially difficult environments or as a reward for attaining professional fluency in certain foreign languages, can add up to tens of thousands of dollars per year.⁵ These awards are based on one's presence at a given place of assignment and stop immediately when a member of the Foreign Service returns to the United States.⁶

Although members of the Foreign Service in stateside positions, like members of the Civil Service, receive locality pay, money added to one's base wage intended to equalize the spending power of federal employees wherever they serve in the United

⁴ US Department of State, 3 FAM 3200 Allowances, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/>.

⁵ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

⁶ US Department of State, "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Post Hardship Differential," accessed May 10, 2015, http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=175&menu_id=81#14.

States. The truth is that, outside of certain major metropolitan areas, this does not come anywhere close to equaling the amount of money that FSOs and Specialists must give up when they return home.⁷ Thus, it is logical to assume that some FSOs and Specialists may choose to remain overseas and forego interagency exchange assignments due to monetary issues.

Unlike the monetary issues previously enumerated, promotion issues are a matter of perception. Promotion in the Foreign Service, unlike the Civil Service, is competitive⁸ and some FSOs and Specialists may worry that attending long-term courses of training could delay their career progression.⁹ One possible area of concern could be based on a Department of State policy which, as defined in 3 FAM 2813.7, exempts employees who are engaged in long-term courses of study from annual performance reviews.¹⁰ Some employees worry that, without an annual review document in their personnel file, the true depth of what they have learned and what they have contributed during a given year has not been captured. As a result, compared to their peer group, they will have less material in their file for a promotion panel to consider, and they worry that this increases the possibility that they will be passed over or low-ranked for promotion. Additionally, because annual reviews remain a part of one's promotion package for up to five years,

⁷ US Office of Personnel Management, "2015 Salaries and Wages," accessed May 8, 2015, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2015/general-schedule/>.

⁸ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

⁹ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Persistent Staffing and Foreign Language Gaps Compromise Diplomatic Readiness* (Washington, DC: US Government Accountability Office, 2009).

¹⁰ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

many in the Foreign Service worry that the effect will linger. It is natural to assume then, that many of those who are looking to quickly build their career, including many highly skilled and otherwise prime candidates for interagency exchange programs at military universities, may opt out of these programs simply because they are regarded as long-term training assignments.

A third possible concern that may cause FSOs and Specialists to avoid long-term training programs is rooted in the competitive process the Department of State uses to decide Foreign Service assignments. Although Department of State employees can earn an advanced degree through a military university, jobs posted to the bid list seldom include educational prerequisites. As a result, adding a master's degree to one's resume appears to have little effect upon the assignments one receives.

Instead, to secure the onward assignment of their choice, FSOs and Specialists must use their personal network of friends and contacts to lobby for positions as spelled out in 3 FAM 2400.¹¹ The more contacts that one has scattered around the globe, the more possibilities one has to obtain a choice assignment. Because attending a military university removes Foreign Service Personnel from the normal working environment, it does little to expand one's pool of close contacts within the Department of State. Because the smartest FSOs and Specialists are always looking for opportunities to meet people who can help them in the assignments process, they may naturally avoid assignments that limit one's ability to make the "right" types of new contacts.

Within the highly competitive and career conscious culture of the Foreign Service, none of these concerns stretch the imagination. Interagency exchanges are

¹¹ Ibid.

important for the Department of State as an institution but, if FSOs and Specialists are concerned that the experience harms them personally, it is natural to assume that they will find ways to avoid them. This thesis seeks to examine if Foreign Service Personnel do, in fact, have these concerns and, if so, whether or not they seek to mitigate them as they work to manage their own careers within the Department of State. To do so, the following questions must be answered.

Research Questions

Primary Research Question: Are Foreign Service Officers and Specialists opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about finances, career progression and assignments?

1. What effect, if any, do financial considerations have on an FSO or Specialist's decision to participate in an interagency course of study at a military university?
 - a. Do FSOs and Specialists consider monetary issues prior to accepting an interagency assignment at a military university?
 - b. Do monetary considerations influence which university an FSO or Specialist choose to attend?
 - c. Based on financial considerations alone, would FSOs and Specialists recommend a similar interagency exchange program to their friends and colleagues?
2. What effect, if any, do FSOs and Specialists believe an extended interagency course of study at a military university has upon promotion rates?

- a. What are the participants' perceptions of their own promotion rates in relation to their peers prior to the interagency experience?
 - b. What are the participants' perceptions of their own promotion rates in relation to their peers after the interagency experience?
 - c. Does the participants' perceptions of the effects of the interagency experience on promotion play a role in whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues?
3. What effect, if any, do FSOs and Specialists believe an interagency course of study at a military university has on a State Department employee's onward assignments?
- a. What are the participants' perceptions of how often they received their top choices of assignments prior to attending the interagency exchange program?
 - b. What are the participants' perceptions of how often they received their top choices of assignments after they attended the interagency exchange program?
 - c. Do the participants' perceptions of the effects of the interagency experience on follow-on assignments play a role in whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues?

Assumptions

This thesis assumes that The Department of State and the Department of Defense find value in interagency exchanges and that funds will continue to be available to

support the program for the foreseeable future. It also assumes that both Departments have a vested interest in establishing the largest pool of qualified interagency exchange candidates possible.

Definitions

Cone: The professional field of expertise in which a Foreign Service Officer works. There are five cones in the Department of State: Political, Economic, Public Diplomacy, Consular, and Administration. Although each officer is assigned to a specific cone, bidding rules allow officers to bid on jobs in any cone once certain pre-requisites have been met.¹²

Corridor Reputation: One's unofficial reputation within the Department of State's corridors as reflected by the comments of one's peers and coworkers. Corridor reputation is an unofficial "grapevine" of personal rumor and anecdotes that either help or hinder members of the Foreign Service when seeking onward assignments.

Entry Level Officer (ELO): A recently hired Foreign Service Officer who serves on a limited five year commission. Within the five years of their limited appointment, an ELO must meet the criteria for tenure or face the termination of their employment.

Foreign Service Officer (FSO): A commissioned member of the United States Foreign Service. As diplomats, Foreign Service Officers formulate and implement the foreign policy of the United States. FSOs spend most of their careers overseas as

¹² US Department of State, "Foreign Service Officer, Career Tracks," accessed April 21, 2015, <http://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/officer/career-tracks>.

members of U.S. embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic missions. Sometimes referred to as a “Foreign Service Generalist.”¹³

Foreign Service Specialist: Direct hire career employees of the United States Department of State. They are members of the Foreign Service system who provide important technical, support or administrative services in nineteen career categories, including: Diplomatic Security Agents, Doctors and Physician Assistants, Information Management Specialists, Office Management Specialists, and Human Resource Specialists.¹⁴

Locality Pay: Money added to the base salary of the employees of the Federal Government who live in different regions of the United States.¹⁵

Long term course of study: For the purposes of this thesis, long term course of study will be defined as a course of training lasting longer than nine months,

Military Universities: Department of Defense run universities designed to foster leadership in military service members and interagency students through training, development, and education.

Limitations

This thesis will be limited to interagency students from the US Department of State. It will not include interagency exchange employees affiliated with any other US

¹³ US Department of State, “What We Do, Mission,” accessed May 8, 2015, <http://careers.state.gov/learn/what-we-do/mission>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ralph Smith, “Locality Pay and How it Impacts Federal Employees,” November 19, 2012, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.fedsmith.com/2012/11/19/locality-pay-and-how-it-impacts-federal-employees/>.

Government agency or organization. The topic of study will only include FSOs and Specialists who normally serve overseas and will not include data on the US Department of State's Civil Service Officers or Locally Employed Staff. The FSOs and Specialists on working-level exchanges outside of the Department of State in any capacity other than "long-term interagency-student" will also be excluded.

Scope and Delimitations

This thesis limited its scope to studying the perceived risks and effects of interagency exchange on the careers of the US Department of State's FSOs and Specialists who have been assigned to long-term training at US military universities. It will include FSOs and Specialists who have studied at all the major military universities including the Command and General Staff Colleges of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines as well as the US Army War College, the National Defense University, the Inter-American Defense College as well as any other university level institution affiliated with the Department of Defense's Professional Military Education program.

Significance

In order to attract the best candidates to interagency exchange programs at military universities, the Department of State must seek to understand and address employees' concerns about the financial costs of participation and their fears over the possible effects on one's career progression and onward assignments. Although there is some anecdotal information that Foreign Service personnel believe that long-term

training can damage their career,¹⁶ the Department of State has yet to formally conduct an extensive investigation of the subject. As a result, there is little information on whether or not interagency exchanges at military universities enhance or harm the finances and careers of FSOs and Specialists. This thesis asserts that this lack of real information is preventing many of the best candidates from participating in the program.

If it turns out that the alumni of the interagency exchange program believe that their participation has helped to increase their chances of promotion, or if they believe that it has helped them obtain a solid follow-on assignment that will likewise help build their career over the long-term, this information may encourage more high-performing FSOs and Specialists to enter the program. If it turns out that, as many FSOs fear, a “year away from the Department” actually hinders one’s ability to be promoted or otherwise slows their career progression, then, in the interest of institutional development, the Department of State and the Department of Defense may wish to examine ways to offset these effects.

Regardless of the outcome, the end result of this study should be a body of evidence that FSOs and Specialists who are considering a course of study at a military university can utilize when deciding whether or not they should attend. Additionally, this same body of information can help leaders as they seek out ways in which to promote the program.

¹⁶ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Persistent Staffing and Foreign Language Gaps Compromise Diplomatic Readiness*, 2009.

Summary and Conclusion

Both the Department of State and the Department of Defense have worked hard to establish solid interagency exchange programs, but, surprisingly, many of the State Department's best potential candidates may be choosing not to apply. This thesis posits that this reluctance is the direct result of concerns about short-term financial issues and/or Foreign Service personnel's attempts to manage their careers to their best advantage in the Department of State's extremely competitive and career-conscious culture.

If the Department of State and the Department of Defense wish to attract the best candidates to the interagency exchange program, the concerns of FSOs who might otherwise choose other assignments must be addressed. The end result of this study should be a body of evidence that FSOs can utilize when deciding whether or not to participate in the interagency exchange program and that leaders can turn to when promote it.

The following chapter will examine the culture of the Foreign Service by looking at the written record, including the applicable laws and policies that govern personnel matters and will review three studies conducted by the Government Accountability Office on behalf of the US Congress that have previously examined the Department of State's personnel policies in regard to long-term training programs. It will conclude with a look at a study on a similar institution, the United States Army, in order to see how officers in that organization view long term courses of training and how they perceive the effects of that training on subsequent promotions and onward assignments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Both the Department of State and the Department of Defense understand the importance of a strong interagency relationship and have worked hard to develop programs that encourage the exchange of personnel at various levels.¹⁷ Surprisingly, however, many of the State Department's best potential candidates may be choosing not to apply to those interagency exchange programs that involve long-term courses of study at military universities. This thesis seeks to examine why this is the case. Its primary research question will attempt to determine if concerns about finances, career progression and assignments play a role in this decision. To accomplish this, it must begin by exploring the Department of State's unique organizational culture.

Defining and understanding the Department of State's organizational culture is important to this thesis because, as Edgar Schein explains in his book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, "Cultural forces are powerful because they operate outside of our awareness. We need to understand them not only because of their power but also because they help to explain many of our puzzling and frustrating experiences in social and organizational life."¹⁸ If the intent of this thesis is to understand the fears and/or motivations of Foreign Service Personnel, culture is a key component.

¹⁷ Andrew J. Shapiro, "A New Era In State-Defense Cooperation: Remarks at the Center for Strategic and International Studies," US Department of State, 2011, accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rm/196200.htm>.

¹⁸ Edgar H. Schein, ed., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (Hoboken: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

To better understand Foreign Service culture, this chapter will examine the written record. It will begin by reviewing how merit and competition were built into the Department of State through the congressional acts that have created and shaped the Foreign Service, followed by an examination of how current Department of State policies and rules, as codified in the *Foreign Affairs Manual* and the *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (FAH), continue to enculturate officers today. It will then focus on the three seminal studies, two from the Government Accountability Office and another by The Henry L. Stimson Center in conjunction with the American Foreign Service Association and the American Academy of Diplomacy, that assess the Department of State's training programs with an eye towards seeking out specific information on the attitudes of FSOs and Specialists in regard to long-term training. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a look at a 2013 study on how the employees of a similar institution, the U.S. Army, view long-term training and the necessity of a higher level degree as they seek to advance within their own organization.

Acts of Congress

Although American diplomacy has its roots in the days of our nation's founding fathers, The Foreign Service was officially established by the *Rogers Act of 1924* which incorporated all consular and diplomatic services into a single, unified organization. The Rogers Act, perhaps with an eye towards dismantling the earlier system that allowed elected officials to appoint whomever they wished to positions of power and made the institutions of American diplomacy primarily places for the rich,¹⁹ introduced the concept

¹⁹ Jim Lamont and Larry Cohen, *In the Beginning: The Rogers Act of 1924* (Washington, DC: American Foreign Service Association, May 2001), accessed March 5,

of merit into the organization by instituting a rigorous Foreign Service Exam, specifying tenure requirements, and establishing performance based, competitive promotion system.²⁰

The Foreign Service Act of 1946 built upon the Rogers Act by further professionalizing the Foreign Service through the creation of six classes of employees: Chiefs of Mission, Foreign Service Officers, Foreign Service Reservists, Foreign Service Staff, Alien Personnel, and Consular Agents.²¹ The act also made Foreign Service Officers commissioned officers of the United States government, established a system of ranks and career progression similar to that of officers in the US military and introduced an “up-or-out” system under which failure to gain promotion to higher rank within a specified time in-class would lead to separation from the service.²²

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 is the US Congress’ most recent attempt to reshape and strengthen the Foreign Service for the modern era.²³ As such, it mandates many of the personnel practices in place at the Department of State today and is the basis of the *Foreign Affairs Manual*, a document that will be examined later in this chapter.

2015, <http://www.afsa.org/PublicationsResources/ForeignServiceJournal/FeaturedContent/May2014IntheBeginning.aspx>.

²⁰ Congress of the United States, *The Rogers Act of 1924*.

²¹ Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, “W(h)ither the Foreign Service? Part I,” accessed April 29, 2015, <http://adst.org/2014/02/whither-the-foreign-service/>.

²² Congress of the United States, Public Law 79-724, *The Foreign Service Act of 1946*.

²³ Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, “W(h)ither the Foreign Service? Part I.”

Title 1 of the Act is split into 12 chapters covering every aspect of the Foreign Service including: the roles and responsibilities of management, appointments, compensation, assignments, promotion and retention, career development and training, retirement and disability, pensions, leave, labor/management relations, grievances and internships.²⁴

Title 2 addresses transitions into and out of the Foreign Service from other US Government Agencies, contains provisions relating to other Foreign Affairs agencies as well as amendments, savings provisions, rules for congressional oversight.²⁵

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 is a detailed piece of legislation that delves deeply into the complicated inner workings of the Foreign Service. Despite the Act's complexity, however, its goals are clearly stated in Title 1, Chapter 1, Section 101, "Findings and Objectives." It reads:

(a) The Congress finds that—

(1) a career foreign service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest to assist the President and the Secretary of State in conducting the foreign affairs of the United States;

(2) the scope and complexity of the foreign affairs of the Nation have heightened the need for a professional foreign service that will serve the foreign affairs interests of the United States in an integrated fashion and that can provide a resource of qualified personnel for the President, the Secretary of State, and the agencies concerned with foreign affairs;

(3) the Foreign Service of the United States, established under the Act of May 24, 1924 (commonly known as the Rogers Act) and continued by the Foreign Service Act of 1946, must be preserved, strengthened, and improved in order to carry out its mission effectively in response to the complex challenges of modern diplomacy and international relations;

²⁴ Congress of the United States, Public Law 96-465, *The Foreign Service Act of 1980*.

²⁵ Ibid.

(4) the members of the Foreign Service should be representative of the American people, aware of the principles and history of the United States and informed of current concerns and trends in American life, knowledgeable of the affairs, cultures, and languages of other countries, and available to serve in assignments throughout the world; and

(5) the Foreign Service should be operated on the basis of merit principles.

(b) The objective of this Act is to strengthen and improve the Foreign Service of the United States by—

(1) assuring, in accordance with merit principles, admission through impartial and rigorous examination, acquisition of career status only by those who have demonstrated their fitness through successful completion of probationary assignments, effective career development, advancement and retention of the ablest, and separation of those who do not meet the requisite standards of performance;

(2) fostering the development and vigorous implementation of policies and procedures, including affirmative action programs, which will facilitate and encourage (A) entry into and advancement in the Foreign Service by persons from all segments of American society, and (B) equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment for all without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition;

(3) providing for more efficient, economical, and equitable personnel administration through a simplified structure of Foreign Service personnel categories and salaries;

(4) establishing a statutory basis for participation by the members of the Foreign Service, through their elected representatives, in the formulation of personnel policies and procedures which affect their conditions of employment, and maintaining a fair and effective system for the resolution of individual grievances that will ensure the fullest measure of due process for the members of the Foreign Service;

(5) minimizing the impact of the hardships, disruptions, and other unusual conditions of service abroad upon the members of the Foreign Service, and mitigating the special impact of such conditions upon their families;

(6) providing salaries, allowances, and benefits that will permit the Foreign Service to attract and retain qualified personnel as well as a system of incentive payments and awards to encourage and reward outstanding performance;

(7) establishing a Senior Foreign Service which is characterized by strong policy formulation capabilities, outstanding executive leadership qualities, and highly developed functional, foreign language, and area expertise;

(8) improving Foreign Service managerial flexibility and effectiveness;

(9) increasing efficiency and economy by promoting maximum compatibility among the agencies authorized by law to utilize the Foreign Service personnel system, as well as compatibility between the Foreign Service personnel system and other personnel systems of the Government; and

(10) otherwise enabling the Foreign Service to serve effectively the interests of the United States and to provide the highest caliber of representation in the conduct of foreign affairs.²⁶

It is worth noting how often merit is mentioned in all three of these Foreign Service Acts. From its inception, merit based competition has been the key to advancement within the modern Foreign Service. The rigorous testing process originally mandated by the Roger's Act, as well as the probationary period and tenure requirements, continue to be enforced to this day and the up-or-out promotion system, introduced in 1946, further strengthened this culture of merit by introducing a mechanism that can be used to remove employees who do not continuously demonstrate their ability to advance in their career.²⁷ *The Foreign Service Act of 1980* adds still more emphasis on merit by mandating that any "personnel action," including promotion, assignments, or any type of performance pay, be based upon merit as well.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, "W(h)ither the Foreign Service? Part I."

²⁸ Congress of the United States, Public Law 96-465, *The Foreign Service Act of 1980*.

The examination of the various iterations of the Foreign Service Act shows that a culture of merit and competition, primarily as an antidote to political meddling,²⁹ has been Congress' intent from the beginning. How that intent comes through in actual personnel policy today is the subject of the next section, an examination of The Foreign Affairs Manual.

The Foreign Affairs Manual

Based on the *Foreign Service Act of 1980*, The *Foreign Affairs Manual*, or FAM, is the Department of State's foundational document. The FAM informs and directs every aspect of the organization at the working level. Updated regularly in response to new presidential directives or congressional mandate, it plays a major role in shaping the culture of the Foreign Service. Its pages spell out the duties of the Department's officials, specify its organizational structure and mission, and codify the rules, regulations and procedures that must be followed down to the tiniest of details. The FAM is divided into 15 chapters, the lengthiest of which is chapter 3, known as "3 FAM" and entitled "Personnel."

3 FAM, in accordance with the mandate of the *Foreign Service Act of 1980*, organizes the Department of State's employees into different categories and defines the specific rules and policies under which the individuals in each of these categories are hired, compensated, promoted and assigned.³⁰ As the lead foreign affairs agency for the United States government, the Department of State directly employs approximately

²⁹ Lamont and Larry Cohen.

³⁰ US Department of State, 3 FAM 1100 Introduction, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/fam/03fam/1100/>.

70,000 people. These include an estimated 13,000 Foreign Service personnel, each of whom, by law, must spend the majority of their career overseas. The Department also employs approximately 11,000 members of the Civil Service, who primarily serve in offices located within the United States, and another 45,000 Locally Employed Staff (LES), including foreign nationals and small numbers of American citizens who permanently reside overseas who, under the direction of Foreign Service personnel, form the bulk of the working-level staff at the Department's overseas missions.³¹

3 FAM 2234.1 further divides Foreign Service personnel into two, more specific categories, FSOs and Foreign Service Specialists. Those roles are defined as:

Foreign Service officers are U.S. citizens who hold career appointments and have general responsibility for carrying out the functions of the Service. Foreign Service Officers are appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate (see section 302(a) (1) of the Act) after having served under a limited appointment as a career candidate (see section 306 of the Act).³²

Foreign Service specialists are U.S. citizens appointed by the Secretary under Section 303 of the Act. They provide special skills and services required for effective performance by the Service.³³

Although these definitions would appear on the surface to be very similar to one another, the differences between the two classifications, with FSOs having “general responsibility for carrying out the functions of the Service”³⁴ and Specialists providing

³¹ US Department of State, “What We Do, Mission.”

³² US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2234.1 Career Members of the Foreign Service, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84852.pdf>.

“special skills and services required for effective performance by the Service,”³⁵ are enormous in practice. As the term “general responsibility” implies, FSOs are expected to fill any number of roles and frequently find themselves working outside their own job specialty or “cone.” As a result, the Department of State seeks out people with wide ranging experience in any number of areas who have excellent communication skills and the ability to quickly adapt to new environments and situations.

Foreign Service Specialists, on the other hand, are required to have real depth of knowledge or experience in a specified area and are limited to work in one of the following fields: administration, construction engineering, facility management, information technology, international information and English language programs, medical and health, office management, and security.³⁶ As a result of these differences, the FAM specifies that the Department use different methods to recruit, assess, promote and assign these two groups of Foreign Service personnel.³⁷

Foreign Service Officer Career Candidates

Foreign Service Officers are hired as Career Candidates through a lengthy process specified in 3 FAM 2216.2 that begins with the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT). The first stage of this exam, a written assessment, is open to all American Citizens, both native born and naturalized, who are at least 20 years of age. The FAM specifies that the

³⁵ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

³⁶ US Department of State, “Foreign Service Specialist,” accessed April 21, 2015, <https://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/specialist>.

³⁷ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2200 Appointments, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/fam/index.htm>.

FSOT be given periodically, in designated cities in the United States and at selected Foreign Service posts, on dates established by the Board of Examiners and publicly announced.³⁸ Currently, the test is offered three times per year, February, June and October for a period of up to eight days, although individual candidates may only apply to take and sit for the exam once every 11 months.³⁹

The written exam is administered on-line at designated testing centers and includes three multiple choice sections. The first is on Job knowledge and covers a broad range of topics including the structure and workings of the U.S. Government, U.S. and world history, U.S. culture, psychology, technology, management theory, finance and economics, and world affairs. The second focuses on English expression. The third is a biographic information section that asks candidates to describe their work style, manner of interacting and communicating and their approach to other cultures. The exam concludes with a 30 minute written exam on an assigned subject. Candidates must pass the multiple choice sections in order to have their essay graded.⁴⁰

Candidates who pass the written FSOT are invited to participate in the second stage of the process, an oral assessment. According to 3 FAM 2216.2-4(A), this assessment is designed to, “enable the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service to test the candidate's ability to demonstrate the qualities or dimensions that are essential to the successful performance of Foreign Service work.”⁴¹ The exam involves a small-group

³⁸ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

³⁹ US Department of State, “What We Do, Mission.”

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

budgeting and planning session, during which the testers observe and assess the candidates' interactions with their peers, and second, individual requirement to conduct something known as a demarche, an exercise in which candidates are expected to deliver a message from Washington to the leaders of a fictitious government. The assessment concludes with an essay, written in the form of an official State Department communication back to Washington DC, in which the candidates report on their experience and detail the substance of the conversation that took place during the demarche. Ultimately, although the exact numbers vary each year, very few of those who began the FSOT will pass the oral assessment.⁴²

Upon their successful completion of the testing process, perspective FSOs are required to obtain a Top Secret Security Clearance and undergo a final suitability review before ultimately being offered a position. Should they accept, the candidates are brought to the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute (FSI) for an introductory class known as an "A-100." After spending several weeks learning about the organization, their position and their new responsibilities, they are commissioned as Entry Level Foreign Service Officers, as the Foreign Service Act mandates, on a five year limited appointment.⁴³

During their limited appointment, which is essentially an extended probationary period, Entry Level Officers (ELOs) have little input into the assignment process and are posted to jobs based exclusively upon "the needs of the service." Under the authorities of 3 FAM 2242, all assignments are directed by the Human Resources Entry Level (EL)

⁴² US Department of State, "What We Do, Mission."

⁴³ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

office and although the ELO's desires and career goals are considered, they do not drive the process.⁴⁴ EL is given wide latitude in making assignments but its primary objective is to ensure that each new officer receives the opportunity to meet the requirements for tenure.⁴⁵

Helping ELOs meet the requirements for tenure is a priority within the Department of State and 3 FAM 2242.4 directs that the process be overseen at the highest levels of the Embassy by directing the Deputy Chief of Mission, often a career FSO who has risen into the ranks of the Senior Foreign Service who holds a rank generally equivalent to that of a Military General Officer, ensure they be "well trained, and properly counseled and evaluated."⁴⁶ Under 3 FAM 2245.2, ELOs can be considered for tenure after 36 months. Those who are not granted tenure at the first opportunity are eligible to be reviewed a second time 12 months later.⁴⁷

3 FAM 2245.1 spells out the rules for tenure and commission. It begins with the statement, "The decision on whether to tenure a candidate will be made by the Board. The sole criterion for a positive tenuring decision will be the candidate's demonstrated potential, assuming normal growth and career development, to serve effectively as a Foreign Service Officer over a normal career span, extending to and including class FS-

⁴⁴ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Handbook*, 2015, accessed March 21, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/m/a/dir/regs/fah/>.

⁴⁵ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2242.4 Supervision, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84851.pdf>.

⁴⁶ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

⁴⁷ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2245.2 Entry-Level Officer Candidates, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84851.pdf>.

01.”⁴⁸ This, along with a requirement for foreign language proficiency as specified in 3 FAM 2245.7, are chief among the considerations for tenure. If an ELO cannot achieve the Board’s requirements for tenure within five years, they face termination.

Foreign Service Specialist Career Candidates

Foreign Service Specialist Career Candidates are appointed under the authority of 3 FAM 2218.2 and “must have a professional or a functional skill for which there is a continuing need in the Foreign Service.”⁴⁹ Applicants must be citizens of the United States and at least 20 years of age and the minimum age for appointment is 21. Unlike FSOs, the FAM specifies that specialist candidates be initially screened on the basis of education and experience. The Board of Examiners, in coordination with the bureau responsible for the candidate’s specialty, will identify and/or approve the knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs) required to perform successfully the tasks and duties of Foreign Service specialists in each functional field. Applicants will document their KSAs in their job application or resume, and assessors working for the Board of Examiners will use that information to select who to invite to an oral assessment/interview.⁵⁰ This in very much in-line with the way that the US Office of Personnel Management (USOPM) seeks candidates to fill positions within the Civil Service and, in fact, job announcements for

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

⁵⁰ US Department of State, “Foreign Service Specialist Selection Process,” accessed April 21, 2015, <http://www.careers.state.gov/specialist/selection-process-printable>.

Foreign Service Specialist positions are listed on the USOPM website.⁵¹ As indicated above, the process works by having the organization, in this case specific functional bureaus within the Department of State, identify the KSAs required to do a specific job as a part of the creation of a job announcement. Applicants then use this announcement, and any supplemental materials posted along with it, to complete an application or a build an on-line resume that they then submit through the USOPM's website or via a link directly to the Department's Bureau of Human Resources (HR).

The Department of State's HR bureau then screens the applications against the established KSA, identifies those applicants who meet the requirements and puts them in rank order. They then forward those applications to decision makers who follow the mandated guidelines and choose who to invite to the oral screening. 3 FAM 2218.2-4 specifies the process, stating: "The oral assessment will be given by a panel of assessors, at least one of whom will be proficient in the Foreign Service functional field for which the candidate is being tested. The examination may include a writing assessment. Candidates taking the oral assessment will be graded numerically according to standards set by the Board of Examiners. The candidacy of anyone whose score is at or above the passing level set by the Board will be continued. The candidacy of anyone whose score is below the passing level will be terminated. The candidate may only reapply after the first year anniversary date of the original application."⁵² Like FSOs, those Specialists who are selected to become career candidates then undergo a background check, a medical examination to ensure that they are fit for world-wide duty, and have their application

⁵¹ USA Jobs, accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.usajobs.gov>.

⁵² US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

package reviewed by a final review panel. It is only after they pass this final step that they are brought on board as career candidates.

3 FAM 2251 deals with the Foreign Service Specialist Career Candidate Program, the stated purpose of which is to create “a comprehensive program of appropriate training, assignment, evaluation, counseling, and review to permit candidates for career status as Foreign Service specialists to demonstrate through on-the-job experience and in the shortest time practicable, that they have the requisite skills, abilities, fitness, and aptitude to perform in their occupational category over a normal service career span.”⁵³ Specialist candidates become eligible for tenure after two years, three years in the case of specialists in the field of medicine, and, like FSOs, will normally have two attempts at satisfy the requirements of the Tenuring Board.

3 FAM 2254 states: “The decision to offer a specialist candidate a career appointment will be based on the recommendation made by a Tenuring Board which only reviews specialist candidates. The sole criterion for a positive tenuring decision will be the specialist candidate’s demonstrated ability to perform satisfactorily in the occupational category in which the candidate is serving and the potential, assuming normal growth and career development, to serve effectively in the Foreign Service at higher levels with greater responsibilities in the specialist’s occupational category.”⁵⁴ It goes on to say that, because specialist candidates are recruited in response to defined Service needs, no numerical limit is placed on the number of positive tenuring decisions and that candidates’ records are reviewed on their merits, rather than in comparison or

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Ibid.

competition with one another. As with FSO ELOs, Specialist candidates who cannot satisfy the tenure board are terminated after five years.⁵⁵

Promotions for Mid-Level FSOs and Specialists

Once tenure has been granted, both FSOs and Specialists enter the world of competitive promotion and assignments. 3 FAM 2320 deals specifically with promotion across all classes of the Foreign Service and subsection 2325 states: “The Director General of the Foreign Service annually determines the number of promotions of members of the Foreign Service reviewed by the selection boards, taking into account such factors as vacancies, availability of funds, estimated attrition, projected needs of the Service, and the need for retention of expertise and experience as provided in 3 FAM 6200.”⁵⁶ This means that the number of available promotions are limited and, in order to reach the next stage in one’s career, FSOs and Specialists are judged against one another by a promotion panel or selection board.⁵⁷

Under 3 FAM 2326.1, selection boards are made up of both members of the Foreign Service and the public. Members of the Foreign Service who sit on selection panels must, as far as possible, have a rank at least one class higher than that of the employees to be rated, have the depth and breadth of experience necessary to evaluate the employees designated for consideration, have a superior record of service, and have a

⁵⁵ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2254.1 Policy, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84850.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2325 Determination of Number of Promotions, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84861.pdf>.

reputation for unbiased judgment of personnel and for perceptive evaluation of performance. Public members of the panel must have gained prominence in a profession, in business, in labor, or in a nongovernmental organization or institution serviced by, or having an interest in the Foreign Service, have some overseas experience, be available to serve on a full-time basis during the entire time that the boards are in session and not be employed in the Federal service.⁵⁸

The functions of the Selection Boards as codified under 3 FAM 2320 are:

- (1) To evaluate the performance folders of members designated by the precepts for consideration and to rank them in the order of their relative merit, in accordance with the precepts; and to make recommendations:
 - (a) For promotion to the next higher class;
 - (b) For denial of within-class step increases to members whose performance during the most recent rating period is found to have fallen below the standards of their class;
 - (c) For offer or renewal of limited career extension (3 FAM 6200);
 - (d) Of members to be considered for possible selection-out (3 FAM 6200);
 - (e) For award of performance pay to career members of the Senior Foreign Service;
 - (f) For review of eligible career members of the Senior Foreign Service by the Department Senior Review Board for Presidential Rank Awards; and

⁵⁸ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2326.1 Selection Board, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84861.pdf>.

(g) For additional within-grade step increases for especially meritorious service (MSI) in accordance with the rank order list.

(2) To prepare such other lists and recommendations as required by the precepts; and

(3) To prepare recommendations for improving the Department's policies and procedures for evaluating the performance of members of the Service and for the operation of future selection boards.⁵⁹

It is important to note that the first thing on the selection boards list of duties is, "To evaluate the performance folders of members designated by the precepts for consideration and to rank them in the order of their relative merit."⁶⁰ This is an example of the way merit is turned into competition and FSOs and Specialists, all of whom have already come through an extremely competitive testing and recruitment process, are acutely aware of this. Promotions, however, are not the only things they compete for.

Assignments for Mid-Level FSOs and Specialists

Foreign Service Personnel are expected to spend the majority of their careers overseas and the Department of State's policy of world wide availability for its officers and specialists mean frequent transfers between posts. 3 FAM 2420 defines the career development, assignment and transfer processes mandating the use of an open assignment process which "is designed to engage all Foreign Service employees directly in the

⁵⁹ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

⁶⁰ US Department of State, 3 FAM 2320 Promotion of Members of the Foreign Service, accessed March 29, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/84861.pdf>.

assignment process by disseminating information on all position vacancies, training programs, and other available assignments, and offering the opportunity to compete openly for them.”⁶¹

According to 3 FAM 2424.2, by regulation FSOs and Specialists are allowed to spend only five continuous years in the United States before they must take an overseas assignment while assignments outside of the United States can last between one and three years, depending upon certain factors, like danger or remoteness, at the post to which one is assigned. Chapter 3 of the *Foreign Affairs Handbook* (3 FAH), the document the Department of State uses to codify the rules under which specific regulations spelled out in the FAM are implemented, defines the process by which assignments are made. 3 FAH-1 H245 explains the intent of the open assignment system thus:

- a. The open assignments system (SOP A-1) is designed to obtain the most effective match of personnel to FS position vacancies in the Department and at posts overseas in a transparent and equitable manner. The paramount consideration remains meeting Service need. To the extent possible, it also considers your assignment preferences as well as those of the bureaus.
- b. The system also takes into account other statutory and regulatory requirements, including mandatory career development and training. Assignments overseas, including for the purposes of career development requirements, will only be considered as completed if they satisfy the continuous service requirements outlined in 3 FAH-1 H-2423.⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Handbook*.

Assignments are made through the Department of Human Resources' (HR) Career Development Office (CDA) which helps facilitate the job assignment process. HR maintains an electronic system for submitting and recording assignment preferences or, bids, and only considers bids that have been submitted through this system unless extraordinary circumstances dictate submission in another form. HR also maintains and continuously updates a list of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and generates an annual cable, the official form of messaging that the State Department uses for on-the-record communication, containing specific information on rules and regulations that officer must abide by during the bidding process.

Job openings are posted to an internal website and FSOs and Specialists are given a number of ways to sort the data to suit their own preference. Generally the jobs can be organized into geographic region, country, specific city or post, cone or job specialty, rank and any number of other factors such as required languages, start and end dates, the level of hardship and/or danger, etc. The information also lists points of contact and persons interested in following up on a specific opportunity generally begin there, although specific bureaus and posts may receive so much interest that they may utilize a collective e-mail box to better organize communications with the various bidders.

The bidding cable sent out by HR/CDA also specifies other rules by which job seekers must abide during the bidding process. Generally, bidders are required to submit a number of "core bids" or bids on jobs that are at one's rank and in one's cone and, usually, bidders must divide these core bids across several geographic regions, as well. Once the core bidding requirements are met, job seekers may then bid on other jobs they desire, including jobs outside of their cone, jobs one rank higher or lower than their

current ranks, known as up stretches and down stretches in the parlance of the Department of State, or on jobs within specific regions that may not otherwise be counted as core bids.

The result of the bidding process is a frenzy of activity as job seekers examine and sort the list every way possible in an attempt to both abide by the bidding rules and receive the assignment they want. But submitting the bids is only a small part of the overall assignment process. In order to receive their preferred choices, bidders much compete against their peers by reaching out to decision makers in much the same way that one applies for any other job, through phone calls, emails, resumes and, if one has them, by taking advantage of existing relationships.

This means that resumes and resume building are extremely important to Foreign Service Officers and Specialists. As it is in the civilian world, a strong resume with solid experience will attract attention and open doors. As a result, many in the Foreign Service are constantly looking for ways to strengthen their resumes and one way they often do this is by planning well ahead and carefully selecting one job so that it helps them achieve the next. Jobs that do not help build resumes are generally avoided.

It also means that personal relationships are extremely important. Many posts use a 360 Review process to help narrow the field of prospective hires and so FSOs and Specialists must always, at a minimum, maintain a good number of contacts that can help them through this part of the bidding process. But, more than just helping one advance in the bidding process, some contacts can also help influence decision makers as well and smart FSOs and Specialists are always looking to forge higher level contacts, too. Jobs

that place one close to higher level leaders, or alongside people who are rapidly advancing upwards through the rank-and-file of the Department, help one build a career.

To be successful in the competition for assignments, FSOs must create opportunities to make new friends within the Department, build relationships, and leverage contacts. Following that logic, attending an interagency exchange program, especially one located outside of the Washington DC area and away from the Department of State's main office are to be avoided.

Allowances, Differentials and Locality Pay

Although much of the above review of the *Foreign Affairs Manual* has focused on how it has shaped the culture of competition within the Foreign Service, this last section will focus on compensation and the various monetary rewards that also work to keep members of the Foreign Service overseas. 3 FAM 3200 defines the various types of compensation that members of the Department of State may receive in addition to their normal salaries should they meet certain conditions.

3 FAM Exhibit 3210 spells each of these out in detail.⁶³ Employees serving overseas always receive either rent-free living quarters or a housing allowance, a foreign transfer allowance and education allowances to pay for overseas schools. Depending on the situation, they may also receive cost of living or "post" allowances, a hardship allowance of up to 25 percent of an employee's base pay, a danger allowance that could add as much as another 25 percent, and even a separate maintenance allowance to help compensate employees who must maintain family members at locations other than their

⁶³ US Department of State, *The Foreign Affairs Manual*.

overseas post due to dangerous, notably unhealthful, or excessively adverse living conditions.⁶⁴

Add to the above special travel and leave benefits paid to employees serving overseas, as well as the possibility of still more extra pay for demonstrated proficiency in certain, especially difficult foreign languages as defined by 3 FAM 3910, and it is easy to see why finances could play a role in FSOs and Specialists' decisions regarding a return to the United States. If, as this thesis posits, finances play a role in the decision to attend an interagency course of study at a military university, this too, must be considered.

Studies on Long Term Training within the Foreign Service

Most training at the Department of State occurs under the auspices of the Foreign Service Institute (FSI). Courses are offered by a number of different means, on-line, through programs in which trainers visit offices, at branch campuses or regional training centers located around the world or at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. FSI provides more than 600 courses, including some 70 foreign languages, to more than 100,000 people per year. Students come from the State Department, more than 40 other government agencies, and the military service branches.⁶⁵

In addition to the entry level training course known as A-100, FSI's programs include trade-specific training for FSOs in administrative, consular, economic, political, and public diplomacy and, for specialists, in the fields of information management, office

⁶⁴ US Department of State, 3 FAM Exhibit 3210.

⁶⁵ US Department of State, "Foreign Service Institute," accessed May 8, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/>.

management, security, and medical services. FSI also provides professional training to Locally Employed Staff who work at U.S. diplomatic posts around the world and for Civil Service employees of the State Department and other agencies.⁶⁶

Ranging in length from one day to two years, FSI's courses are designed to promote successful performance in each professional assignment, to ease the adjustment to other countries and cultures, and to enhance the leadership and management capabilities of the U.S. foreign affairs community. Other courses and services help family members to prepare for the demands of living abroad, and provide employees and their families with important information about such critical and timely topics as emergency preparedness and cyber security awareness.⁶⁷

Government Accountability Office

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has studied the effectiveness of FSI's training programs on a number of occasions. This review will focus on the two most recent products, a January 2011 report entitled, *Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning of Evaluation of Training for State Department Personnel* and a September 2009 report on language training, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*.

These two reports are important to this thesis because they identify areas for improvement within the Department of State's training programs that can affect the attitudes of FSOs and Specialists towards training. The 2009 report is especially valuable

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

to this review as it studies long-term language training which, like attendance in interagency courses of study at military universities, pulls FSOs and Specialists out of working assignments for an extended period of time. Both of these studies are the seminal works in this field and are frequently quoted by news articles, bloggers, and other academic works.

In its 2011 report on strategic planning for evaluation of training, the GAO identified several specific issues with the Department of State's training programs. In his testimony before the US Senate's Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, GAO Director of International Affairs and Trade Jess T. Ford summarized the findings thus:

In brief, Mr. Chairman, we found that State has taken many steps to incorporate the interrelated elements of an effective training program— planning, design, implementation, and evaluation—into its training for personnel, but the department's strategic approach to workforce training could be improved in several key areas. Specifically, we identified five areas where State can improve its training. First, State lacks a comprehensive training needs assessment process incorporating all bureaus and posts. Second, State developed guidance for employees about training opportunities, career paths, and how training can help employees attain career goals, but the guidance does not provide complete and accurate information. Third, State lacks a data collection and analysis plan for evaluating training, and thus cannot be assured that proper practices and procedures are systematically and comprehensively applied. Fourth, State could not sufficiently demonstrate consistent and appropriate support for training, because the department does not track detailed information on training cost and delivery that would allow for an analysis and comparison of employees in different groups, bureaus, regions, or posts. Lastly, State performance measures for training generally do not fully address training goals, and are generally output- rather than outcome oriented.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Training for State Personnel* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2011).

Mr. Ford's testimony indicates the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute is generally good, but that it suffers from a few important problems. He paints a picture of a system that is disconnected from the bureaus, posts, and people it serves and specifically notes the fact that FSI lacks State developed guidance on training opportunities, career paths, and how training can help employees attain career goals. He also identifies the lack of a plan for data collection and analysis to ensure that its programs are being effectively run, and that FSI fails to track the costs of what it delivers versus the benefit it gives. Lastly, he notes that FSI measures the numbers of classes it offers but not the results those classes achieve.⁶⁹

For the purposes of this thesis, the most important among those areas listed above is the lack of guidance on training opportunities, career paths and how training can help employees attain career goals. Without accurate information with which to assess the relative value of a particular course of study, employees are left to their own devices and, in the a culture of competition as outlined in the first part of this chapter, many will likely choose to stay with what they know and simply stick with regular assignments.

The Department of State's official comment, included as an appendix in the study, generally agreed with the report but noted that a comprehensive training needs assessment is especially difficult due to the complexity of the organization that FSI serves. It points out that, in addition to Foreign and Civil Service personnel, the Department employs an additional 43,000 Locally Employed Staff (LES) at 270 unique posts and, among other things, goes on to state that much of the training conducted within

⁶⁹ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Training for State Personnel* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2011).

the Department is accomplished via on-the-job experience, something that the study failed to take into consideration because it could not be measured.⁷⁰

This last statement is of particular interest to this thesis in that it can be used to bolster the assertion that many FSOs and Specialists use when making a decision to avoid formal training, namely that on-the-job training is just as effective as classroom training. But why would FSOs and Specialists wish to avoid training in the first place? One answer can be found in another GAO report included in this review, “Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls.”

This study, released in September of 2009 as an update of a 2006 study, was intended to explore why high numbers of Foreign Service officers in overseas language-designated positions did not meet the foreign language speaking and reading proficiency targets that the Department of State had set for their positions. Generally, the report blames the problems on a number of issues, including chronic staffing gaps, questions about the adequacy of the language proficiency requirements, training capacity, the lack of a career development program that requires FSOs to have sustained professional language proficiency and lack of a strategic plan that is linked to targets, goals, or time.⁷¹

Of interest to this thesis is the fact that, while seeking answers to the overall problem, GAO researchers also looked at other issues related to long-term language training and their findings include a passage that states exactly what this thesis posits in its opening paragraph. It reads:

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*.

Another challenge to State's efforts to address its language shortfalls is the persistent perception among Foreign Service officers that State's promotion system undervalues language training; however, while HR officials told us that the system values language training, the department has not conducted a systematic assessment to refute the perceptions. Officers at several posts we visited stated a belief that long-term training, specifically advanced training in hard languages, hinders their promotion chances. For example, officers in Beijing said that some officers are reluctant to study a foreign language that requires a 1- or 2-year commitment because they believe it makes them less competitive for promotion, and one officer said that she would not have bid on her current position if she had had to take Chinese first. A former ambassador told us that many officers feel that language training is a "net minus" to their careers, as the department views this as a drain on the staffing system. We reported similar sentiments in 2006, when several officers said they believed that State's promotion system might hinder officers' ability to enhance and maintain their language skills over time. Although senior HR officials told us that the promotion system weighs time in training as equal to time at post, they acknowledged that officers applying for promotion while in long-term training were at a disadvantage compared with officers assigned to an overseas post. Although promotion boards are required by law to weigh end-of-training reports for employees in full-time language training as heavily as the annual employee evaluation reports, officers in Beijing, Shenyang, Istanbul, and Washington expressed concern that evaluations for time in training were discounted. State officials said they have reviewed the results of one promotion board and found a slightly lower rate of promotions for officers in long-term training at the time of the review. However, these officials were not sure if these results were statistically significant and said that the department has not conducted a more systematic assessment of the issue.⁷²

This is a smoking gun. In addition to reiterating comments made in 2006, this report reaches back even further by citing a 1986 report entitled: "Hard Language Proficiency in the Foreign Service"⁷³ by Ambassador Monteagle Stearns that also identified several bureaucratic biases adversely affecting hard language training, including State's promotion system, which, according to the report, "convinced many

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Monteagle Stearns, *Hard Language Proficiency in the Foreign Service* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, 1986).

Foreign Service officers that they cannot afford to take time out for training, especially in hard languages which require two years or more to achieve even limited proficiency.”⁷⁴

Clearly then, this is a long standing perception. Although the passage related above focuses exclusively upon long-term language training, this thesis posits that the tendency to avoid long-term language training can be applied to other long-term training and educational programs, including interagency exchanges at military universities. The question is whether or not it is significant enough to merit a full, formal study by the Department of State. Up to this point, it has not, but other institutions, too, have looked into the issue.

The Henry L. Stimson Center, The American Foreign Service Association,
and The American Academy of Diplomacy

The GAO was not the only organization that released a report on the Department of State’s training programs in 2011. The Henry L. Stimson Center, in conjunction with the American Foreign Service Association and the American Academy of Diplomacy adds to the picture painted by the GAO in their report, *Forging a 21st-Century Diplomatic Service for the United States through Professional Education and Training*,

After beginning with an overview of the ways in which diplomacy has changed in the years since the cold war has ended, the report goes on to take a hard look at the current state of the Department of State’s present training programs before offering some suggestions for a way forward. Generally, the report blames a drastically increased workloads in the wake of the War on Terror along with budget limitations and staffing

⁷⁴ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls*.

gaps for creating a situation where the demands of the Department leave little time for long-term training. It also addresses the Foreign Service culture and the perceptions of training, stating:

In contrast to their US military counterparts, whose career progress is contingent on completing periodic training and professional education, there has been, according to some observers, a “widely held perception among FSOs that State’s promotion system does not consider time spent in language training when evaluating officers for promotion, which may discourage officers from investing the time required to achieve proficiency in certain languages.” A similar perception has historically held true for longer-term professional education at the National War College or other outside institutions, particularly in the case of fast-track FSOs.⁷⁵

Fast-track FSOs and Specialists are exactly who interagency exchange programs at military universities must attract if the Department of State and the Department of Defense want to ensure that interagency understanding and cooperation percolates to the highest levels. It is precisely these people who are on their way to becoming the State Department’s next generation of leaders but, as the above quote asserts, many people on the fast track avoid long term training, especially at outside institutions.

Getting these people to bid on interagency exchange positions at military universities is difficult. As this chapter’s review of earlier review of 3 FAM 2420, 3 FAH-1 H245 and the “open assignment” process indicates, mid-level FSOs and Specialists play a critical role in determining which onward assignments they will receive. So long as they adhere to the rules, they cannot be forced to apply to these positions. If they truly believe, as the literature indicates, that the progression of their career will be slowed by long-term training, how then can they be attracted?

⁷⁵ Henry L. Stimson Center and The American Academy of Diplomacy.

A Qualitative Case Study on How U.S. Army Officers Attending the Command and General Staff College Decide to Attend Graduate School

The officer corps of the Department of State and the Department of Defense bear many striking similarities. To begin with, with the exception of some high-level political appointees to certain positions within the Department of State, new-hires in both organizations join a limited pool of entry-level personnel who then compete with one another for promotions from within. Unlike the civilian world, neither institution brings in mid-level leaders from outside this existing pool. The US Army, for example, does not generally recruit from private industry when seeking brigade commanders nor does the Department of State when it fills mid to higher level leadership positions.

Distinguishing oneself among one's peers, then, is the key to earning promotion and special assignments in both institutions and Charles David Vance's 2013 Kansas State University doctoral dissertation, "An Exploration of How U.S. Army Officers Attending the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Decide Whether or Not to Attend Graduate School: A Qualitative Case Study," examines how many U.S. Army officers use education to help set themselves apart. As a part of this study Vance interviewed twenty CGSC students, all of whom were mid-career professionals, and found that all but four already had or were pursuing a graduate degree through CGSC's Master's degree programs. When he queried them on why they felt they needed graduate level degrees, he found that the following:

The reasons they cited fell into two categories: professional development, in terms of improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities as an Army officer; and military job security, with respect to improving their competitiveness in terms of being kept on active duty. With respect to professional development, some students in the study felt a master's degree provided them an edge over their

contemporaries with respect to promotion and selection for command or other key positions.⁷⁶

This is because the US Military makes a priority of Professional Military Education and fosters a culture in which higher level learning leads to more responsibility and/or more desirable assignments.⁷⁷ This is almost the exact opposite of the Department of State whose culture, the basis of which were examined at the beginning of this chapter, sets a high bar for entry via its use of a rigorous written and oral test for FSOs, and a difficult written application and job-specific interviews for FS Specialists, but which places more emphasis on one's on-the-job achievements and personal contacts when one competes for promotion and assignment. The result is easy to understand, military officers do not dread long-term training because they believe that their culture considers it a net positive to their professional development. Members of the Foreign Service, on the other hand, remain uncertain.

Conclusion

This thesis' primary research question is intended to explore the reasons why Foreign Service personnel may seek to avoid long-term courses of study at military universities. Its primary research question is intended to examine whether or not concerns about finances, assignments or career progression within the Department of State's merit based and extremely competitive culture play a role in this decision.

⁷⁶ Charles David Vance, "An Exploration Of How U.S. Army Officers Attending The U.S Command And General Staff College Decide Whether Or Not to Attend Graduate School: A Qualitative Case Study" (Diss., College of Education, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS, 2013).

⁷⁷ Department of the Army, Army Regulation (AR) 600-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2007), 4.

In order to understand this culture, its origins and how its rules affects FSOs and Specialists' attitudes towards long-term training, this chapter has looked into the written record. It began with an examination of how merit and competition were built into the Department of State through the various iterations of the Foreign Service Act and how it continues to be fostered in the organization today through the rules and regulations spelled out in great detail by the *Foreign Affairs Manual*. It then examined the three seminal studies that assess the Department of State's training programs and concluded by looking at attitudes in a similar institution, the U.S. Army, via a 2013 study on how mid-career officers view long-term training.

The next chapter will focus on the creation of a study that will explore this issue more directly via the creation of a survey instrument that can better define the motivations and general attitudes of FSOs and Specialists in regards to interagency exchanges at military universities.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This thesis seeks to examine why some of the Department of State's best potential candidates for interagency exchange programs that involve long-term courses of study at military universities may choose not to apply. Its primary research is intended to assess whether or not Foreign Service Officers and Specialists are opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about finances, career progression and assignments.

Chapter 2 used the written record to examine Foreign Service culture. It reviewed how merit and competition were built into the Department of State through the congressional acts that have shaped the Foreign Service since its inception and then looked at the ways in which personnel policy, as spelled out in the *Foreign Affairs Manual*, work to enculturate officers today. It then examined three important assessments of the Department of State's training programs in search of specific information on the attitudes of FSOs and Specialists in regard to long-term training. It concluded with a look at a 2013 study on how the employees of a similar institution, the U.S. Army, view long-term training and the necessity of a higher level degree as they seek to advance within their own organization.

Because the focus of the research is often on other subjects, the written record reports on the attitudes of Foreign Service personnel towards long-term training in an almost anecdotal fashion. The Government Accountability Office's 2009 report entitled, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign*

Language Shortfalls. Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2009.

includes the issue this way:

Another challenge to State's efforts to address its language shortfalls is the persistent perception among Foreign Service officers that State's promotion system undervalues language training; however, while HR officials told us that the system values language training, the department has not conducted a systematic assessment to refute the perceptions. Officers at several posts we visited stated a belief that long-term training, specifically advanced training in hard languages, hinders their promotion chances. For example, officers in Beijing said that some officers are reluctant to study a foreign language that requires a 1- or 2-year commitment because they believe it makes them less competitive for promotion, and one officer said that she would not have bid on her current position if she had had to take Chinese first. A former ambassador told us that many officers feel that language training is a "net minus" to their careers, as the department views this as a drain on the staffing system.⁷⁸

The report goes on to say that officials in the Department of State's Human Resources bureau acknowledged that officers in long-term language training were at a disadvantage relative to the peers when competing for promotion but that, after examining the results of a single promotion board, were not certain that the numbers of people affected were statistically significant enough to merit a more systematic study of the issue.⁷⁹

This thesis posits that the belief among Foreign Service Officers and Specialists that the Department of State undervalues long-language training also affects other forms of long-term training. It is specifically intended to explore the issue as it relates to interagency exchanges at military universities with the intent of discovering whether or not concerns about finances and career progression are leading members of the Foreign

⁷⁸ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Comprehensive Plan Needed to Address Persistent Foreign Language Shortfalls* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2009).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Service to avoid these types of assignments. Its primary research and follow-on questions are:

Primary Research Question: Are Foreign Service Officers and Specialists opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about finances and career progression?

1. What effect, if any, do financial considerations have on an FSO or Specialist's decision to participate in an interagency course of study at a military university?
 - a. Do FSOs and Specialists consider monetary issues prior to accepting an interagency assignment at a military university?
 - b. Do monetary considerations influence which university an FSO or Specialist choose to attend?
 - c. Based on financial considerations alone, would FSOs and Specialists recommend a similar interagency exchange program to their friends and colleagues?
2. What effect, if any, do FSOs and Specialists believe an extended interagency course of study at a military university has upon promotion rates?
 - a. What are the participants' perceptions of their own promotion rates in relation to their peers prior to the interagency experience?
 - b. What are the participants' perceptions of their own promotion rates in relation to their peers after the interagency experience?

- c. Does the participants' perceptions of the effects of the interagency experience on promotion play a role in whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues?
- 3. What effect, if any, do FSOs and Specialists believe an interagency course of study at a military university has on a State Department employee's onward assignments?
 - a. What are the participants' perceptions of how often they received their top choices of assignments prior to attending the interagency exchange program?
 - b. What are the participants' perceptions of how often they received their top choices of assignments after they attended the interagency exchange program?
 - c. Do the participants' perceptions of the effects of the interagency experience on follow-on assignments play a role in whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues?

Data Collection

Because the stated goal of this thesis is to examine whether or not concerns about finances and career progression are leading FSOs and Specialists to avoid interagency assignments at military universities, human subject research is required. In order to reach the maximum number of people, a survey instrument was employed.

The selected target group was the State Department alumni of interagency exchanges at military universities, people who prior to committing to the programs had to

weigh their own thoughts on money, assignments and career progression, and come to their own conclusions as to whether or not the potential benefits of the program outweighed the potential risks. Additionally, this same group, because they have since gone on to rejoin the Department of State at the working level and have had the opportunity to experience the effects of the interagency experience on their careers, will also have had additional time to form opinions as to whether or not any of their prior concerns had been merited. The intent of the survey was to measure both general data in regards to the participants' initial decision to participate in the interagency exchange program and to garner deeper insight into their thoughts as they relate to finances, promotion and assignments in the Foreign Service.

Four previous year groups, the classes of 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and including the attendees of every military university involved in the interagency exchange program, were selected to receive the survey. The total number of employees asked to participate was 89, including 34 FSOs and 55 Specialists. Although they may also apply to interagency exchange programs, Civil Service Officers were not represented in any of the above year groups. Table 1, shows the total numbers of FSOs and Specialists broken into the perspective groups and organized by university.

Table 1. Total number of program alumni by job specialty and Military University

Military University Name	FSO	FS Specialist	Total
Air Force Command & Staff College	0	4	4
Army Command & General Staff College	8	9	17
Inter-American Defense College	3	0	3
Joint Forces Staff College	5	4	9
National Defense Intelligence College	9	25	34
US Marine Corps Command & Staff College	1	5	6
US Navy Command & Staff	8	8	16
Total:	34	55	89

Source: Created by author.

The FSOs in the survey group may further be divided by cone and rank. Table 2, which shows the total number of FSOs in the survey group and broken down by rank, shows that all five professional fields were well represented in the program but that in the field of Public Diplomacy only FS-03s participated. This table also shows that, in accordance with State Department policy, no attendees were ranked FS-01 or higher meaning that these are true mid-career professionals who are still fairly new to organizational leadership.

Table 2. Total FSO alumni by cone and rank

Cone	Number of Participants	FS-01	FS-02	FS-03
Administration	9	0	3	6
Consular	8	0	3	5
Economics	4	0	3	1
Political	7	0	3	4
Public Diplomacy	6	0	0	6
Total:	34	0	12	22

Source: Created by author.

Table 3 organizes the FSO participants in the survey group by the military university they attended and their Foreign Service rank. The data reveals that, with the exceptions of the US Air Force Command and Staff College, which had no FSO attendees, and the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College, which had a single attendee, FSOs at both the FS-02 and FS-03 levels were well represented at all the military universities.

Table 3. Total FSO alumni by military university and rank

Military University Name	Number of Participants	FS-01	FS-02	FS-03
Air Force Command & Staff College	0	0	0	0
Army Command & General Staff College	8	0	3	5
Inter-American Defense College	3	0	1	2
Joint Forces Staff College	5	0	2	3
National Defense Intelligence College	9	0	3	6
US Marine Corps Command & Staff College	1	0	0	1
US Navy Command & Staff	8	0	3	5
	34	0	12	22

Source: Created by author.

Table 4 shows the FSO participants in the interagency exchange programs organized by university and cone. The data shows that all five cones are well represented in the program. It also shows that each cone is fairly equally distributed across the entire university system, with members of at least two cones at each institution, with the exceptions of the US Air Force and US Marine Corps Command and Staff College which, as noted above, suffered from limited overall participation.

Table 4. Total FSO alumni by university and cone

Military University Name	Admin	Cons	Econ	Pol	PD
Air Force Command & Staff College	0	0	0	0	0
Army Command & General Staff College	3	1	1	0	3
Inter-American Defense College	1	2	0	0	0
Joint Forces Staff College	2	2	0	0	1
National Defense Intelligence College	0	2	1	4	2
US Marine Corps Command & Staff College	0	0	0	1	0
US Navy Command & Staff College	3	1	2	2	0

Source: Created by author.

As with the FSOs, the data on Foreign Service Specialists in the survey group can also be broken by university, rank and professional field. Table 5 shows that only two of the eight different Specialist career tracks are represented in the survey group. Of these two groups, the data further shows that the specialty of Diplomatic Security is overwhelmingly represented in the program, with 53 of 55 total participants, and that of these 55 participants 42 are FS-03, or people who are still fairly junior in rank and who are just beginning to come into positions of institutional leadership.

Table 5. Total FS Specialist Alumni by job specialty and rank

Specialty	Total Number of Participants	FS-01	FS-02	FS-03
Diplomatic Security	53	1	11	41
IT Management	2	0	0	3
Administration	0	0	0	0
Construction Engineering	0	0	0	0
Facility Management	0	0	0	0
International Information and English Language Programs	0	0	0	0
Medical and Health	0	0	0	0
Office Management	0	0	0	0

Source: Created by author.

Table 6 shows FS Specialists broken down by rank and university. The data's most obvious feature is that 25 of 55 total participants choose to attend the National Defense Intelligence College (NDIC) in Washington DC. It also shows that higher ranking specialists, including the program's sole FS-01 participant and 9 of 11 FS-02 mid-career specialists chose to attend NDIC as well. Otherwise, at the FS-03 level, the data shows good participation of FS specialists at all institutions with the single exception of the Inter-American Defense College which has no Specialist attendees.

Table 6. Total FS Specialist alumni by university and rank

Military University Name	Number of Participants	FS-01	FS-02	FS-03
Air Force Command & Staff College	4	0	1	3
Army Command & General Staff College	9	0	0	9
Inter-American Defense College	0	0	0	0
Joint Forces Staff College	4	0	0	4
National Defense Intelligence College	25	1	9	15
US Marine Corps Command & Staff College	5	0	1	4
US Navy Command & Staff	8	0	0	8

Source: Created by author.

Table 7 breaks down the information on which specific universities and the members of the two participating specialties chose to attend. Because of the overwhelming numbers of DS agents in the program, the numbers look similar to those found in table 6. The data does, reveal, however, that the two participating members of IT Management chose to attend different universities, both of which were popular choices for DS agents as well.

Table 7. Total number of FS Specialist alumni by university and job specialty

Military University Name	Diplomatic Security	IT Management
Air Force Command & Staff College	4	0
Army Command & General Staff College	8	1
Inter-American Defense College	0	0
Joint Forces Staff College	4	0
National Defense Intelligence College	24	1
US Marine Corps Command & Staff College	5	0
US Navy Command & Staff	8	0

Source: Created by author.

Methods of Analysis

Because this thesis is basically an anthropological study of the effects of culture on the decision making processes of FSOs and Specialists, the chosen method for data collected by the survey instrument employed by this thesis is mixed methodology. This is because in natural and social sciences, both approaches are important.⁸⁰ Quantitative research is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical, mathematical or computational techniques and this thesis will use quantitative analysis in order to systematically chart data obtained through multiple choice questions included in the survey in order to identify common trends and patterns. It will use qualitative methodology to analyze answers from any of the several comment fields included the survey with the intent of more deeply probing the thoughts and opinions of program

⁸⁰ H. Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2011).

alumni. The following chapter's analysis will be richer for including both of these approaches analytic approaches

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This thesis seeks to explore why many of the Department of State's best potential candidates for interagency exchanges at military universities may choose not to apply to the program. The primary research question, introduced in the first chapter, is intended to examine whether or not financial issues and/or concerns over the impact of long-term training programs on career progression and follow-on assignments within the Department of State's merit based and extremely competitive culture play a role in this decision.

Chapter 2 used the written record to examine the organizational culture of the Foreign Service. It reviewed how merit and competition were originally built into the Department of State, beginning with the *Roger's Act of 1924*, and how subsequent laws, and the Department's own policies, rules and regulations helped to facilitate the creation of highly competitive organizational culture that exists today. It then looked at three recent studies on long-term training in order to verify the thesis that Foreign Service personnel generally believe that long-term courses of training can damage their career and concluded by comparing those studies with a similar study on US Army officers to gauge whether or not further study of training in that institution could offer additional insights.

Chapter 3 explained that, in order to achieve the stated goal of the thesis, human subject research would be required. It determined that the best way to gather the necessary data was via survey and identified mixed methodology as the best tool with which to analyze returned data. It also identified the a target group, one that included

attendees of every military university involved in the interagency exchange program, State Department alumni of interagency exchanges at military universities alumni from the classes of 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. The total number of people invited to participate was 89 and included 34 FSOs and 55 Specialists.

The survey was sent to the target group via their official Department of State email addresses. The invitation email contained a short explanation of the subject being researched and included a link to a survey website based outside of the Department of State's own intranet. Potential survey takers were given three weeks to complete the survey and, in addition to the original invitation, were sent two follow-up emails to encourage participation. The total time required to complete the basic survey was estimated to be less than ten minutes but, because of numerous fields soliciting comments on specific issues, could take longer depending upon how much detail individual respondents wished to add.

Demographic Data on Respondents

Of the 89 Foreign Service employees in the target group, 33 responded, giving the survey an overall response rate of 37 percent. Broken down into their career fields by demographic data questions included on the first page of the survey, the data shows that responses were received from 11 out of a possible 34 FSOs and 22 out of 55 Specialists. Of these, 100 percent of respondents indicated that the program they attended met the definition of long-term training used in this assessment, a course of study lasting more than nine months, and the responses also showed that all but one had successfully completed the program. A detailed list of the numbers, broken into respective FSO or Specialist career fields and organized by university, can be seen in table 8.

Table 8. Total number of responses by FSO/Specialist and university

Military University	FSO	Specialists	Total
Air Force Command & Staff College	0	0	0
Army Command & General Staff College	1	6	7
Inter-American Defense College	1	1	2
Joint Forces Staff College	0	3	3
National Defense Intelligence College	4	7	11
USMC Command & Staff College	0	3	3
US Navy Command & Staff College	5	2	7

Source: Created by author.

Although the raw numerical data presented above that answers the “who” and “where” by grouping the respondents into their respective employee classifications and telling what institution they attended where they came from and went to, it does not address the “why.” To help explain the participants’ motivations, the first qualitative question in the survey sought out information on this important question. Those answers are broken out in table 9.

Table 9. Reasons for Decision to Bid an Interagency Assignment

Why did you decide to bid on an interagency exchange assignment at a military university?	
Thought it would enhance my promotability	12
Thought it would enhance my ability to bid on certain positions	7
Specifically wanted to bid on POLAD or other interagency assignments	7
Wanted to return to the United States	4
Was having difficulty finding an onward assignment	4
Wanted to avoid serving in Washington DC	0
Personal improvement	25
Other	13

Source: Created by author.

Other answers from the survey respondents included:

1. An unparalleled opportunity to learn from and with military colleagues as well as contribute Department of State foreign policy perspectives into the classroom. I wanted to understand more about DoD planning, decision-making and approaches to issues,
2. Better understand military approach to world and how we can work together
3. Had to break assignment due to the outbreak of civil war and a drawdown but needed to find an alternative, preferably outside of DC.
4. I thought it would make me better working in an interagency environment i.e. an embassy.
5. I thought the training would be professionally and personally useful since DS interacts so much with DoD.

6. Improve on Spanish language skills and make foreign officer connections throughout WHA⁸¹
7. My father, a retired FSO attended the Army War College and I always wanted to do the same.
8. Obtain skills beneficial to the Department
9. Planning for Post State Dept career
10. Potential future career
11. This nested nicely with my subspecialty of Pol/Mil⁸².
12. To develop expertise in interagency and national security issues and processes
13. Wanted to obtain a Master Degree

Demographic Data: Analysis

Three important conclusions can be drawn from the above data. First, based on a quantitative analysis of the respondents' demographics, the sample group is small but representative of the overall target group in that it includes both FSOs and Specialists in relatively close proportion to the numbers as they are represented in the original target group. Second, qualitative analysis reveals that the survey group included many highly intrinsically motivated people, with 25 out of 33 respondents rating "Personal Improvement" among their reasons for participating. Third, judging by the number and quality of comments added by survey participants to the "other" field, that the choice to

⁸¹ WHA is the Western Hemisphere Administration, the bureau that oversees the Department of State's foreign operations in the Western Hemisphere.

⁸² Pol/Mil is an FSO subspecialty in the Political Cone

participate in the interagency course of study at a military university was, for many people, quite personal.

These last two points are very important the analysis of this survey. Considering this groups intrinsic and personal motivations, when trends appear among this highly individualistic group, especially as they relate to monetary issues, promotion and assignments, they should be noted and, possibly, considered for future research.

Monetary Issues

To successfully answer the primary research question several secondary questions must be answered. The first among these explore attitudes towards monetary issues with the question, “What effect, if any, do financial considerations have on an FSO or Specialist’s decision to participate in an interagency course of study at a military university?” The survey instrument sent to the target group attempts to answer this by asking three specific sub-questions:

1. Do FSOs and Specialists consider monetary issues prior to accepting an interagency assignment at a military university?
2. Do monetary considerations influence which university an FSO or Specialist choose to attend?
3. Based on financial considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your colleagues?

Monetary Issues: Quantitative Data

Of the respondents, only 11 out of 33 indicated they had considered monetary issues prior to deciding to attend a long-term course of study at a military university while 22 of 33 indicated they had not (see table 10).

Table 10. Prior consideration of monetary issues

Did you consider monetary issues prior to deciding to attend a military university?	
Yes	11
No	22

Source: Created by author.

Because military universities are located in different regions of the United States, FSOs and Specialists could affect the amount of locality pay they receive by choosing to attend those universities that are in regions that have the highest rates of locality pay. When asked about how important locality pay and other financial considerations were in deciding which program to attend, however, the vast majority of Foreign Service personnel attached little to no importance at all to the subject. The specific numbers are broken out in table 11.

Table 11. Importance of locality pay

How important was locality pay or other monetary considerations when choosing which program to attend?	
Very	2
Somewhat important	4
Neither important nor unimportant	4
Somewhat unimportant	7
Not at all important	16

Source: Created by author.

As a useful check on whether or not the numbers in table 10 reflect the reality of the choices FSOs and specialists made as reflected in table 11, table 12 uses data on those eleven Foreign Service employees who initially indicated they had considered monetary issues prior to beginning their course of study and cross references them with the institutions they report they attended, the locality region in which those universities exist and the rate of additional pay those students would have received while assigned to that region of the United States.

Table 12. Actual Assignment Cross Referenced with Locality Pay

Military University Name	Location	Locality Region	Locality Pay Rate	Considered monetary issues
Air Force Command & Staff College	Montgomery, AL	Rest of US	14.16%	0
Army Command & General Staff College	Leavenworth, KS	Rest of US	14.16%	4
Inter-American Defense College	Washington, DC	DC-MD-VA-WV-PA	24.22%	0
Joint Forces Staff College	Norfolk, VA	Rest of US	14.16%	1
National Defense Intelligence College	Washington, DC	DC-MD-VA-WV-PA	24.22%	3
US Marine Corps Command & Staff College	Quantico, VA	DC-MD-VA-WV-PA	24.22%	0
US Navy Command & Staff	Newport, RI	MA-NH-RI-ME	24.80%	3

Source: Created by author.

The data in table 12 shows that six people attended schools in the regions with the highest levels of locality pay while five attended universities in the regions with the least. This reflects the data that was shown in table 2 where, despite the fact that eleven people in table 1 indicated they had considered financial issues prior to attending a course of study at a military university, only six people listed monetary issues as important when considering which program to attend. This data appears to back up the assertion, then, that survey participants truly did not consider monetary issues prior to attending the program and, even if they did, they took no action to ensure they received the maximum amount of money.

The third and final question on monetary issues, “Based on financial considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your colleagues?” was intended to gauge whether or not monetary issues related to the interagency experience had caused program participants to change their views on the importance of monetary issues after completing the program. Only seven people indicated they would not recommend the program and, of these, none indicated that they considered monetary issues prior to participating in the program. Quantitatively, then, the numbers appear to show little concern among members of the Foreign Service as they relate to the financial costs of participation in the program.

Monetary Issues: Qualitative Data

There were no qualitative questions or areas for comments specifically relating monetary issues included in the survey, but one respondent, an FSO-03 who attended a military university in a region with the base level of locality pay, 14.16 percent, and who also indicated that they would not recommend a similar course of study to their colleagues, did address a monetary issue in the section at the conclusion of the survey intended to solicit final thoughts and issues the instrument had otherwise failed to address. That person remarked:

State Department students were the only civilian agency that did not receive any per diem. Students from other civilian agencies were on per diem the whole year; military colleagues had housing benefits. Comparatively, State Department students were less well compensated—and valued—for their participation in this program. Considering that I contributed greatly to the understanding of State Dept. perspectives on issues examined in the course, and thus brought a benefit to the whole (almost entirely military) student group I was with, it is regrettable that I should receive much less compensation and support and appreciation from the same government for which we all serve.

It is important to note that, unlike the military, neither the Civil Service nor the Foreign Service provides housing benefits for employees while those employees are at their normal, assigned duty station within the United States. Unlike Foreign Service personnel assigned to the Foreign Service Institute for some training programs, usually attached to an onward assignment overseas, FSOs and Specialists assigned to military universities are considered to be at their place of assignment and are given orders that include a permanent change of station.

Foreign Service personnel assigned to military universities have their families and household goods moved at government expense and, as a result, are not, as some members of the Civil Service who are assigned to military universities on Temporary Duty, eligible for per-diem. Although, as this qualitative comment indicates, at least some members of the Foreign Service would likely appreciate housing benefits or added money to help defray other costs, the quantitative data seems to indicate it is not a priority. In any case, State Department policy on the matter is clear.

Monetary Issues: Analysis

Overall, the data obtained in relation to the secondary research questions addressed in this section appears to indicate that the majority of those FSOs and Specialists who chose to attend an interagency course of study at a military university paid little attention to possible monetary issues. In answer to the first secondary research question, quantitative methods revealed that only 11 out of 33 of Foreign Service Personnel who responded to the survey considered monetary issues related to attendance prior to accepting their interagency assignment. Answers to the second question revealed that only 8 out of 33 people thought locality pay was an important consideration when

choosing which university to attend and a further examination and, on the final question, only 6 of 33 people considered financial issues to be so important that they would not, solely because of those issues, recommend a similar course of study to the colleagues.

A space for comments that could have led to more qualitative comments on monetary issues was, unfortunately, not a part of the survey design. The sole monetary related response, proffered in a general comment field at the end of the survey, added one additional issue for consideration but, in light of overwhelming numerical data, offered little additional insight into the issue.

That said, when considering looking for qualitative data to assess, it is important to consider that everyone included in the survey group chose to opt-into the program. What the survey lacked was access to people who may have considered the program and then chose to opt-out on. Identifying and polling this larger group, perhaps via a more general poll across the entirety of the Foreign Service, may yield different results. This suggestion will be included as a topic for possible further research in the next chapter.

Promotion

The second section of the survey was intended to answer the primary research question by exploring FSOs and Specialists' thoughts on extended interagency courses of study as they relate to promotion rates. In order to accomplish this, three specific questions needed to be answered. They were:

1. What is the participants' perception of their own promotion rates in relation to their peers prior to the interagency experience?
2. What is the participants' perception of their own promotion rates in relation to their peers after the interagency experience?

3. Does the participants' perception of the effects of the interagency experience on promotion play a role in whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues?

Promotion: Quantitative Data

The survey's first question on promotion attempted to gather quantitative data by asking about participants' perceptions of their own career progression in relation to their peers. Of the 33 respondents, only 28 replied to this specific question. Their answers, which form an almost perfect bell curve, are broken out in table 13.

Table 13. Perception of career progression in relation to peer group

How do you compare your career progression in relation to your A100 peer group?	
I believe that I have generally been promoted ahead of my peer group.	6
I believe that I have generally been promoted with my peer group.	15
I believe that I have generally been promoted more slowly than my peer group	7

Source: Created by author.

The second question, also quantitative, attempted to measure any changes in perception in the wake of the interagency exchange program by asking, "What affect do you believe attending an interagency exchange program at a military university has had on your post-attendance promotions?" This time, 32 respondents replied to the query. Their answers are broken down in table 14.

Table 14. Post attendance perceptions of program effect on promotion

What affect do you believe attending an interagency exchange program at a military university has had on your post-attendance promotions?				
	Helped	No effect	Hindered	No answer
FSO	3	3	5	0
Specialist	2	14	5	1
Total	5	17	10	1

Source: Created by author.

The third question on promotion, an attempt to gather quantitative data on a qualitative issue, was intended to explore the participants' perceptions of the effects of the interagency experience. It asked simply, whether or not respondents would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues. More than half, as indicated by table 15, said they would not.

Table 15. Recommendation Based on Promotion

Based on promotion related considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your peers?	Yes	No
	14	18

Source: Created by author.

Promotion: Qualitative Data

When asked to comment in detail about issues relating to promotion prior to participating in an interagency course of study at a military university, seventeen

respondents offered-up their thoughts. Despite the general feeling of the majority that their own career progression was at or above par as indicated by the quantitative data, analysis of qualitative data showed, at best general ambivalence and, at worst, open hostility towards the promotion system as it exists in the Department of State today.

Those comments include:

The promotion system in DOS is a complete and total mystery. There might actually be an intoxicated monkey with a dart board involved.

DOS promotions are lacking in transparency and there is not (sic) consensus on what it takes to be promoted. Horrible system that should be overhauled.

I am not one to spit in the wind. The promotion process is in need of greater transparency. It is what it is.

From my perspective it appears arbitrary, numbers-driven, and biased against those who undertake long term training of any kind.

Qualitative analysis of comments that were garnered when Foreign Service personnel were asked to comment about promotions after completing the course of study found tacit acknowledgment of the belief that the Department of State would not reward participation in the program through the promotion process. While many of the comments showed some unhappiness over the various issues as they related to promotion, some comments also indicated a high level of satisfaction with the program, regardless. Comments included the following statements:

I honestly don't think that my agency cares.

I was told by many people that it would probably delay my promotion to the next grade. While promotion is important to me, other factors (ie family considerations and personal growth) were more important to me.

Generally speaking the system does not consider these as promotable assignments in the short term; but these are fantastic learning opportunities for the long-term.

It was a dead year for promotions.⁸³ With a five year past evaluation history, it is as if I did nothing at all for a year. I didn't lead a program or supervise anyone. I sat around drinking tea and thinking. Not productive. It actually hurt my chance for promotion. We are warned to try to get these courses when you are newly promoted because there is no chance you will be promoted in two consecutive years anyway, so it doesn't hurt. But if you are in the business just to be promoted, you need to go somewhere else.

All of these comments add clarity to the numbers that appear in the qualitative assessment of issues relating to promotion above by helping to explain why more than half of program participants, people who willingly joined the program and who are, as acknowledged in this section's analysis of the respondents' demographic data, highly, intrinsically motivated, would indicate that they would not recommend a similar course of study to their colleagues.

Promotion: Analysis

Overall, this portion of the study found Foreign Service personnel to be as sensitive to issues of promotion as posited in this thesis' chapter 2 assessment of the State Department's internal culture predicted. Because the survey instrument employed focused on alumni, people who have had first-hand experience with the interagency program and understand its benefits as well as its drawbacks, the results to this partition of the survey are extremely important to answering the primary research question.

Are Foreign Service Officers and Specialists are opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about career progression? There is, it appears, cause for concern. However, without a larger survey group that includes general responses from all across the Foreign Service and includes those who

⁸³ "Dead year for promotions" references the fact that after receiving a promotion Foreign Service Personnel are ineligible for further promotion for two years.

have actually considered the program but then, for reasons of career progression actually chose to opt out, it is a difficult assertion to definitively prove. Further study will likely be required,

Assignments

The third part of the survey instrument was intended to explore what effects FSOs and Specialists believe an interagency course of study at a military university has on a State Department employee's onward assignments. In order to do this, the answers to three secondary questions were needed.

1. What is the participants' perception of how often they received their top choices of assignments prior to attending the interagency exchange program?
2. What is the participants' perception of how often they received their top choices of assignments after they attended the interagency exchange program?
3. Does the participants' perception of the effects of the interagency experience on follow-on assignments play a role in whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues?

Assignments: Quantitative Data

To answer the first of the above questions, survey participants were asked: "In your opinion, prior to attending an interagency exchange program at a military university, how successful were you in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?"

Generally, the answers here indicated general level of success with only 2 of the 32 respondents indicating any lack of success prior to attending a program at a military university.

Table 16. Assignments: Perception of Success Prior to Program

In your opinion, prior to attending an interagency exchange program at a military university, how successful were you in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?	
Very successful	8
Somewhat successful	15
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	7
Somewhat unsuccessful	2
Usually unsuccessful	0

Source: Created by author.

To determine if the respondents' perceptions of the effects that attending long-term training at a military university has had on the assignments they have received since completing the program, the survey included a necessary follow-on question: "Since completing your interagency exchange at a military university, how successful have you been in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?" Those results are broken down in table 17.

Table 17. Assignments: Perception of Success After Completing Program

Since completing your interagency exchange at a military university, how successful have you been in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?	
Very successful	4
Somewhat successful	17
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	7
Somewhat unsuccessful	1
Usually unsuccessful	3

Source: Created by author.

Although the numbers above generally remain positive for the majority of respondents, based on a comparison of tables 16 and 17, the data appears to show a negative trend. Figure 1 cross references the two preceding tables using a bar graph to better visualize the changes.

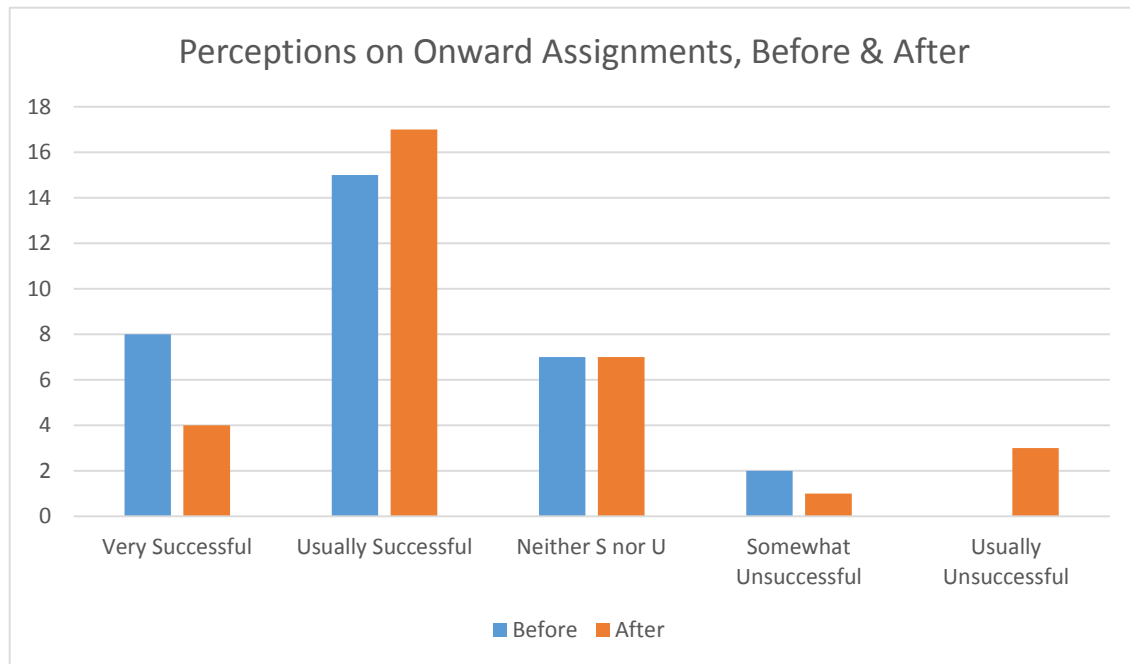


Figure 1. Perceptions on Assignments: Before/After

Source: Created by author.

In line with the two previous sections of the survey, question three in this section inquired about participants' willingness, solely on the basis of onward assignments, whether or not they would recommend a similar course of study to their friends and colleagues. The results here are similar to those received on promotion, with a slight majority, 17 out of 32 respondents, indicating that they would not recommend the course.

Table 18. Recommendation Based on Assignment

Based on onward assignment related considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your peers?	
Yes	15
No	17

Source: Created by author.

Assignments: Qualitative Data

Although the quantitative data examined above would seem to indicate that Foreign Service personnel are generally happy with the assignment process, a qualitative assessment of comments by survey respondents in answer to the question, “Would you like to offer additional thoughts on the assignment process?” show a wider variety of opinions, many negative. Responses include:

Too political.

In my opinion, the assignment process is far from transparent.

The assignment’s process sucks and the pendulum has swung back to “who you know”. Experience and prior work history is not taking into consideration when making assignments. And the process is completely hidden. Post does not really have a say. My current post’s “don’t you dare send us this guy” was ignored and that is who was selected. That person is a known poor performer and trouble maker. The absolute worst thing about this job is the DSS⁸⁴ assignment’s process. It is also unfortunate that the Department has glass ceilings that, as was explained to me through several interviews, preclude specialists from seeking DCM⁸⁵ and Principle Officer⁸⁶ positions. The excuses were laughable. Many specialists, with extensive leadership and management experience, bid on DCM positions this year

⁸⁴ DSS–Diplomatic Security Service

⁸⁵ DCM–Deputy Chief of Mission, The second highest ranking officer in an embassy.

⁸⁶ Principal Officer–The highest ranking officer at a mission other than an embassy.

and, to my knowledge, not a single one was awarded the position. The Department does not value these skills either—so it is no surprise. Just sad.

I feel the assignment process is a better reflection of one's merit than the promotion process, because their (sic) is a backdoor channel that everyone uses to ensure the person applying is solid, if you have a choice in the matter that is (i.e. hasn't been hand-picked by the muckity-mucks at Main State⁸⁷ or you have enough bidders to be choosey).

The assignments process is not fair; it's all about who you know versus who's the best qualified.

The assignments process is relatively fair but those in Washington have the upper hand, should they so choose to, as they can lobby directly for their onwads with the bureaus. This year was exceptionally ugly as the new EUR⁸⁸ head, Victoria Neuland, specifically stated that those who already served in EUR would not be considered for another tour in EUR - basically get the hell out until you have served elsewhere first. That's all very nice and touching but ignores the reality that NEA⁸⁹ welcomes NEAers, AF⁹⁰ loves their people, and both bureaus give weight to those who served with them before. I am not saying people in Paris shouldn't get the boot but my colleagues and I serve in the highest hardship differential in EUR, in a dictatorship to boot, and having to deal with Belarusian KGB on a daily basis yet my colleagues and I could not be considered for some other posting in EUR? Really? Very sad way to get any reward for those of us, again, who are putting in harder time than others. Kiev is a fun place right now>? Valdivostok? St. Pete's (they are having a rough time out there)?

In general it is terrible, exhausting, time consuming and "who you know" not what you know. Very political.

The process is completely broken for DS Agents.

Despite the relatively small size of the survey sample, the fact that so many respondents took the time to express ambivalent or negative opinions on the subjects of assignments is obvious and significant. Correlated with the comments left in the

⁸⁷ Main State—The Department of State's Headquarters in Washington DC

⁸⁸ EUR—The Department of State's European Bureau

⁸⁹ NEA—The Department of State's Near-East Asia Bureau

⁹⁰ AF—The Department of State's Africa Bureau

qualitative section of the survey devoted to opinions on assignments after the program, it appears that alumni's inability to get desired assignments that put their military university experience to good use could be the cause. Those comments include:

In relation to assignments (sic) I sought for immediately after my war college experience, I found officials I contacted about POLAD,⁹¹ political advisor, and Pol-Mil jobs quite lacking in response time. In the end I accepted an handshake⁹² for a job in my cone unrelated to my specialized training at the war college. I think if State wants officers to make use of their new and expanded knowledge of interagency issues and processes, they should at least have a system to reach out much earlier and respond mych (sic) more quickly to war college students who are looking for a relevent (sic) onward assignment in pol-mil/POLAD/political advisor, etc/

SinceFor (sic) any program tyaking (sic) place in the DC area, I would attach an onward 1-year assignment at Main State. Asking an individual to bid in consecutive years while away from the department and focusing on schools is too much. I did not motivate myself to bid and am currently in an unfulfilling job. Still a great program though.

Liaison positions with DoD should require attendance to a military university. Certain other assignments (sic) that work with DoD on a regular basis should also require military university attendance. Similar to language training requirements. If one wants to be the DOS LNO⁹³ to SOCOM,⁹⁴ then one must attend a military university first.

While attending NIU has opened opportunities (sic) for bidding on jobs in INR,⁹⁵ it generally has not made me a more competitive bidder. That being said, I has not hurt me other than delaying promotion, which closed the doors on a number of jobs at the next grade that I was hoping to bid on during my last bidding cycle.

I don't think it has any impact at all.

⁹¹ POLAD—Department of State personnel seconded to the DOD as Political Advisors to Military Commanders

⁹² “Handshake” is Department of State slang for “job offer”

⁹³ DOS LNO—Department of State Liaison Officer

⁹⁴ SOCCOM—The Department of Defense’s Special Operations Command

⁹⁵ INR—The Department of State’s Bureau for International Relations

I do not believe attendance to CGSC has enhanced or negated my ability to obtain a desired onward assignment (sic). Like most, some assignment cycles I have received a top choice, and some I have not. However, I have always been satisfied with the assignment I have received (sic) and I have gained both experience and intellect in each of my assignments (sic). I am confident in saying everyone wants their top choice of assignments (sic), but that is not the reality. The fear has always been taking assignments (sic) you believe may not help in obtaining promotions. I now believe DS is remedying that perception by promoting those with more well-rounded careers.

Jury is not in . . . I wanted POLAD positions . . . I did in fairness not apply to any US POLAD places

The process is completely broken for DS Agents. Before NIU, I spent two years at an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force investigative assignment. After earning my MSSSI degree from NIU I was bidding on DS PSP⁹⁶ positions and threat analysis HQ spots. Instead, I was directed to the secretary's detail as an agent. I do the same job as agents who have been on the job for two weeks. I will cite this issue, and be sure to thank DS for paying for my second master's degree, when I resign from the foreign service and take a job that is available due to my NIU degree.

I served in Iraq for two years immediately following the program. I believe my onward assignment after Iraq had nothing to do with the program.

The third question asked, “Based on onward assignment related considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your peers?” and, as with the similar question relating to promotions, the majority of students, 17 out of 32 in this case, indicated that they would not.

The comments above offer some indication why. An excerpt from one respondent’s comment, “The assignments process is relatively fair but those in Washington have the upper hand, should they so choose to, as they can lobby directly for their onwands with the bureaus.” directly echoes what this thesis posited in its first chapter in regards to onward assignments, that being posted away from the Department of

⁹⁶ DS PSP–Diplomatic Security Priority Staffing Positions. Generally critical skill positions in places like Iraq or Afghanistan.

State, in this case the commenter expresses that as “Washington,” harms one’s ability to effectively lobby for onward assignments.

Assignments: Analysis

Overall then, the results of this part of the research indicate at least tacit satisfaction with the Department of State’s assignment system and that most people surveyed indicate that feel they have some level of success prior to participating in an interagency course of study at a military university. Unfortunately, the survey data also indicates that, post program, at least some people feel less successful. Worse yet, a majority of program alumni indicate that they would not recommend the program based on onward assignments. This is indicative of a problem.

As with the previous sections, the data presented goes some distance towards answering this thesis’ primary research question, “Are FSOs and Specialists opting-out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about onward assignments?” but, because of the survey group is comprised of program participants and not a general survey of all members of the Foreign Service, cannot definitively prove a connection. A recommendation for further study will appear in the next chapter.

General Analysis and Conclusion

In addition to the specific issues explored in relation to the primary research question, the survey closed with an open comment field headed with the question: “Is there anything else you would like to add about the effect that participating in an interagency exchange program at a military university has had on your career?” in order to gather general qualitative data on the perceptions, thoughts and opinions of Foreign

Service personnel. Twelve respondents, including the person mentioned in the qualitative data section on monetary issues, offered the following additional insights. They are all included below:

I have not seen any indication that the Department considers long term interagency training beyond allocating personnel to attend. I have not experienced (sic) any interaction with the Department that leads me to believe it is a consideration for promotion or assignments, either positively or negatively.

State Department students were the only civilian agency that did not receive any per diem. Students from other civilian agencies were on per diem the whole year; military colleagues had housing benefits. Comparatively, State Department students were less well compensated--and valued--for their participation in this program. Considering that I contributed greatly to the understanding of State Dept. perspectives on issues examined in the course, and thus brought a benefit to the whole (almost entirely military) student group I was with, it is regrettable that I should receive much less compensation and support and appreciation from the same government for which we all serve.

The effect was generally negative. It gave me two dead years for promotion (one in the course and one in a language course) and pushed me out of the running for promotion. Many leaders in DS think it was a year of boondoggle where I was just F'ing off. And then you run across people who respond negatively to you for thinking you are better than them by going to the school--even if you've never really talked about the school. It is just a mixed bag of nothing for professional growth or advantage. However, it was worthwhile to me personally for intellectual reasons. And that is good enough for me. But the course was pretty weak too. The "adult learning method" needs to be balanced with more structured material.

I am much better informed when working with DoD. DoD also has more respect for me knowing I am a graduate of CGSC. It has helped me tremendously (sic) in my assignments post CGSC.

Helped me expand my range of contacts and provided opportunity to better appreciate how military officers view the world and foreign affairs; so an absolutely positive experience

I earned a MS in Strategic Intelligence but I was able to secure a position in Counterintelligence before I entered the program.

I cannot say for certain how attending CGSC has affected my career. I'm sure it played a role, but so has every one of my assignments. I can say for certain that the friends gained at CGSC will remain with me throughout my life as will the

memories. The year I had at CGSC was perhaps the most professionally challenging time I have had, but I know that I was a more intellectual person the day I graduated than I was the day before the program began. I believe my work has been enhanced by CGSC and the effect that participating in the interagency exchange program will be reflected by the quality of my work.

I feel in general it has made me a better officer, more willing to challenge the conventional wisdom at Main State. While perhaps not always appreciated, I believe it is beneficial for the institution.

I think it helps in IRAQ/AFPAK⁹⁷ contingency (sic) assignments

The experience was great for relationship building between State and DoD. Many of the military folks had little to no experience with State Department personnel. This gave them a chance to meet and interact with a State Department person and hear a different perspective on military operations.

Yes, I would like to see both the military and the State Department take the educational program more seriously. While at CGSC, there were 2 generalists and 3 specialists. Of the two, I passed with a top 20% and got my Master's while my generalist colleague somehow managed to 'drop out' of having to complete his degree since he already had two Master's degrees. As for the specialists, one was unable to complete his degree at all but was given a completion for the work done. They were both nice guys but that was ludicrous as it makes it appear that the same amount of work was done by all. For this reason, I would ask that there be an additional report card given with actual grades for the year which would then be placed into each employee's Employee Performance File (EPF). That would be the only way for the Promotion Boards to know who did the heavy lifting. That alone is why some people do not understand what it's (sic) value is since there is no way to grade it or weigh it. As State pushes for officers to talk about their experiences with local papers, State should invite those who have this interagency exchange experience to speak to their peers, through a webinar or other format in order to increase understanding of what we do, how it can be used after they leave the classroom, and to raise awareness in general.

Very informative, useful and in my case, helped me get an INL/International Law Enforcement job. This however just added to time out of cone/Specialty which again, does not go well for Specialist promotion panels.

The final open comment field on the survey was intended to give respondents one final opportunity in an unstructured area to highlight issues and thoughts that they

⁹⁷ IRAQ/AFPAK—Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan

believed would help further express their thoughts on the interagency exchange program that they had participated in. If there is a bright spot in this research, it is that in addition to several suggestions that could help the program, many of the comments were quite positive in tone, especially as they related to what the Foreign Service personnel personally gained from participating in the program.

These comments also help frame the survey. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the survey group's responses to demographic questions indicated that this was a highly intrinsically motivated group of people and that many of them had actually decided to participate in the program for personal reasons. While the survey results acknowledge that, for some people, the experience had effects on pocketbooks, career progression and onward assignments, people generally didn't allow these things to color their entire experience. Despite the fact that in two of the three areas studied, promotion and assignments, a slight majority indicated that they would not recommend the programs to their colleagues, these final comments indicate that many people ultimately found value in the program.

This chapter has examined the data obtained from 33 members of the Foreign Service via the survey instrument found in appendix 1. Appendixes 2, 3 and 4 give the raw data of respondents both in total and divided into their respective professional roles as FSO and Specialists. The following chapter will use the analysis from this chapter to determine whether or not this thesis has achieved its stated goal and found the answer to its primary research question. It will also examine how this study could be improved and offer suggestions for follow-on studies that may help better define the problem so that it may be more effectively managed.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This thesis seeks to examine why some of the Department of State's best potential candidates for interagency exchange programs that involve long-term courses of study at military universities may choose not to apply. Its primary research is intended to assess whether or not Foreign Service Officers and Specialists are opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about finances, career progression and assignments.

Chapter 2 used the written record to explore whether or not there was already existing data on the subject of this thesis and posited that the underlying reasons behind Foreign Service personnel's aversion to these programs were rooted in competitive nature of Foreign Service culture. It explained the origins of that culture by examining the laws and regulations that govern the Department of State and noted that, as a part of studies on long-term language training conducted by the Government Accountability Office in 2006 and 2011, there was, in fact, evidence that FSOs and Specialists believed long-term courses of study could harm their careers.⁹⁸ Whether or not that belief translated into action, however, required further study.

Chapter 3 explained that, in order to achieve the stated goal of the thesis, human subject research would be required and determined that the best way to gather the

⁹⁸ US Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Additional Steps Are Needed to Improve Strategic Planning and Evaluation of Training for State Personnel* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2011).

necessary data was via survey. It specified the group to be targeted, State Department alumni of interagency exchange programs at military universities, and selected four years groups, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, to poll. This group included attendees from every military university involved in the program and totaled 89 Foreign Service personnel, including 34 FSOs and 55 Specialists.

Chapter 4 reviewed the data received from the survey using mixed methodology. It began by reporting demographic information on the response group and then moved on to an examination of the three secondary research questions. Numerical data received was organized into tables in order to more easily identify trends and relationships while respondents' comments were subjected to qualitative analysis in order to determine whether they supported or refuted the quantitative findings.

This chapter draws conclusions based upon the data gathered and organized thus far. As in previous chapters, its intent was to answer the primary research question, "Are Foreign Service Officers and Specialists opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to concerns about finances, career progression and assignments?"

Conclusions: Monetary Issues

Overall, the data obtained in relation to the secondary research questions addressed in this section of the previous chapter appears to indicate that the majority of those FSOs and Specialists who chose to attend an interagency course of study at a military university paid little attention to possible monetary issues. As those answers relate back to the primary research question, "Are Foreign Service Officers and Specialists opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due to

concerns about finances, career progression and assignments?” The answer appears to be, at least as far as money is concerned, “No.”

That said, when considering possible conclusions about the veracity of the data gathered, it is important to consider that the survey group included only those people who did, ultimately, choose to opt-into the program. What the survey lacked was access to those people who had considered the program and then chose to opt-out. Identifying and polling this group, or perhaps conducting a more general poll across the entirety of the Foreign Service, may yield different results, a possibility for further research that will appear at the end of this chapter.

Conclusions: Promotion

Chapter 2, “Literature Review” spent a great deal of time examining the competitive culture of the Foreign Service and survey questions that sought out information on the subject of promotions found indications that at many of the respondents were, as expected, quite sensitive to on the issue. But is the issue large enough to cause Foreign Service Officers and Specialists to opt out of interagency exchange programs at military universities? The data appears to indicate that there is some cause for concern.

As one respondent put it, the program was, “a lost year,” for promotions. Another remarked that, prior to attending, “I was told by many people that it would probably delay my promotion to the next grade.” There is then, the perception among FSOs and Specialists that long-term courses of training do harm one’s career progression. However, proving that those perceptions loom large enough to actually cause people to avoid the

programs is a leap that cannot be made without a larger, more inclusive survey group that includes general responses from all across the Foreign Service.

Conclusions: Onward Assignments

The third question that must be answered in order to effectively answer this thesis' primary research question relates to onward assignments. Chapter 2, "Literature Review," used the regulations in Foreign Service Manual to explain the complicated process that FSOs and Specialists must engage in when seeking their preferred onward assignment and posited that the lack of opportunities to network with their Foreign Service colleagues and/or the lack of skills added to resumes could lead many members of the Foreign Service to ignore the opportunity to apply to interagency exchanges at military universities.

As with the previous sections, the data presented goes some distance towards answering this thesis' primary research question but, because of the survey group, cannot definitively prove a Department-wide effect. There is, however, enough evidence to assert that some members of the Foreign Service are less satisfied with their onward assignments after they complete the program than they are before. If these people actively communicate their dissatisfaction to their peers, other potential candidates may choose to opt out. Clearly then, there is the possibility that what this thesis posits is true.

Conclusion: Primary Research Question

This thesis' posed the primary research question: Are Foreign Service Officers and Specialists opting out of interagency exchange programs at military universities due

to concerns about finances, career progression and assignments? The answer is that there is some cause for concern.

In addition having a highly competitive and rank conscious organizational culture, the Foreign Service is also, with just 13000 employees,⁹⁹ quite small. As pointed out in this thesis' second chapter, FSOs and Specialists frequently rely upon close contacts to help seek out and obtain assignments and often maintain well-organized personal networks. It is not a stretch of the imagination to say that negative opinions and attitudes about certain assignments can run through this network as quickly as positive opinions and experiences and so, based on the fact that in two out of the three secondary topics explored by this thesis slightly more than half of survey respondents indicated that they would not recommend the programs to their friends and colleagues, there is the potential for trouble.

That said, proof of potential is not definitive proof of action. In order to do that further research will be required. Suggestions for how that research should be conducted and who should be included in the target group for any surveys is included below.

Suggestions for Further Research

In order to definitively prove what this thesis posits, that some FSOs and Specialists are avoiding long-term, interagency exchange assignments at military universities due to financial, promotion and assignment related concerns, more study is required. To begin with, the survey group targeted in this study needs to be expanded to include a greater number of people with a wider range of experience. By targeting alumni

⁹⁹ US Department of State, "What We Do, Mission."

of interagency exchange programs the survey utilized here was able to measure attitudes before and after participation in the programs but was not of a sufficient size and made up of people with a broad enough background to definitively prove the cause-and-effect relationship that the research sought to prove actually exists. In order to do that, and to measure just how common this attitude may be, the survey group must include people who have chosen not to participate in the program.

In order for the root causes of FSOs and Specialists' concerns about participation in long-term training programs at military universities to be effectively addressed they must be uncovered. In order to do this, those people who considered the program and then opted out must be identified and their reasons examined. In order to do this, research on the subject should be conducted all across the Foreign Service at a higher level, either by the Department of State itself as a part of a larger survey on job satisfaction or other issues of concern or through the one of the third part surveys that are conducted by American Foreign Service Association, a professional association for members of the Foreign Service. Only a large organization is likely to have the reach required to poll the entirety of the Foreign Service and the authority to insist that it be done.

The Department of State should also conduct research on how long term courses of study, be they interagency exchanges, difficult languages, or simply subjects that require time to master, affect actual promotion and assignment. The men and women of the Department of State are working to advance the policy goals of our nation and they must be fully prepared in order to be successful. In some cases, adequate preparation requires long term training and people should not be asked to slow their career progression or give up their ability to obtain their top choices of assignment in order to

gain the skills required to do the job they have been asked to do. Research must be done in order to mitigate issues, if they are found, or rumors dispelled if they are not. The Foreign Service will be stronger for it.

The Department of Defense, too, should research the specific types of Foreign Service personnel it wishes to attract to its military universities and find ways to appeal directly to that demographic. Classes that involve study of issues like foreign policy and bilateral relations are little served by a cattle-call approach that attempts to attract anyone it can. This thesis spent a great deal of time explaining the different professional fields in which the different members of the Foreign Service work and, although many may not like to admit it, for the purposes of interagency exchanges at military universities, all occupational specialties are not equal. With a better understanding of who they want, military universities can better design programs to attract those people who will add maximum value to their programs.

Conclusion

Interagency exchanges are a useful tool for building institutional understanding and the capacity for cooperation. Exchanges at military universities expose members of the Foreign Service to another institutional culture and the experience, as well as the rigorous educational programs that focus on important topics like policy, decision making and leadership, can open one's eyes to wider possibilities. As the result of this thesis appears to indicate, however, the pool of Department of State employees willing to take on the challenge of an interagency assignment could be limited because many FSOs remain focused on the potential effects that being posted to long-term training outside of

the Department of State may have upon their careers. Both the Department of State and the Department of Defense suffer from their absence. The situation should be rectified.

How that happens will be the subject of much future debate. Although some of the wider ranging studies recommended above may prove differently, the survey conducted as a part of this thesis indicates that Foreign Service Personnel who attend Interagency Exchanges at Military Universities are, for the most part, not concerned with financial issues and so monetary incentives may not be the answer. FSOs and Specialists are, however, concerned about promotions and assignments and, as a result, finding ways in which to enhance the perceived status of an interagency course of study at a military university via a process that utilizes preferential or tied assignments may be an answer.

Two such possibilities spring immediately to mind. The first is reclassifying a course of study at an interagency university as something other than long-term training, perhaps classifying it in a way similar to other working-level interagency exchanges with the Department of Defense, and allow the experience to generate a full EER rather than a training report. The second is by tying the assignment to a follow-on position, perhaps attached to one of the high-level planning offices in the Department of State's headquarters that could help "rehabilitate" FSOs and Specialists who have been injured by their "year away from the Department."

Hard facts or simply perceptions, the results of this study indicate that many FSOs and Specialists believe that their careers and lives can be negatively affected by courses of long-term study. This is a problem because, more than an opportunity for FSOs and Specialists to improve themselves, having students participating in a military university is an opportunity for the Department of State to influence the future leaders of the US

Military. Given this opportunity, the Department of State should be actively working to recruit and send its very best and very brightest. Unless changes are made, however, the culture of the Department of State and the fears of Foreign Service Personnel many of the Department's best will not volunteer in the numbers they should. This should not be allowed to happen.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

Survey Control Number 15-03-035

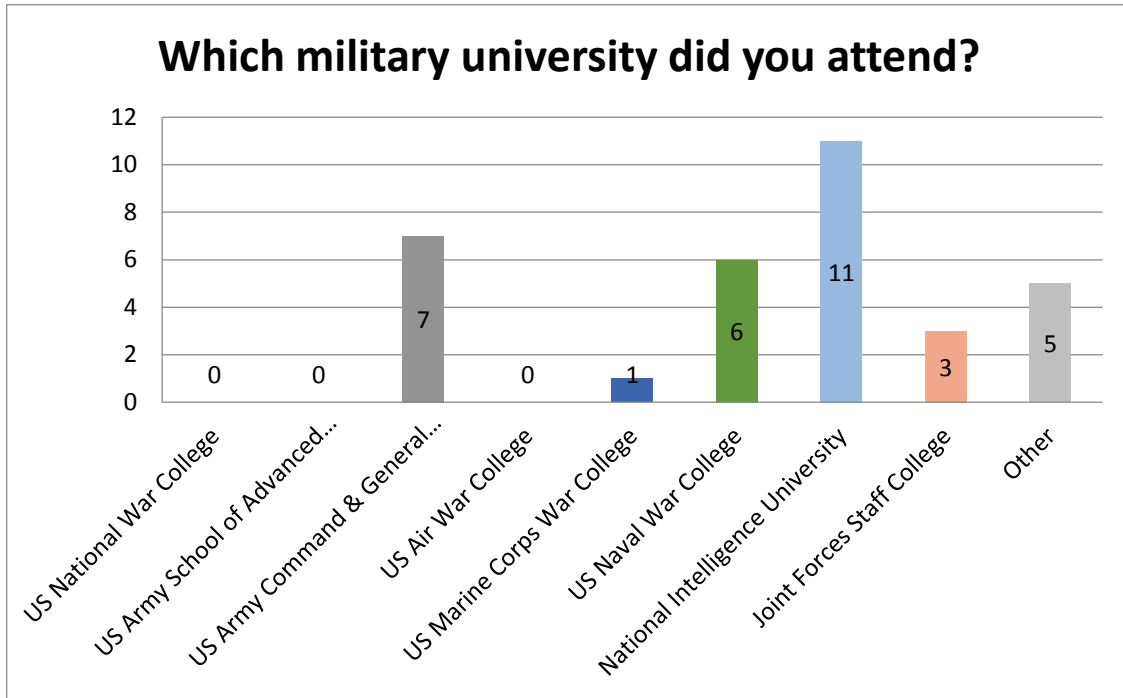
Thursday, April 09, 2015

33/88 Response Rate

Which military university did you attend?

Response Rate: 97% (N=33) Question Type: **Choose one**

US National War College	0
US Army School of Advanced Military Studies	0
US Army Command & General Staff College	7
US Air War College	0
US Marine Corps War College	1
US Naval War College	6
National Intelligence University	11
Joint Forces Staff College	3
Other	5
Total Responses	33



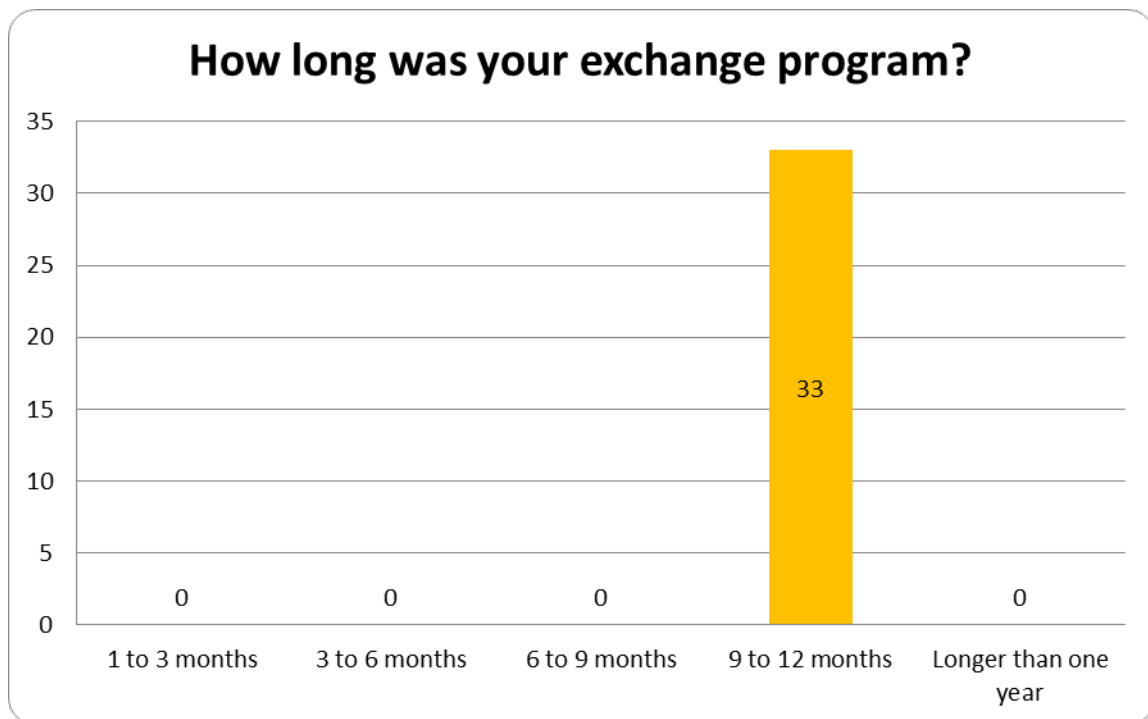
Other Responses

Inter-American Defense College	2
Naval Command & Staff College	1
US Marine Corps Command and Staff College	1
USMC Command & Staff College	1
Total Responses	5

How long was your exchange program?

Response Rate: **97% (N=33)** Question Type: **Choose one**

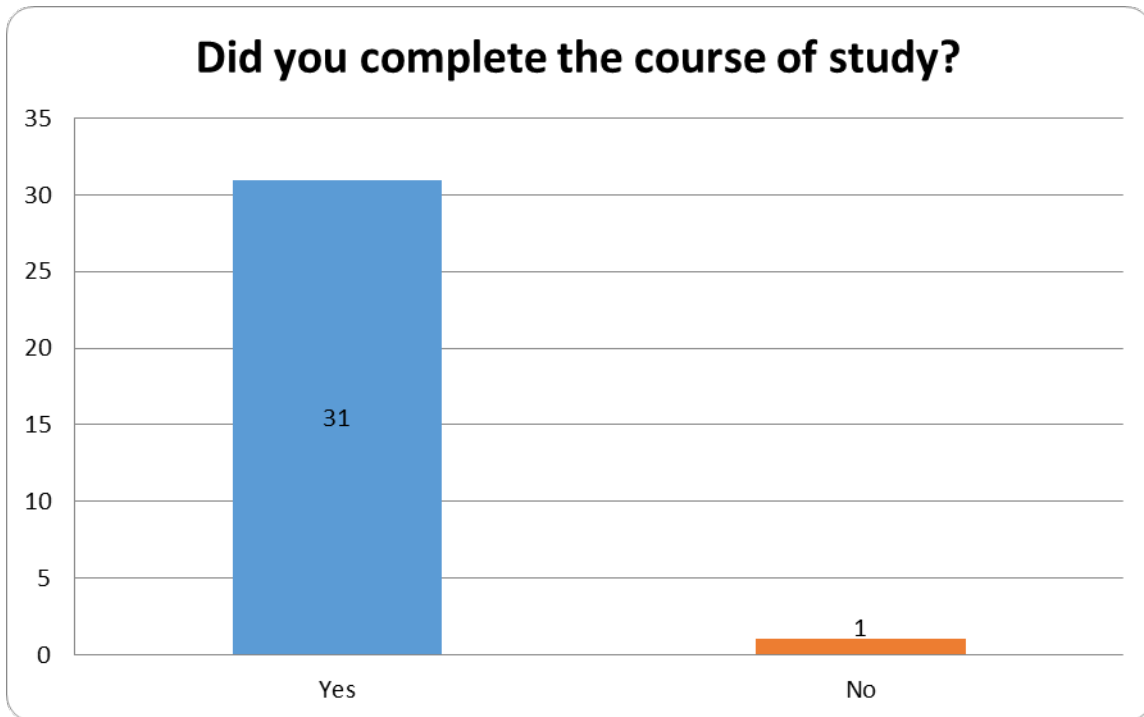
1 to 3 months	0
3 to 6 months	0
6 to 9 months	0
9 to 12 months	33
Longer than one year	0
Total Responses	33



Did you complete the course of study?

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

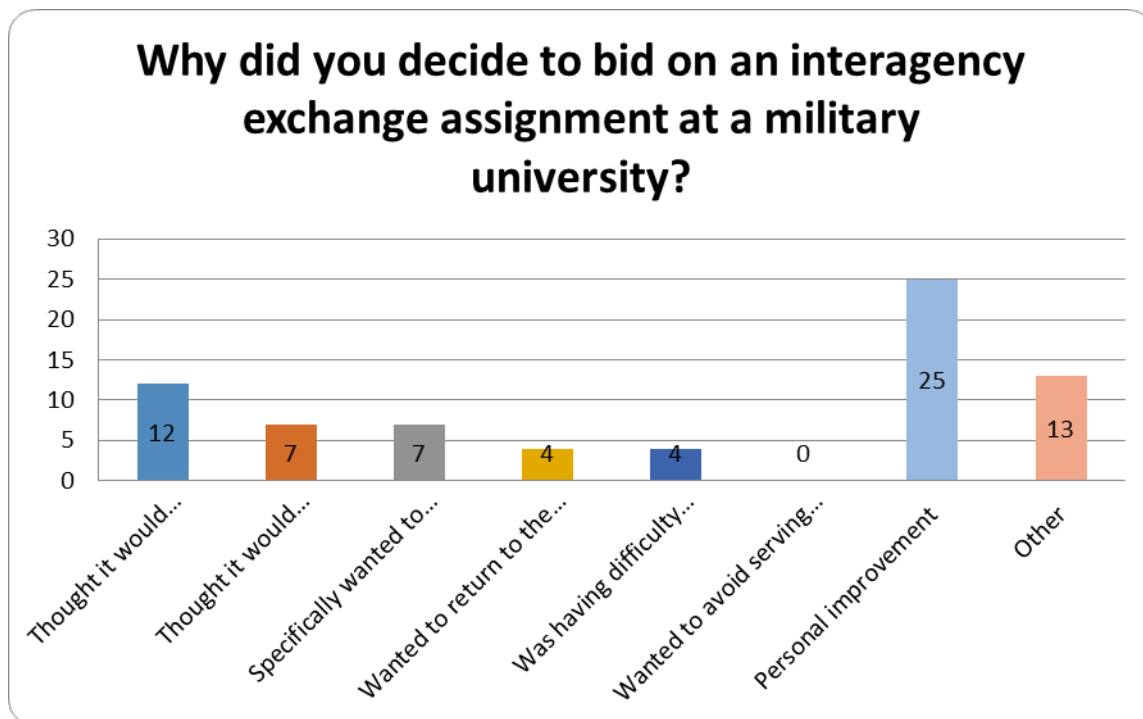
Yes	31
No	1
Total Responses	32



Why did you decide to bid on an interagency exchange assignment at a military university?

Response Rate: 97% (N=33) Question Type: Choose many

Thought it would enhance my promotability	12
Thought it would enhance my ability to bid on certain positions	7
Specifically wanted to bid on POLAD or other interagency assignments	7
Wanted to return to the United States	4
Was having difficulty finding an onward assignment	4
Wanted to avoid serving in Washington DC	0
Personal improvement	25
Other	13
Total Responses	72

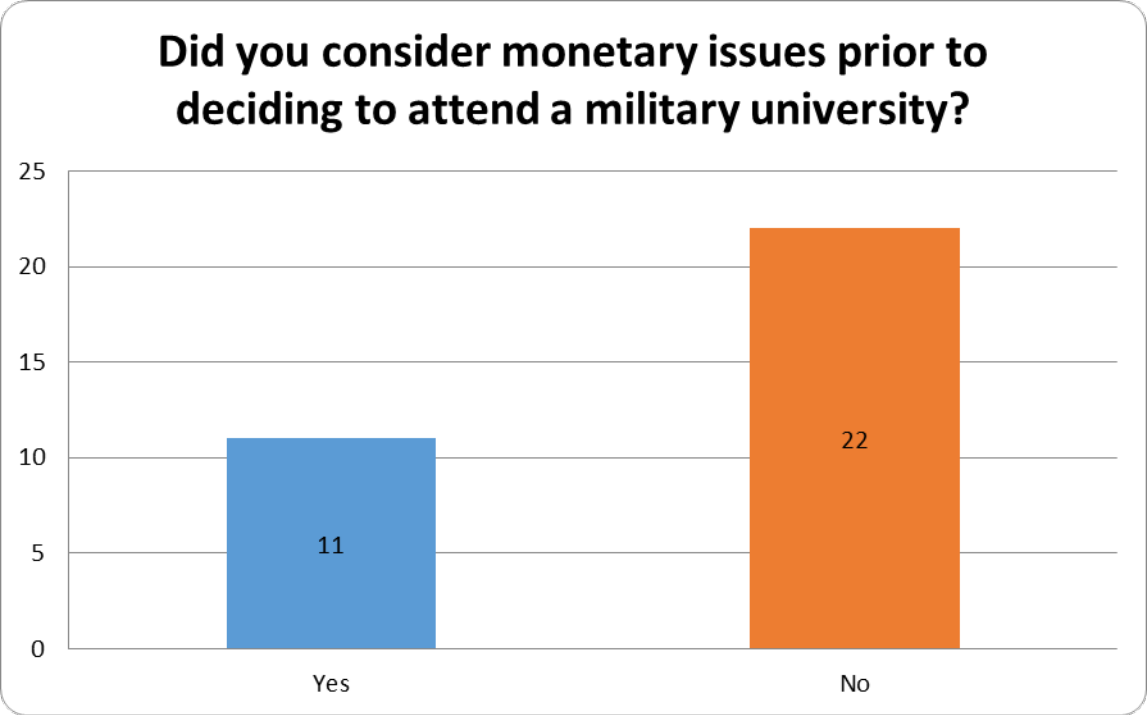


Other Responses

An unparalleled opportunity to learn from and with military colleagues as well as contribute Department of State foreign policy perspectives into the classroom. I wanted to understand more about DoD planning, decision-making & approaches to issues,	1
better understand military approach to world and how we can work together	1
Had to break assignment due to the outbreak of civil war and a drawdown but needed to find an alternative, preferably outside of DC.	1
I thought it would make me better working in an interagency environment i.e. an embassy.	1
I thought the training would be professionally and personally useful since DS interacts so much with DoD.	1
Improve on Spanish language skills and make foreign officer connections throughout WHA	1
My father, a retired FSO attended the Army War College and I always wanted to do the same.	1
Obtain skills beneficial to the Department	1
Planning for Post State Dept career	1
potential future career	1
This nested nicely with my subspecialty of Pol/Mil.	1
to develop expertise in interagency and national security issues and processes	1
Wanted to obtain a Master Degree	1
Total Responses	13

Did you consider monetary issues prior to deciding to attend a military university?
Response Rate: 97% (N=33) Question Type: Choose one

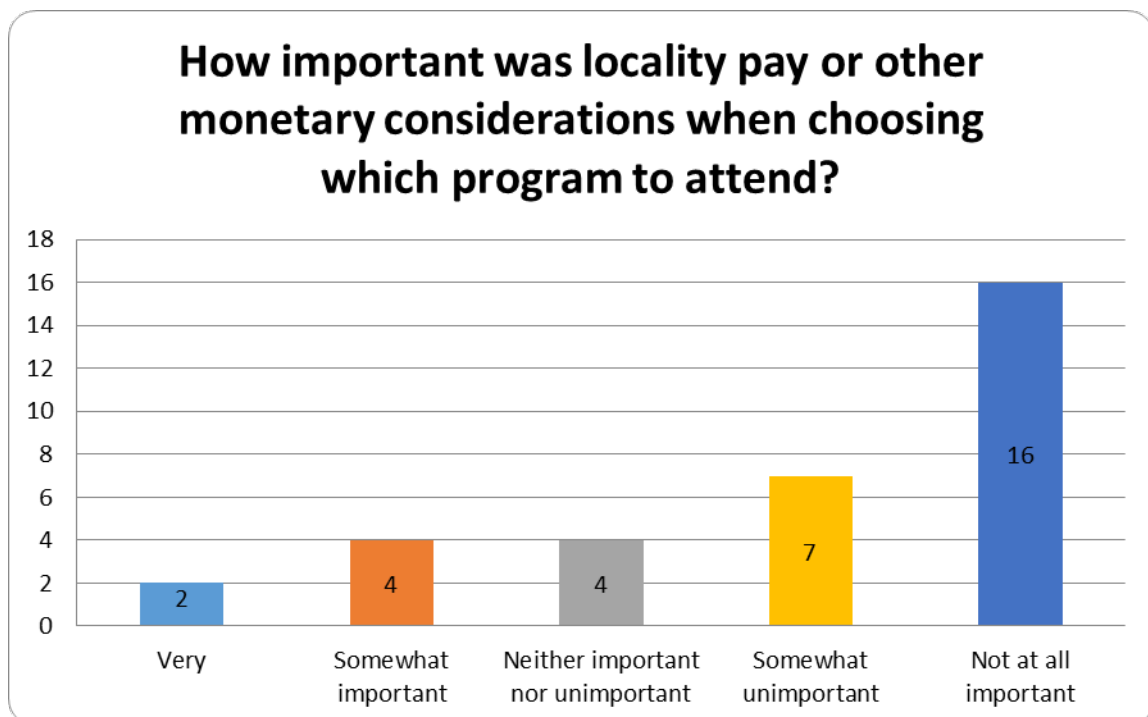
Yes	11
No	22
Total Responses	33



How important was locality pay or other monetary considerations when choosing which program to attend?

Response Rate: 97% (N=33) Question Type: Choose one

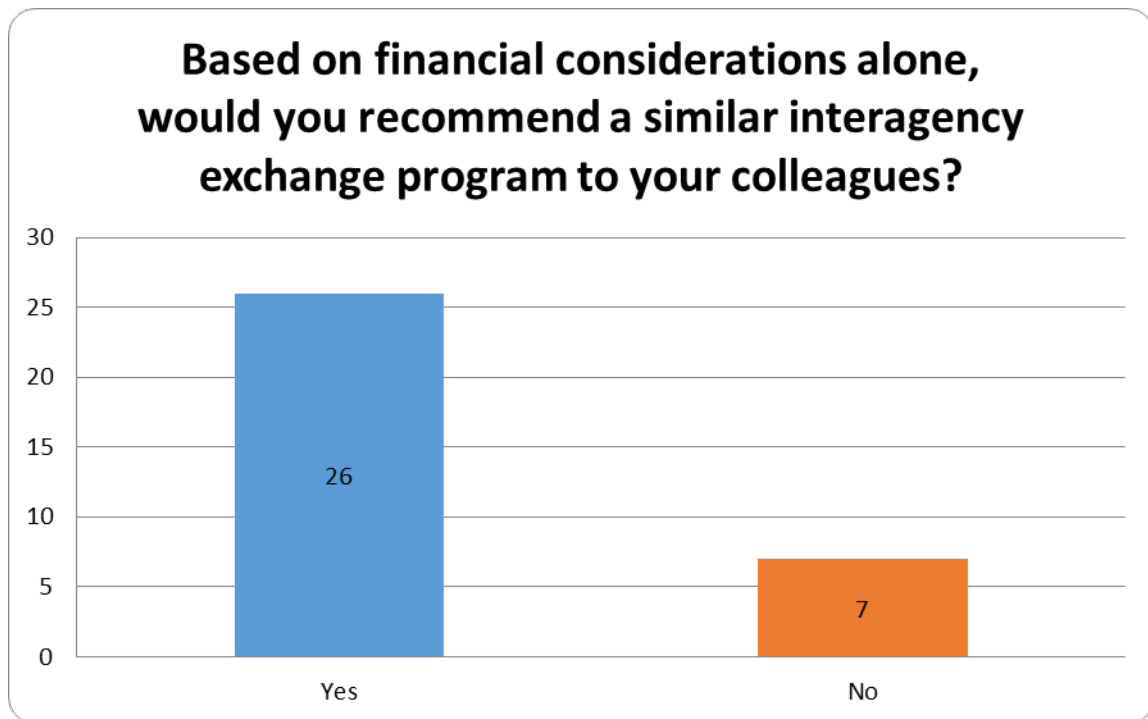
Very	2
Somewhat important	4
Neither important nor unimportant	4
Somewhat unimportant	7
Not at all important	16
Total Responses	33



Based on financial considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your colleagues?

Response Rate: 97% (N=33) Question Type: Choose one

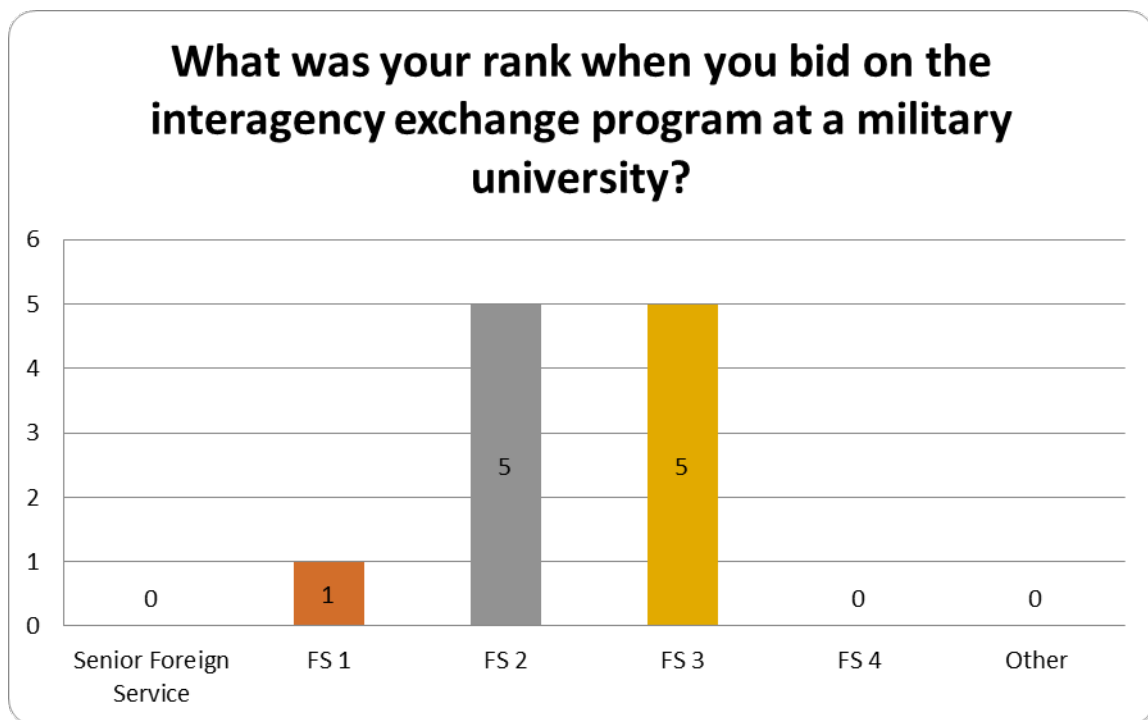
Yes	26
No	7
Total Responses	33



What was your rank when you bid on the interagency exchange program at a military university?

Response Rate: 32% (N=11) Question Type: Choose one

Senior Foreign Service	0
FS 1	1
FS 2	5
FS 3	5
FS 4	0
Other	0
Total Responses	11

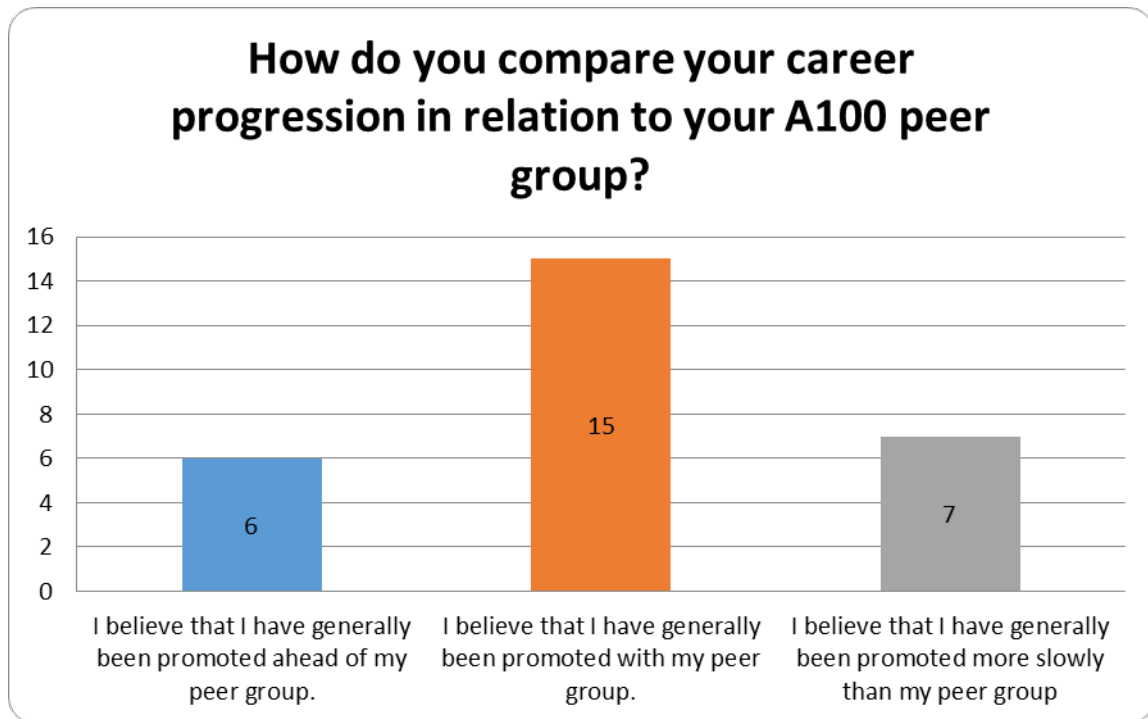


Other Responses

Total Responses 0

How do you compare your career progression in relation to your A100 peer group?
Response Rate: 82% (N=28) Question Type: Choose one

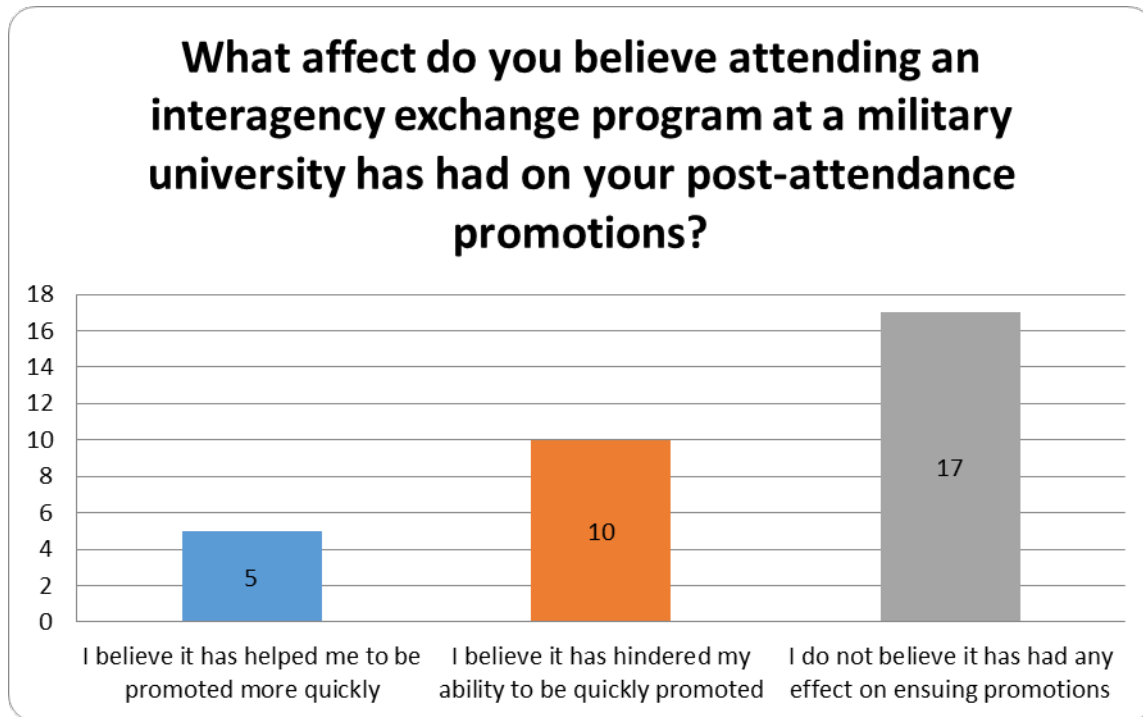
I believe that I have generally been promoted ahead of my peer group.	6
I believe that I have generally been promoted with my peer group.	15
I believe that I have generally been promoted more slowly than my peer group	7
Total Responses	28



What affect do you believe attending an interagency exchange program at a military university has had on your post-attendance promotions?

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

I believe it has helped me to be promoted more quickly	5
I believe it has hindered my ability to be quickly promoted	10
I do not believe it has had any effect on ensuing promotions	17
Total Responses	32



Would you like to offer any additional thoughts on the effect that attending an interagency exchange program at a military university has had on your career progression?

Response Rate: 68% (N=23) Question Type: **Paragraph**

I recieved my promotion to FS-02 right after I had completed my coursework at NDIC (now NIU); since I was not on the promotion panel, it is hard to say how much of a contributing factor it was, but I suspect it helped prove that I still had the desire/skill set to achieve at higher levels.

It was essentially a lost year for me in terms of enhancing my promotion. There was no contact with State Department colleagues to network with and become known to more State Department officials and bureaus. The one position for a State Department representative at the collge remained unfilled throughout my time there. This military college's evaluation process does not seem to be taken seriously by State Department promotion panels. Finally, the lack of familiarity of the role of the State Department--let alone its merit system--was prevalent among this military college's faculty and administration.

I do not feel that the Department values continuing education with respect to promotions. I graduated in 2014 so I have not had enough time to determine the affect of the program on my career. That being said, my participation int he program has been greeted very positively by supervisors.

I honestly don't think that my agency cares.

These programs was great and the Department needs to do more to promote them as they contribute greatly to inter-agency cooperation.

As a DS Agent, I believe the program helped me in my onward assignment in Iraq particularly when serving as a liaison with DOD personnel in country.

It was a dead year for promotions. With a five year past evaluation history, it is as if I did nothing at all for a year. I didn't lead a program or supervise anyone. I sat around drinking tea and thinking. Not productive. It actually hurt my chance for promotion.

We are warned to try to get these courses when you are newly promoted because there is no chance you will be promoted in two consecutive years anyway, so it doesn't hurt. But if you are in the business just to be promoted, you need to go somewhere else.

Unfortunately, I do not think it has had any impact on career progression.

I was told by many people that it would probably delay my promotion to the next grade. While promotion is important to me, other factors (ie family considerations and personal growth) were more important to me.

generally speaking the system does not consider these as promotable assignments in the short term; but these are fantastic learning opportunities for the long-term

I feel that attending NIU will better serve me when I retire or if I decide to change agencies.

As a Regional Security Officer, I often work closely with Department of Defense/Military personnel; however, I did not have a military background prior to attending CGSC. Since completing the CGSC ILE program, as well as obtaining an MMAS, I truly believe the experience gained has helped with my DOD interactions and

has allowed me to see a more intimate vision of how "Big Army" works. I believe better interaction with any section leads to a better employee evaluation which leads to promotions. The career development playbook for DS Special Agents specifically states attending a long-term training program, like CGSC; thus, I feel attending the program has enhanced my career progression.

Like a regular assignment, a lot depends on your training report. A report that notes you graduated with honors and were thought of highly by your peers and instructors goes a lot further than a general report.

Provided some additional background for work in future military-related assignments in the Foreign Service.

It is beneficial in the long run, but attendees should not think of it as an immediate promotion potential. The programs offer you the ability to enhance your own skill sets, no matter which cone you serve. If you take the program seriously and apply the skills learned during the course, you will improve your career skills on your own.

We at State in comparison to other USG civilians do not receive any stipend for rent...really terrible in comparison even to our military students who receive VHA worth around 1800 USD per month probably more

I don't think that this will have any major impact on my career progression. It is very useful--specifically with the relationships built between State and DoD.

The State Department does not reward these types of programs and considers them a vacation.

Normally it slows an FSO down. The reasons are numerous but include the lack of an EER written by someone fluent in Statespeak, the lack of presence on emails with colleagues for a year, the complete ignorance of most State personnel on what you "do" at a military institute, as well as the extremely limited ability to bid competitively for an onward assignment. It is not a win/win in the career sense but more of a draw. You gain a degree, gratis, but you lose exposure and become a State shadow who is an unknown entity for the vast majority of State people who don't know the value of what you have accomplished or undertaken.

The Naval War College was the second best experience after my studies at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy. Spending time in seminars and classroom participation with the military was an invaluable experience that has bolstered my ability to work collaboratively with DOD elements at our embassies. I highly recommend the program. Being out of cone (Specialist) hurts promotion opportunities in the short run. Helps more for Generalists. This should be taken into account for promotion boards and benefit, not hinder promotions.

Essentially it is a non rated year which can become an issue if your promotion window is open shortly after attending the program.

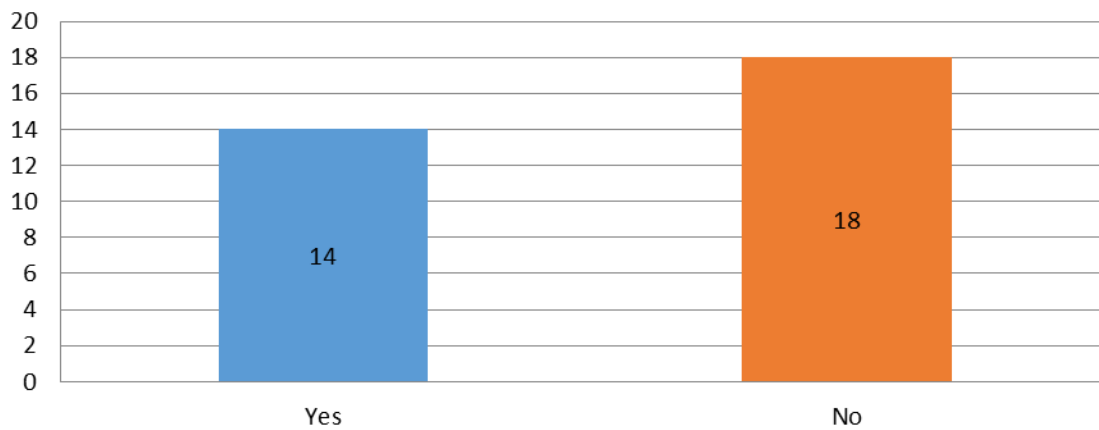
Total Responses: 23

Based on promotion related considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your peers?

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

Yes	14
No	18
Total Responses	32

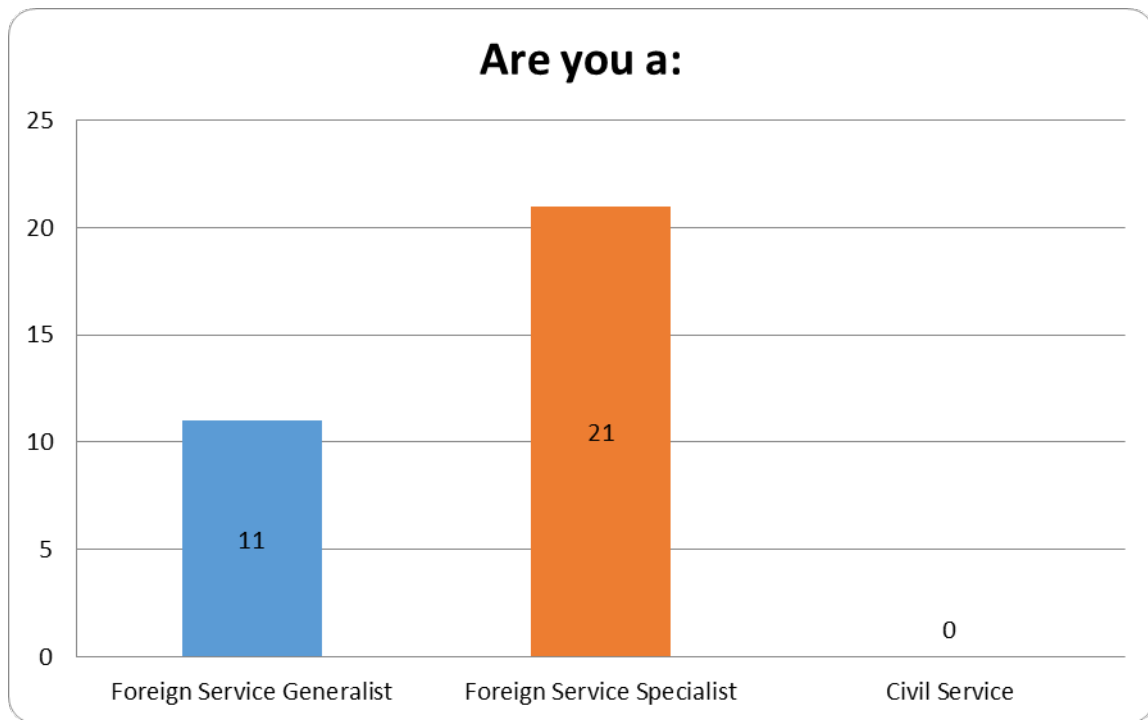
**Based on promotion related considerations
alone, would you recommend a similar
interagency exchange program to your
peers?**



Are you a:

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

Foreign Service Generalist	11
Foreign Service Specialist	21
Civil Service	0
Total Responses	32



Would you like to comment on the promotion process in general?

Response Rate: 50% (N=17) Question Type: Paragraph

I know the promotion process is intended to be as fair as possible, and I think having outside training is helpful in that process. I've never served on a promotion panel, however, so this is anecdotal.

From my perspective it appears arbitrary, numbers-driven, and biased against those who undertake long term training of any kind.

The promotion system in DOS is a complete and total mystery. There might actually be an intoxicated monkey with a dart board involved.

I am aware of the "pig in the python" phenomena at State and I am aware that promotions might be hard to come by. I have taken my CDO's advice and will enjoy my life in the Foreign Service. :)

It is unfair that I spent a year networking with the future leaders of Latin America, to the benefit of the USG, and the promotion panel uses that as an excuse to not promote me. But then again, I knew that going in...

Promotion panels only review the last five years of service. So if you have a full year that is "not productive", such as outside training, then you are automatically behind your peers who stayed to do "real work". DSS does not look at this type of training as a benefit to the organization. It is more of a break for agents who are tired and need to recharge. The same problem exists with internal training, such as year-long language training. It is a dead year too – for promotions. DSS doesn't even count it as a domestic tour so both types of long-term training actually make it more difficult to get overseas positions because you have not "served" in a domestic position. So it is a double whammy.

DOS promotions are lacking in transparency and there is not consensus on what it takes to be promoted. Horrible system that should be overhauled.

If someone is truly focused/obsessed with immediate promotion, then this type of assignment is not the right choice

Taking a year to attend one of these programs actually hinders your promotion potential because it can't be considered in your annual promotion evaluation which puts you a year behind everyone else. I was aware of that before beginning the program.

I'm sure many people have their own thoughts on how one gets promoted, how fast one gets promoted, etc. I believe a well-rounded career which incorporates domestic, overseas, and training assignments is the correct path to career development. I have been fortunate to have such a well-rounded career thus far, and I believe the promotions I have received have been a direct result of those assignment decisions. At the time I attended CGSC, I believed the course would enhance me personally as I had not yet obtained a Masters Degree. I can honestly state that I did not believe the course would assist me in getting promoted. In fact, I believed it would hurt my chances for promotion as it would show me doing work outside the scope of what has generally been perceived to get promoted (namely, overseas RSO work). At approximately the same time I graduated from CGSC, the new DS career development playbook was published which listed a training course such as CGSC would assist in one's career development. At that time I believed the course would help me get promoted, and I was promoted several years later

(earlier than a majority of my class). It appears that promotion boards are looking for a more well-rounded career and the change in culture, i.e. only overseas work "counts," may be occurring. The result will be better morale for the entire workforce.

Yes, it's very arbitrary. :)

The promotion process is broken.

No I have has enough and am unhappy with the whole process.

In the last fifteen years, skewed towards those who served in war zones, irrespective of success, and of course as usual, those who are favored by the powerful.

The promotion process for getting to the SFS requires that you have interagency experience and time at a military academy or institution counts towards that but/but that is only effective when you are going from an FS-01 to SFS. For the majority of slots open within the military education system, you have FS-03s and FS-02s attending. Those State people can only count on the experience "weighing in" on their careers if, and only if, they make it to the FS-01 level. Otherwise, it is simply a nice piece of paper to hang on their walls and, of course, simply the "best year of their lives". On another note, there has been a lot of talk on the requirement of hardship tours. Some of my colleagues and I believe that a point system should be considered, wherein each post's hardship differential counts towards the ability to be considered for promotion (not to be promoted). One hundred points in the ten years prior to going up for SFS seemed to be a fair proposition with a two year tour at a 25% post equaling 50 points. The main issue would be that schools such as these do not have any points attached but perhaps it would be possible to give them some point structure (5 points?) for attending. But this would have to be based on the succesful completion of all coursework, including actually obtaining an advanced degree.

I am not one to spit in the wind. The promotion process is in need of greater transparency. It is what it is.

Being out of cone (Specialist) hurts promotion opportunities in the short run. Helps more for Generalists. This should be taken into account for promotion boards and benefit, not hinder promotions. Both Specialists and Generalists should be lauded for attending any War College.

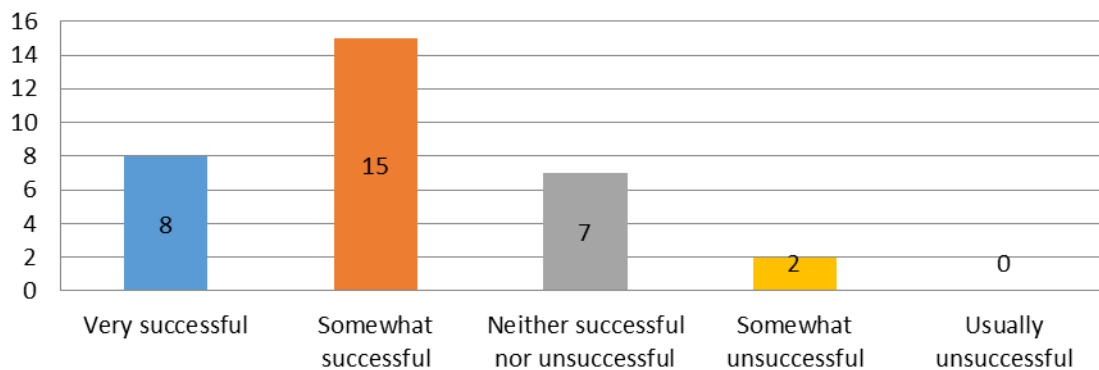
Total Responses: 17

In your opinion, prior to attending an interagency exchange program at a military university, how successful were you in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

Very successful	8
Somewhat successful	15
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	7
Somewhat unsuccessful	2
Usually unsuccessful	0
Total Responses	32

In your opinion, prior to attending an interagency exchange program at a military university, how successful were you in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?

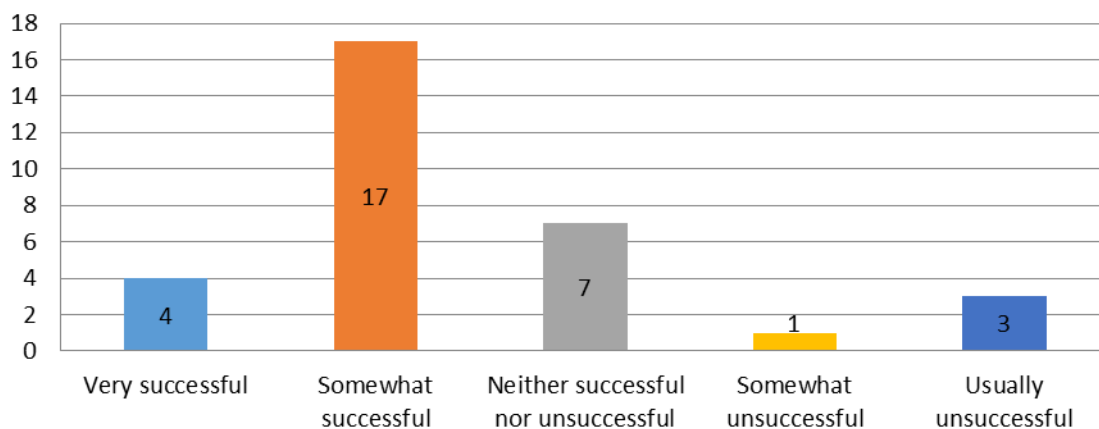


Since completing your interagency exchange at a military university, how successful have you been in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

Very successful	4
Somewhat successful	17
Neither successful nor unsuccessful	7
Somewhat unsuccessful	1
Usually unsuccessful	3
Total Responses	32

Since completing your interagency exchange at a military university, how successful have you been in receiving your top choices for onward assignments?



Would you like to offer additional thoughts on the assignment process?

Response Rate: 56% (N=19) Question Type: Paragraph

My understanding is that a separate panel decides who gets assigned to long term training assignments, and that getting assigned to a long term training assignment can "trump" other handshakes from elsewhere. The view is that the assignments panel for specialists, therefore is somewhat irritated by those who essentially remove their name from re-assignment by being selected by another panel outside of their control (they end up with gaps in places they didn't anticipate). In a sense they "ducked out" for an assignments cycle, and RUMOR has it that they have a long memory. I've heard that they prefer to make the suggestion themselves so they can control the process a bit. Naturally, when queried about this stigma, management involved in the assignments process denied that people were being "punished" for taking long term training...but that particular view of the panel process has not gone away.

In relation to assignments I sought for immediately after my war college experience, I found officials I contacted about POLAD, political advisor, and Pol-Mil jobs quite lacking in response time. In the end I accepted an handshake for a job in my cone unrelated to my specialized training at the war college. I think if State wants officers to make use of their new and expanded knowledge of interagency issues and processes, they should at least have a system to reach out much earlier and respond much more quickly to war college students who are looking for a relevant onward assignment in pol-mil/POLAD/political advisor, etc/

Too political.

In my opinion, the assignment process is far from transparent.

SinceFor any program taking place in the DC area, I would attach an onward 1-year assignment at Main State. Asking an individual to bid in consecutive years while away from the department and focusing on schools is too much. I did not motivate myself to bid and am currently in an unfulfilling job. Still a great program though.

The assignment's process sucks and the pendulum has swung back to "who you know". Experience and prior work history is not taking into consideration when making assignments. And the process is completely hidden. Post does not really have a say. My current post's "don't you dare send us this guy" was ignored and that is who was selected. That person is a known poor performer and trouble maker. The absolute worst thing about this job is the DSS assignment's process. It is also unfortunate that the Department has glass ceilings that, as was explained to me through several interviews, preclude specialists from seeking DCM and Principle Officer positions. The excuses were laughable. Many specialists, with extensive leadership and management experience, bid on DCM positions this year and, to my knowledge, not a single one was awarded the position. The Department does not value these skills either – so it is no surprise. Just sad.

Liaison positions with DoD should require attendance to a military university. Certain other assignments that work with DoD on a regular basis should also require military university attendance. Similar to language training requirements. If one wants to be the DOS LNO to SOCOM, then one must attend a military university first.

While attending NIU has opened opportunities for bidding on jobs in INR, it generally

has not made me a more competitive bidder. That being said, I has not hurt me other than delaying promotion, which closed the doors on a number of jobs at the next grade that I was hoping to bid on during my last bidding cycle.

I don't think it has any impact at all.

I do not believe attendance to CGSC has enhanced or negated my ability to obtain a desired onward assignment. Like most, some assignment cycles I have received a top choice, and some I have not. However, I have always been satisfied with the assignment I have recieved and I have gained both experience and intellect in each of my assignments. I am confident in saying everyone wants their top choice of assignments, but that is not the reality. The fear has always been taking assignments you believe may not help in obtaining promotions. I now believe DS is remedying that perception by promoting those with more well-rounded careers.

I feel the assignment process is a better reflection of one's merit than the promotion process, because there is a backdoor channel that everyone uses to ensure the person applying is solid, if you have a choice in the matter that is (i.e. hasn't been hand-picked by the muckity-mucks at Main State or you have enough bidders to be choosy).

The assignments process is not fair; it's all about who you know versus who's the best qualified.

Jury is not in...I wanted POLAD positions...I did in fairness not apply to any US POLAD places

My husband is active duty military--an OPSCO in the DAO. He generally bids on his position prior to my bidding. I usually bid so that I can be at the same location as my husband.

The assignments process is relatively fair but those in Washington have the upper hand, should they so choose to, as they can lobby directly for their onwards with the bureaus. This year was exceptionally ugly as the new EUR head, Victoria Neuland, specifically stated that those who already served in EUR would not be considered for another tour in EUR - basically get the hell out until you have served elsewhere first. That's all very nice and touching but ignores the reality that NEA welcomes NEAers, AF loves their people, and both bureaus give weight to those who served with them before. I am not saying people in Paris shouldn't get the boot but my colleagues and I serve in the highest hardship differential in EUR, in a dictatorship to boot, and having to deal with Belarusian KGB on a daily basis yet my colleagues and I could not be considered for some other posting in EUR? Really? Very sad way to get any reward for those of us, again, who are putting in harder time than others. Kiev is a fun place right now>? Valdivostok? St. Pete's (they are having a rough time out there)?

N/A

In general it is terrible,exhausting, time consuming and "who you know" not what you know. Very political.

The process is completely broken for DS Agents. Before NIU, I spent two years at an FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force investigative assignment. After earning my MSSSI degree from NIU I was bidding on DS PSP positions and threat analysis HQ spots. Instead, I was directed to the secretary's detail as an agent. I do the same job as agents who have been on the job for two weeks. I will cite this issue, and be sure to thank DS for paying for my

second master's degree, when I resign from the foreign service and take a job that is available due to my NIU degree.

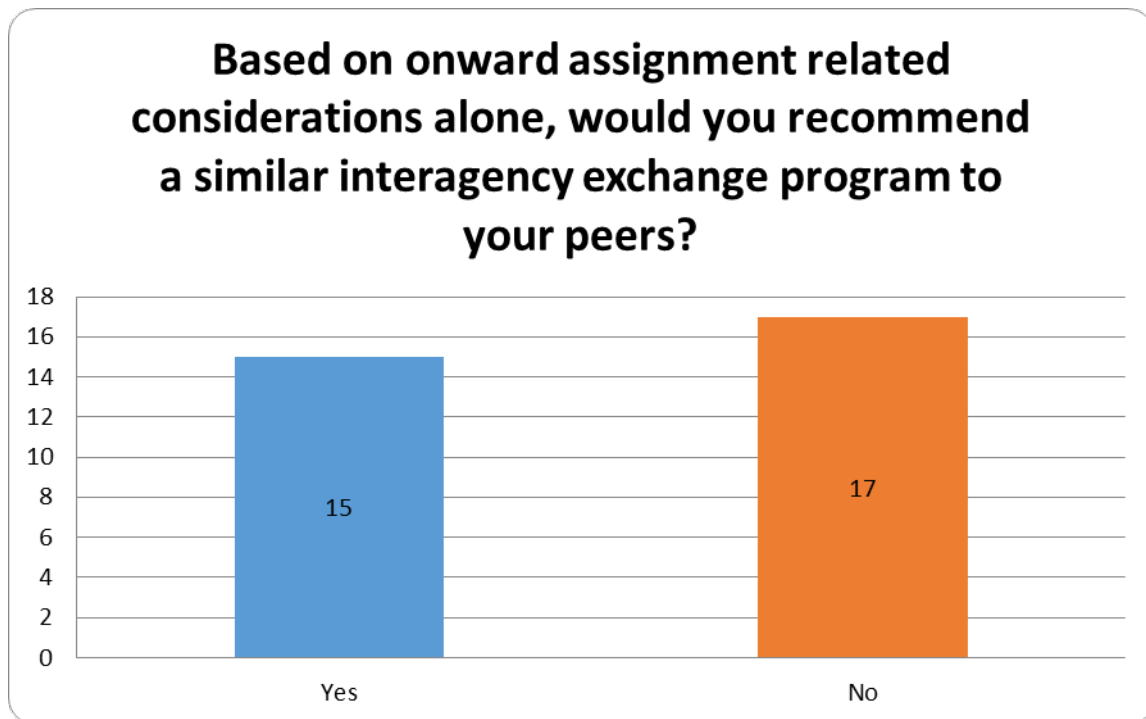
I served in Iraq for two years immediately following the program. I believe my onward assignment after Iraq had nothing to do with the program.

Total Responses: 19

Based on onward assignment related considerations alone, would you recommend a similar interagency exchange program to your peers?

Response Rate: 94% (N=32) Question Type: Choose one

Yes	15
No	17
Total Responses	32



Is there anything else you would like to add about the effect that participating in an interagency exchange program at a military university has had on your career?

Response Rate: 41% (N=14) Question Type: Paragraph

I have not seen any indication that the Department considers long term interagency training beyond allocating personnel to attend. I have not experienced any interaction with the Department that leads me to believe it is a consideration for promotion or assignments, either positively or negatively.

State Department students were the only civilian agency that did not receive any per diem. Students from other civilian agencies were on per diem the whole year; military colleagues had housing benefits. Comparatively, State Department students were less well compensated--and valued--for their participation in this program. Considering that I contributed greatly to the understanding of State Dept. perspectives on issues examined in the course, and thus brought a benefit to the whole (almost entirely military) student group I was with, it is regrettable that I should receive much less compensation and support and appreciation from the same government for which we all serve.

The effect was generally negative. It gave me two dead years for promotion (one in the course and one in a language course) and pushed me out of the running for promotion. Many leaders in DS think it was a year of boondoggle where I was just F'ing off. And then you run across people who respond negatively to you for thinking you are better than them by going to the school – even if you've never really talked about the school. It is just a mixed bag of nothing for professional growth or advantage. However, it was worthwhile to me personally for intellectual reasons. And that is good enough for me. But the course was pretty weak too. The “adult learning method” needs to be balanced with more structured material.

I am much better informed when working with DoD. DoD also has more respect for me knowing I am a graduate of CGSC. It has helped me tremendously in my assignments post CGSC.

helped me expand my range of contacts and provided opportunity to better appreciate how military officers view the world and foreign affairs; so an absolutely positive experience

I earned a MS in Strategic Intelligence but I was able to secure a position in Counterintelligence before I entered the program.

I cannot say for certain how attending CGSC has affected my career. I'm sure it played a role, but so has every one of my assignments. I can say for certain that the friends gained at CGSC will remain with me throughout my life as will the memories. The year I had at CGSC was perhaps the most professionally challenging time I have had, but I know that I was a more intellectual person the day I graduated than I was the day before the program began. I believe my work has been enhanced by CGSC and the effect that participating in the interagency exchange program will be reflected by the quality of my work.

I feel in general it has made me a better officer, more willing to challenge the conventional wisdom at Main State. While perhaps not always appreciated, I believe it is beneficial for the institution.

N/A

I think it helps in IRAQ/AFPAK contingency assignments

The experience was great for relationship building between State and DoD. Many of the military folks had little to no experience with State Department personnel. This gave them a chance to meet and interact with a State Department person and hear a different perspective on military operations.

Yes, I would like to see both the military and the State Department take the educational program more seriously. While at was at CGSC, there were 2 generalists and 3 specialists. Of the two, I passed with a top 20% and got my Master's while my generalist colleague somehow managed to 'drop out' of having to complete his degree since he already had two Master's degrees. As for the specialists, one was unable to complete his degree at all but was given a completion for the work done. They were both nice guys but that was ludicrous as it makes it appear that the same amount of work was done by all. For this reason, I would ask that there be an additional report card given with actual grades for the year which would then be placed into each employee's Employee Performance File (EPF). That would be the only way for the Promotion Boards to know who did the heavy lifting. That alone is why some people do not understand what it's value is since there is no way to grade it or weigh it. As State pushes for officers to talk about their experiences with local papers, State should invite those who have this interagency exchange experience to speak to their peers, through a webinar or other format in order to increase understanding of what we do, how it can be used after they leave the classroom, and to raise awareness in general.

N/A

Very informative, useful and in my case, helped me get an INL/International Law Enforcement job. This however just added to time out of cone/Specialty which again, does not go well for Specialist promotion panels.

Total Responses: 14

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