Leadership development programs offer employees cross-training with job rotations, shadowing

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Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Md.- February 21, 2020 - Job shadowing and job rotations are just two ways participants in NAVAIR's leadership development programs can fill skill gaps.

Below, read the story of two employees who are taking advantage of these opportunities and, in the process, improving their careers and work at NAVAIR.

Gaining Hands-On Experience with a Job Shadow

Emberle Pearson, a mechanical engineer in the Design and Analysis Branch, shadowed NAVAIR Deputy Commander Garry Newton at the Acquisition Workforce Summit as part of her participation in the Journey Leadership Development Program (JLDP).

“My attendance at the summit gave me a front row seat to the leaders of the Navy acquisition workforce together in a room, committed to developing the workforce,” she explained. “Every solution to better the workplace that I have personally thought of was already being discussed in that room. I was able to listen to real-time solutions being implemented that are enabling the workforce to be the best at their jobs and achieve the ultimate goal of supporting the warfighter.”

Pearson also went on a rotation to serve as the acting director for the School of Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment and Support Equipment.

As a result, Pearson said she has become more mission focused, because she can now see the big picture of what is done at NAVAIR.

“The shadowing and interview opportunities allowed me to have conversations with senior leaders that I normally would not have the opportunity to have,” Pearson said. “My development now will prepare me to strategically lead in the future.”

Next, Pearson plans to apply to the NAVAIR Leadership Development Program (NLDP), because “to be a part of an organization that invests in me as a future leader directly aligns with my career development philosophy to never stop learning,” she said. “JLDP was an opportunity that revealed my purpose to be a leader in the NAVAIR organization. I viewed JLDP as the door to the next step in my career.”

Filling a Critical Need with a Job Rotation

Tracey Pintell-Quade, an information systems security manager, took an initial six-month rotation, which was extended to 18 months, to work as an analyst for the Wartime Acquisition Support Plan, WASP. There, she coordinates events, collaborates on data analysis and helps develop a wartime acquisition plan, a “Wartime Playbook,” to find gaps in the current wartime acquisition preparedness posture and identify how to move from peacetime to wartime acquisition quickly.

“My WASP position helps NAVAIR, and the Navy as a whole, prepare for a potential global conflict, something we haven’t seen since World War II,” Pintell-Quade explained.

Overall, Pintell-Quade said NLDP has helped improve her mentoring skills: She mentors four NAVAIR employees. She’s also using the information she gleaned from the Emergenetics profile she created in the program. The profile helps NLDP participants understand how their behavior, genetic makeup and life experiences merge.

“The Emergenetics program provided me with a personal profile that helped me understand how I think and how I behave in relation to how others think and behave. This knowledge has improved my leadership style and made me more productive,” she said.

“NLDP has given me the courage to try for something outside the norm,” Pintell-Quade said. She hopes to continue to meet the goals of the WASP effort, the brainchild of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, James Geurts, and eventually form a new job position.

About JLDP and NLDP

Both JLDP and NLDP give employees the opportunity to broaden their leadership, management and organizational knowledge and worldview, while establishing networks with peers and senior leaders across the command, the Navy and the Department of Defense. In addition to rotations and shadowing, both programs include classroom-based leadership courses, online training, mentoring and professional reading assignments.

Applications for the NLDP will be accepted now through March 6, 2020.