

TALKING PAPER

ON

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS GENDER BIAS LANGUAGE MITIGATION ON EVALUATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

PURPOSE: To provide a response to the Defense Advisory Committee On Women In The Services Request for Information #4 (March 2019) regarding actions the Air Force has taken to assess and mitigate the impact of gender bias and language on our evaluations and promotions systems.

Evaluations Policy:

- The Officer and Enlisted Evaluation System has 3 purposes:
 - To establish performance standards and expectations for ratees, meaningful feedback on how well the ratee is meeting those expectations, and direction on how to better meet those established standards and expectations
 - To provide a reliable, long-term, cumulative record of performance and promotion potential based on that performance
 - To provide promotion boards with sound information to assist in identifying the best qualified officers and enlisted personnel for promotion, as well as other personnel management decisions
- Air Force Instruction 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems* (8 November 2016), mandates that raters do not refer to race, ethnic origin, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation or political affiliation of the ratee in such a way that others could interpret the comments as reflecting favorably or unfavorably on the person
- The forms used in evaluating performance have no gender information in the ratee identification data section, however, raters may use pronouns and reference the ratee's name
- Many checks and balances are in place to ensure evaluations are fair and equitable to ensure the best qualified members are identified for positions of higher responsibility
 - Evaluations may have up to four evaluators; most evaluations have two or three evaluators to ensure fair, accurate, and unbiased evaluations
 - Evaluators must consider a member's commitment to Equal Opportunity and Treatment when evaluating performance and making a promotion recommendation and evaluations must reflect serious or repeated occurrences of discrimination

Promotions Policy:

- The fundamental purpose of the enlisted promotion system is to promote enough of each skill and grade to meet mission requirements

- Enlisted members have much control over their promotions under the Weighted Airman Promotion System (WAPS)
 - Members are responsible for ensuring all the weighted factor data elements (Enlisted Performance Reports, Decorations) are up to date; they are responsible for preparing for their respective tests (Promotion Fitness Examination or Specialty Knowledge Test)
 - None of the documents have gender information in the ratee identification data section, however, raters may use pronouns and reference the ratee's name
- The fundamental purpose of the officer promotion system is to select officers through a fair and competitive selection process that advances the best qualified officers to positions of increased responsibility and authority
- Promotion boards review the record of performance when assessing officers for promotion
 - The record of performance includes evaluations, decorations, and a promotion recommendation form
 - None of the documents have gender information in the ratee identification data section, however, raters may use pronouns and reference the ratee's name
- After each board, the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force review reports of selection rates for the following segments of the eligible population of officers: joint duty officers; acquisition corps officers; race/ethnic group; and gender
- For both officer and enlisted promotion boards, board membership will reflect the eligible population in terms of minority, gender, and Major Command of assignment, as closely as possible