



**ACC Diversity & Inclusion  
Strategic Plan  
January 2021**

## Executive Summary

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan will serve as a guide to sustain efforts to strengthen the readiness and lethality across Air Combat Command (ACC) through the use of Diversity and Inclusion. The plan provides strategic-level perspective on diversity and inclusion for the ACC enterprise to help us evolve and strengthen our competitive edge. This plan creates pathways for success through the lines of effort, strategic objectives, and within a supporting infrastructure across the command. The strategic intent of this plan is applicable throughout the command to include the Headquarters, Numbered Air Forces, and Wings.

ACC understands increasing the diversity of the force and creating more inclusive environments is a national security and operational imperative. This plan recognizes building a diverse force and fashioning more inclusive cultures is not an easy task—organizational change never is. Diversity and inclusion efforts must be flexible, innovative, targeted, and precise, just like our ACC teams. This plan outlines ways to measure progress and account for improvement, and provides a framework for oversight and assessment to ensure the command's diversity and inclusion efforts are continuous and sustained.

This document is divided into three main sections: 1. ACC Diversity and Inclusion Outlook, 2. ACC Diversity and Inclusion Lines of Effort, and 3. ACC Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Objectives. The first section describes the command's Diversity and Inclusion vision and mission, defines terms and focus, and provides an understanding of the operational necessity of diversity and inclusion across the global ACC footprint. The second section outlines the four lines of effort where continued progress is needed to strengthen, integrate, and develop the command's diversity and inclusion through the organization's culture and climate, people, education and training, and sustained efforts. The third section provides a guide path for the command's sustained effort and suggests strategies for engaging the lines of effort in productive and meaningful ways that translate to increased diversity and improved inclusiveness throughout the command.

The establishment and practice of Air Force diversity and inclusion must be part of a continuous effort, much like Air Force safety programs, and practitioners will continually evaluate progress and revise plans as needed to advance organizational priorities and further the strategic goals. Progress and plans must be consistently resourced and regularly monitored, assessed, and maintained to ensure efforts are continually setting the conditions for sustainable operational success.

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I want all ACC leaders to understand that diversity and inclusion is not a *program* for POCs to manage – it is a leadership responsibility and priority and requires leaders to aggressively engage.

General Mark Kelly, ACC Commander



## Section 1:

### ACC Diversity and Inclusion Outlook

Diversity and inclusion are two distinct ideas that are often inextricably linked in concept and application. To best achieve the ends of increasing diversity while creating more inclusive environments, each concept must be understood separately even as we work to optimize the synergy between the two.

The Air Force broadly defines **diversity** as, “a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the Air Force Core Values and the Air Force Mission. Air Force diversity includes, but is not limited to: personal life experiences, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, cultural knowledge, educational background, work experience, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical and spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity, and gender. This concept of diversity is to be tailored as specific circumstances and as the law require (AFI 36-7001).” Diversity also encompasses demographic, cognitive, behavioral, organizational/structural, and global diversity.

The Air Force defines **inclusion** as, “the process of creating a culture where all members of an organization are free to make their fullest contributions to the success of the group, and where there are no artificial barriers to success (AFI 36-7001).” For ACC, we expect each of us, no matter our level or function, to play an active role in creating environments where people of diverse backgrounds are excited to bring all of who they are in order to do their best work.

The work of increasing diversity and creating inclusive environments is challenging to all organizations, but particularly in organizations with long-standing cultural norms, strong group identity, and specific, unique mission requirements. Successful implementation of diversity and inclusion efforts will require a strong foundation that must include:

- Senior leaders making diversity and inclusion a priority
- Inseparable linkage to mission
- Deliberate and effective training and education
- Strategic communication
- Sustained commitment at all levels

With this foundation in place, this plan will help integrate the ACC operational imperatives of diversity and inclusion into the overall ACC priorities in an effort to focus the command on the transformational change required to build a diverse force and establish inclusive environments.

## **The National Security Imperative**

Today's geopolitical environment is dynamic and challenging. Diversity and inclusion are national security imperatives in this context. By ensuring we have the most talented, cross-culturally competent, and operationally relevant force possible, the Air Force will be much more agile, innovative, and effective – able to meet emergent requirements quickly and decisively. Within an inclusive environment, diversity opens doors for creative solutions to complex problems and provides the Air Force a competitive edge in air, space, and cyberspace. Diversity includes and involves all Airmen. When leveraged inclusively, it strengthens the nation and gives the United States Air Force a decisive advantage as the Service engages in global operations.

Diversity and inclusion are imperative if the Air Force is to remain competitive in attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining the best of the nation's incredibly diverse talent pool. As the Air Force provides global vision, global reach, and global power for America using an all-volunteer force, diversity and inclusion are critical for successful operations in the international community. A force interacting with people around the globe must have cross-culturally competent Airmen, including those proficient in foreign languages, as they are critical to building partnerships and conducting the full range of military operations.

Incorporating global perspectives in all core functions improves the Air Force's ability to mitigate cognitive biases such as blind spots, mirror imaging, and groupthink that could result in flawed analysis of critical data and images. Leveraging diverse talent pools empowers the Air Force mission by continuing to recruit and retain necessary technical experts while also deliberately incorporating diverse backgrounds attuned to potential threats from a wide array of different organizations or nations. These examples are illustrations of how diversity and inclusion lead to mission excellence across the Air Force core missions, but they are only a partial reflection of how diversity and inclusion are force multipliers and mission enhancers.

These core missions, the dynamic geopolitical environment, and the Air Force core values – integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do – all integrate together, compelling the Service to ensure diversity and inclusion remain priorities. No other approach can achieve the same degree of success in upholding the values and continuing the Service's legacy of innovation and operational superiority.

## **Integrating Diversity and Inclusion with ACC Priorities**

ACC organizes, trains, and equips Airmen who fight in and from multiple domains to control and exploit the air, space, and electromagnetic spectrum. As the lead command for fighter capabilities; command and control; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; personnel recovery; persistent attack and reconnaissance; electronic warfare; and cyber operations, ACC is responsible for providing combat air, space, and cyber power and the combat support that assures mission success to America's warfighting commands.

Increasing the diversity of our force and creating more inclusive environments is necessary to advance ACC priorities:

We are best positioned to **Improve Squadron Readiness** because we will have ready Airmen, ready families, and ready weapon systems. Ready Airmen are grown through education, training, and experience. Improving the readiness of our weapons systems will require sustained effort by ready Airmen, sustained investment, and a continued emphasis on the hard earned basics of sortie generation. We will build and sustain ready families by continuing our investments in family support.

We are best positioned to **Build Leaders** through education, training, and experience, by delegating authority, empowering leaders, and fostering an environment of inclusion. We will build leaders by providing education, training, and experience focused on our contributions to joint warfighting for leaders at all levels and all components. We need diverse thinking and innovative methods to engage in a world that continues to be volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

We are best positioned to **Bring the Future Faster** by accepting risk and integrating the different experiences and skillsets that our civilian, enlisted, and officer professionals bring to the fight every day.

ACC will leverage the full potential of the nation and Service's warfighting capability in order to build a more diverse force and create more inclusive environments or we risk losing a significant competitive edge as we compete in the Great Power arena.

## Section 2:

### ACC Diversity and Inclusion Lines of Effort

The ACC Diversity and Inclusion Lines of Effort align with the vision and priorities of the command and work to establish an enterprise-wide vector for planning, integration, and oversight. These lines of effort provide the framework for advancing diversity and inclusion and for building measures of accountability to ensure the enterprise attracts and leverages elite talent from diverse communities to compete and win for the nation.

These lines of effort provide a strategic outlook to assist diversity and inclusion practitioners within the command in developing operational plans, measures of performance, metrics, and initiatives to forward and track progress.

#### Line of Effort 1: Organizational Culture and Climate

##### Vision – Leadership – Communication

**~Develop enduring and fully inclusive environments, programs, policies, processes, and procedures~**

**Create** enduring institutional change by developing **fully inclusive** environments, programs, policies, processes, and procedures while **divesting** of cultural norms, narratives, programs, processes, and procedures that work against diversity and inclusion.

- **Align** diversity and inclusion vision and strategy with ACC priorities to create enduring institutional change.
- **Identify artificial barriers** to diversity and inclusion in **cultural norms, narratives, programs, processes, and procedures** to create a more **inclusive** organizational climate.
- **Facilitate open dialogue** to cultivate an environment where all have a **strong sense of belonging** to the command.
- **Develop** internal and external **communication strategies** to clearly message diversity and inclusion as an **operational imperative**.

## Line of Effort 2: ACC Integration

### Recruitment – Assessment – Selection

~Integrate diversity and inclusion efforts throughout the ACC community~

**Integrate** diversity and inclusion efforts throughout the ACC community, including attraction, recruitment, development, assessment, and selection of diverse military and civilian professionals.

- **Identify diversity gaps** in ACC career fields and ACC key leadership positions and methods to ensure consideration of all talent prior to hiring.
- **Commit fully** to promoting ACC career fields, especially to fill high demand, low density specialties.

## Line of Effort 3: Education and Training

### Operational Effectiveness – Cultural Competence – Operational Engagement

~Ensure training environments reflect and defend diversity and inclusion~

**Engage** enterprise leaders and educate the force on why diversity and inclusion is a **national security imperative** and ensure training environments **accurately reflect diversity and inclusion tenets**.

- **Develop and emphasize interconnectedness** of matters relating to culture, ethnicity, class, race, and gender, to make diversity in ACC an **operational imperative**.
- **Educate** ACC professionals and leaders to facilitate and sustain a diverse and inclusive culture.
- **Integrate** diversity and inclusion principles within **community engagement and organizational collaboration** for better **operational effectiveness**.

## Line of Effort 4: Sustainment

### Infrastructure – Talent Management – Retention

~Build a diversity and inclusion construct that sustains efforts~

**Build** a diversity and inclusion construct that sustains **diversity and inclusion efforts** across the enterprise, **increasing the diversity** of the force and **improving inclusiveness** to **retain a ready and lethal force** that can compete and win for the nation.

- **Establish** diversity and inclusion **infrastructure** throughout the enterprise to build institutional stability.
- **Determine metrics and measures of effectiveness and performance** to **strengthen a ready and lethal force**.
- **Conduct** in-depth analysis of **talent management and organizational culture** to **maximize** ACC's ability to translate increased diversity and improved inclusion.

These four lines of effort provide a framework to synchronize ACC's efforts to build a more diverse force and create more inclusive environments across the enterprise.



### **Section 3:**

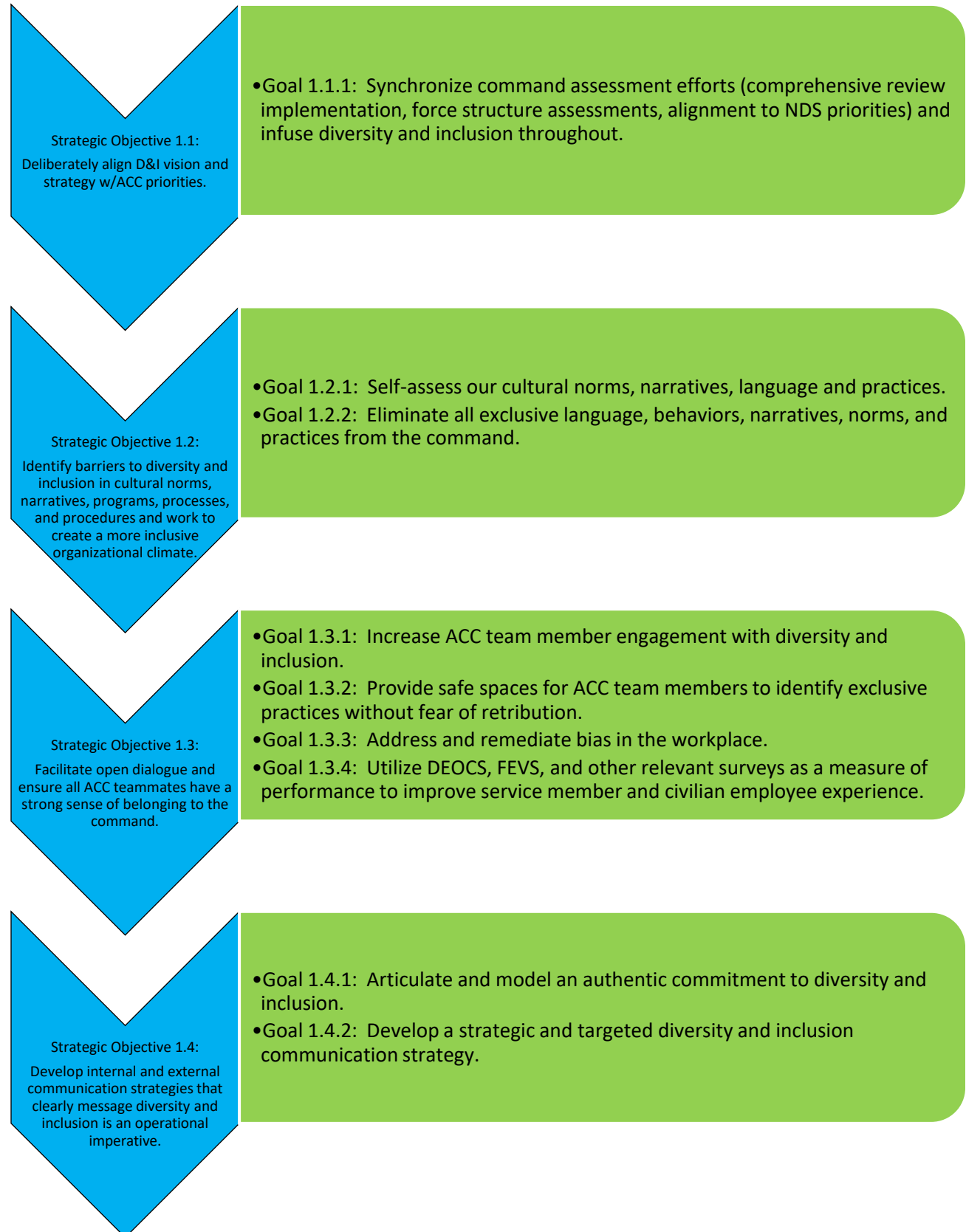
## **ACC Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Objectives**

The lines of effort outlined in Section 2 provide strategic level, long-term guidance for the command. Headquarters Air Combat Command and their diversity and inclusion practitioners are responsible for the development, integration, engagement, and building of a diversity and inclusion infrastructure and for sustained efforts that will strengthen the command's competitive edge to compete and win for the nation. The first step in executing the lines of effort is conducting a mission analysis to determine the current state of each line of effort and identify any shortfalls, gaps, areas requiring improvement, and/or barriers to implementation. This work has already begun and will be a continuous effort as additional data is gathered and metrics are established.

The purpose of this section is to outline ACC strategic objectives for each line of effort that will be used to develop operational planning orders, determine measures of progress, and ensure a sustained, results-oriented way ahead. In an effort to spur further innovation and creative problem solving throughout the command, this section will also highlight best practices throughout the command to promote collaboration.

Long-term success requires ACC leaders to think holistically and jointly to leverage diversity and inclusion. As national and global demographics shift and become more diverse, so must ACC. While this change will meet friction points and hurdles, these lines of effort are intended to maintain the command's focus, while the strategic objectives drive the command forward in a continuous, sustained effort to increase diversity and create more inclusive environments.

## Line of Effort 1: Organizational Climate and Culture



## Line of Effort 2: ACC Integration

Strategic Objective 2.1:  
Identify diversity gaps in ACC career fields and ACC key leadership positions and institute programs to fill in gaps.

- Goal 2.1.1: Collect and analyze demographic data, pipeline training data, and retention data.
- Goal 2.1.2: Diversify ACC career fields.
- Goal 2.1.3: Diversify the pool of ACC members prepared and selected for critical developmental opportunities.

Strategic Objective 2.2:  
Fully commit to promoting diversity of ACC career fields to increase awareness.

- Goal 2.2.1: Leverage services to increase representations of diverse ACC personnel and capabilities in recruitment/marketing materials.
- Goal 2.2.2: Tell diverse ACC stories through media and social media platforms throughout the enterprise.

Strategic Objective 2.3:  
Eliminate barriers to entry by assessing recruitment strategies, accessions processes, assessment qualifications, and selection criteria in ACC career fields.

- Goal 2.3.1: Develop recruiting strategies to intentionally target underrepresented populations.
- Goal 2.3.2: Assess peer reviews and assessments of "fit" in pipeline training courses for bias.
- Goal 2.3.3: Develop accountability mechanisms to hold leadership accountable for facilitating recruitment, assessment, and selection of diverse ACC team members.

### Line of Effort 3: Education and Training (E&T)



## Line of Effort 4: Sustainment

Strategic Objective 4.1:  
Establish corporate diversity and inclusion infrastructure throughout the enterprise.

- Goal 4.1.1: Build an ACC HQ Diversity & Inclusion office led by a Command, Diversity and Inclusion Officer with data analysis and strategic communication support.
- Goal 4.1.2: Ensure each NAF has a permanent diversity and inclusion infrastructure to support sustained efforts.
- Goal 4.1.3: Integrate diversity and inclusion efforts throughout the enterprise's strategic planning and battle rhythm events to further ensure the command's competitive edge.
- Goal 4.1.4: Integrate diversity and inclusion principles within operational planning and mission execution to create more culturally competent teams and engage adversaries more effectively.
- Goal 4.1.5: Incorporate diversity demographic reporting in annual Health of ACC report.

Strategic Objective 4.2:  
Determine metrics and measures of effectiveness and performance.

- Goal 4.2.1: Expand data collection to include the entire formation; collect diversity demographic data on all active duty, reserve, and civilian employees.
- Goal 4.2.2: Develop a command dashboard for diversity demographic data enterprise-wide.
- Goal 4.2.3: Establish enterprise and component goals for increasing racial, ethnic, and gender diversity across the formation.
- Goal 4.2.4: Increase demographics of ACC leadership to reflect the command's overall population.

Strategic Objective 4.3:  
Maximize ACC's ability to translate increased diversity and improved inclusion to operational advantage through in-depth analysis of talent management and organizational culture.

- Goal 4.3.1: Implement diversity and inclusion throughout the talent management life cycle to retain an elite, ready force.
- Goal 4.3.2: Decrease attrition resulting from exclusive behaviors.
- Goal 4.3.3: Increase hiring rates of diverse applicants.
- Goal 4.3.4: Monitor attrition rates of target demographics.
- Goal 4.3.5: Develop a culture of leader accountability focused on the intentional development of personnel through innovative talent management practices.

## Summary

Air Combat Command is an organization where leaders focus on purpose, growth, and innovation. As we seek to increase our readiness and lethality, we believe the success of our teammates drives the success of our mission. This is reflected in our ongoing commitment to creating an environment focused on equity, inclusion, empowerment, and respect. When our teams feel supported and inspired, they turn that creativity into innovation to serve our force, families, and joint partners globally. ACC is at its best when every member of our team feels respected, included, and heard—when everyone can show up as themselves and do their best work every day.

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*We must ensure we create inclusive environments that leverage the diverse talents of all our people.*

General Mark Kelly, ACC Commander

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