Marine Corps Force Integration Plan
Red Team: Final Report
JULY 2015
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Executive Summary

In summer 2014, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps asked the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to convene a red team. That team was tasked with evaluating the research plan the Corps had in place to support the Commandant of the Marine Corps’ (CMC’s) fall 2015 decision about whether to request an exception to the policy ending the exclusion of females from various positions in the Corps’ ground combat element on January 1, 2016.

To accomplish this task, CSIS convened a 16-person red team representing a broad range of experiences and perspectives to review the Corps’ existing and planned research. From August 2014 through May 2015, that team conducted three meetings in Washington, DC, visited an experimental unit conducting training in California, and had multiple teleconferences and virtual exchanges. The red team received briefings from experts both within and outside the Corps on issues ranging from recruiting to the historical experiences with integration of females or other minorities into both military and non-military organizations, within the U.S. and in other countries. The team reviewed dozens of studies and articles, and CSIS staff provided literature reviews and information papers in areas where the red team had additional questions.

The team’s charter was to offer an independent assessment of whether the Corps’ analytic plan would provide a sufficient and credible foundation for the CMC’s decision, and to recommend any additional research that might improve the decision’s quality. After nine months of examination, the red team found the following:

- The Marine Corps has conducted a careful review of existing research, and has initiated additional experimentation and analysis that are unprecedented in their scale and scope;
- The data to support reliable projections about the possible effects of full integration of females are strongest around individual effects (e.g., decisions about whether to join or remain in the Corps), as well as those at the institutional level (such as the likely costs associated with implementation); and
- Available data are less robust (though still more thorough than has previously existed) about the potential unit-level effects of full integration, especially in the areas of unit readiness and combat effectiveness.
Based on these findings, the red team concluded that the data available to the Corps are sufficient for understanding individual and institutional effects and partly sufficient for understanding unit-level effects of full integration.

The red team was also asked to evaluate the credibility of the research upon which a decision will be based. While the team had access to the full range of studies and analysis the Marine Corps staff intends to consider, it could not assess each study in detail. Though its review was not granular, throughout its tenure the team offered its thoughts to the Marine Corps on the reliability of the studies with which it was most familiar.

Ultimately, it became clear to the red team that the credibility of the totality of the research will rest on how the Corps synthesizes the vast amount of disparate research findings it has accumulated. Because that process is not yet fully defined, the red team is unable to reach a definitive judgment about the likely credibility of the overall result. The red team’s previously agreed upon timeline ended before the Corps’ internal analysis was finished. Despite that limitation, in its final meeting the red team offered some recommendations for the Marine Corps to consider as it concludes its analytic, and subsequent decision, process in order to:

- enhance the rigor of the research synthesis, to include 1) identification and categorization of the various studies in an intuitive, transparent way, 2) a transparent weighting scheme for how the data from the different lines of research would be used, 3) an easily repeated model for how the different data/lines of research will be integrated; and 4) a description of this process in a final report, detailed briefing, or other product;
- ensure that the Marine Corps can thoroughly and objectively describe the basis for any inter-service difference, should any of the other military services reach a different conclusion about the need for a policy exception for similar positions or specialties;¹
- improve and refine its understanding of integration-associated issues, both physical and social, by continuing integration-related research (irrespective of the decision taken in fall 2015); and

¹ The red team’s examination suggests that the most likely causes for such differences would be differences in research approach, or in the conditions and/or standards to which like specialties perform largely similar tasks.
• should an exception *not* be requested or, if requested, not be granted, improve the chances for integration to go smoothly by requesting sufficient funding for supporting initiatives.

There are three important caveats to the red team’s conclusion that the research is generally sufficient to inform a decision about whether to request an exception to policy. The first is that it is a general conclusion, and not specific to decisions that might be made about any particular Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). That is, the red team did not examine the available research for each of the currently-closed specialties individually to determine whether it was sufficient to inform a sound decision about light armored vehicle crewmen, for example, or towed artillery repair technicians. The second is that the red team’s judgments are based upon the data available, not on the conclusions that might be drawn from them. The red team has every reason to believe that the Marine Corps is employing methodologically-sound approaches not only in its collection of data but in their interpretation. However, since the interpretive phase is ongoing, the red team’s assessments assume that the level of rigor exhibited thus far will continue. Finally, the red team’s judgments assume that Marine Corps’ decisions about the likely effects of integration will be based on what might be anticipated given the application of sound physical and mental standards, applied uniformly to all Marines. Some of those standards are still being identified, and the levels at which they are set will significantly affect the size and nature of any impact on the force (both men and women).
Background

In January 1994, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin issued a memorandum outlining assignment rules for women serving in the armed forces. This memorandum, formally called the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (DGCDAR), or “Combat Exclusion Policy,” prohibited women from serving in various positions for one of three reasons: (1) their assumed proximity to combat; (2) the costs associated with providing appropriate privacy; or (3) because the job-related physical demands would likely exclude the vast majority of women.

Implementing these policies proved problematic during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One outcome was that the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2011 required the Secretary of Defense to review the laws, policies and regulations that restricted the service of women in the armed forces. The February 2012 report submitted as the result of that review stated that the Defense Department “is committed to removing all barriers that would prevent Service members from rising to the highest level that their talents and capabilities warrant.”

The report further described policy changes expanding the types of units that would now be open to women; committing to open positions previously restricted for privacy reasons as affordable solutions allowed; and opening all positions formerly restricted because of their proximity to units engaged in ground combat. It also affirmed the continuation of restrictions on positions involved in conducting long-range reconnaissance and special operations missions and on positions with high physical demands until scientifically-based gender neutral standards could be established.

Less than a year later, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey issued a memorandum rescinding the DGCDAR policy in its entirety. It declared that all positions closed to women would be opened by January 1, 2016 unless the military service chiefs or Special Operations Command commander requested and exception to policy which was subsequently approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and then the Secretary of Defense.

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3 2012 Report, i-ii.
gration proceed in a manner consistent with guiding principles put forth by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.\textsuperscript{5} Those five principles, enumerated in a separate memorandum entitled the “Women in the Service Implementation Plan,” included:

1. “Ensuring the success of our Nation’s warfighting forces by preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale.

2. Ensuring all Service men and women are given the opportunity to succeed and are set up for success with viable career paths.

3. Retaining the trust and confidence of the American people to defend this Nation by promoting policies that maintain the best quality and most qualified people.

4. Validating occupational performance standards, both physical and mental, for all military occupational specialties (MOSs), specifically those that remain closed to women. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation. For occupational specialties open to women, the occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 542 (1993).

5. Ensuring that a sufficient cadre of midgrade/senior women enlisted and officers are assigned to commands at the point of introduction to ensure success in the long run.”\textsuperscript{6}

While the Marine Corps had been conducting research around opening a larger number of positions to women for years, the requirement to open all positions by a date certain added greater urgency to ensuring that the Corps’ leadership had a firm analytic foundation from which to make a determination about whether the CMC should in fact request an exception to policy (ETP). To help guide these efforts, the Marine Corps established the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office (MCFIO). One of MCFIO’s tasks was to work closely with a number of analytic

\textsuperscript{5} The Joint Chiefs of Staff comprise the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force, Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.


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**Note:** The text contains a reference to a RESTRICTED, PRE-DECISIONAL—EMBARGOED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE document, indicating the need for secure handling of sensitive information.
organizations both within and outside the Corps to conduct or review research about the effects that full integration of women might have in a number of areas.

As part of this process, Marine Corps leaders recognized the need for an external group charged with reviewing the Corps’ intended assessment methodology. This took the form of an independent red team, convened and supported by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

Assembling the red team

In summer 2014, CSIS was tasked with selecting red team members, organizing their activities, and supporting their work over a nine month period. In order to ensure broad stakeholder representation, CSIS first considered the types of expertise and experience that should be represented on the team. To do so, CSIS staff identified people who had served in one or more of six relevant venues: the Marine Corps (both male and female officers and enlisted personnel, across a range of specialties); the Congress; the Office of the Secretary of Defense and military departments; organizations that have faced or are facing similar integration issues (e.g., the other military services and the Federal Bureau of Investigation); and specific relevant disciplines (in this instance, law, medicine, and gender studies). Although the red team was not tasked with recommending what the outcome of the CMC decision should be (i.e., to request an exception or refrain from doing so), CSIS also sought to include members with varying views on that issue. Based on these general parameters, CSIS staff found potential red team members and ultimately selected 16 that were able to commit to support the effort in its entirety and that, collectively, were broadly representative of the desired stakeholder perspectives. Their names and biographies can be found at Appendix A.

Once the team’s members were identified, they and the CSIS staff signed non-disclosure agreements restricting any public discussion of information they received from the Marine Corps until after Congress has been notified of the Defense Departments’ decisions on any exceptions to policy (expected in early 2016). Those statements were designed to ensure that the team could have full access to Marine Corps thinking and information, while reducing any concern that pre-decisional materials or information taken out of context might be publicly released.

Red team mission

With the red team identified, the Marine Corps provided a more detailed mission statement:
“The... Red Team, as an independent group representing the broad spectrum of stakeholder interests, addresses the following questions:

1) Is the problem properly scoped?
2) Is the data collection plan sufficient?
3) Is the data analysis plan sound?
4) Will the findings be credible?
5) Would the range of policy options be better informed by additional data collection and/or analysis?

in order to provide credible and constructive feedback to the USMC on the external and perceived validity of the MCFIP assessment methodology.”

For simplicity, the red team reduced this mission statement to two basic questions: whether the Marine Corps’ research methodology was sufficient to support a sound decision by the CMC about an ETP request; and whether the conclusions he draws from the available analysis be credible.

After each of its three meetings, the red team provided written, and in some cases oral, observations and recommendations to the Marine Corps on these two questions. At the conclusion of its final meeting in May 2015, the red team provided an oral summary of its final conclusions and recommendations. Those findings were also presented in writing with this report, which was submitted to the Marine Corps in June 2015.

Red team activities and supporting materials

The red team utilized a number of different fora and relied on a broad set of analyses in addressing its mission. Between August 2014 and May 2015, the red team held three meetings in Washington, DC. Those meetings included briefings and presentations from a range of subject matter experts both within and outside the Marine Corps. In addition, in February 2015 two subsets of team members traveled to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twenty-nine Palms, CA to observe a large-scale integration-related Marine Corps experiment.

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7 For example, after its initial meeting the red team suggested that the Marine Corps expand its research into the Corps’ prior integration experiences in the aviation and logistics career fields to include explosive ordnance and combat engineers. Based on this recommendation, the Marine Corps subsequently initiated additional research in this area (Chewning, 2014).
These in-person sessions were augmented with six webinars and teleconferences designed to allow red team members to hear directly from subject matter experts on topics of particular interest. Further, in response to questions, CSIS staff provided literature reviews and information papers to red team members on a number of additional topics. Finally, throughout its tenure the red team received weekly email updates from CSIS staff that included relevant news articles and reports, ultimately numbering in the hundreds. The full list of activities the red team conducted, to include the topics addressed during each session, can be found at Appendix B.

Beyond the specific information presented, red team members were also provided with web-based access to key documents and research through a controlled website. That material, along with other resources identified by CSIS staff, is detailed at Appendix C. It included over 150 studies, 20 briefings, and dozens of articles from scholarly journals, research organizations, and the press.

Limitations

While the red team undertook a serious review, its efforts were to some degree limited by the time the group was able to dedicate to its task. The team’s scope was also narrowly focused; that is, it was specifically asked to evaluate the research associated with an ETP decision. This did not include a review of the research the Marine Corps was conducting or assessing to support the development and validation of gender-neutral standards for positions and occupations in the Corps’ Ground Combat Element (GCE). This was somewhat problematic, as the two issues (an ETP decision and standards) are inherently linked: for example, an ETP request could be based on a judgment that the likely negative effects of integration -- the nature or scale of which determined by the application of a given set of standards -- would outweigh the potential benefits. To address this dependency, the red team assumed

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8 These included summaries of research relating to the idea of a “critical mass” of minority populations, of various definitions of successful integration, and of how past studies had attempted to analyze unit readiness. CSIS also provide background papers comparing when the Marine Corps and other U.S. military services integrate their entry level training, comparing tasks for Marine Corps and Army infantry units, and providing an overview of types and causes of attrition (i.e., temporary or permanent removal from the Marine Corps).

9 As used here, the term “standards” refers to those criteria which the Marine Corps sets to determine eligibility for entry into or continuation within a specific military occupational career field or specialty. For physical criterion, Marine Corps Training and Education Command uses the term “MOS-Specific Physical Assessments,” or MSPAs, to capture the full range of tests, etc. that are intended to screen, classify, and qualify (to include over time) Marines for physically-demanding specialties.
that the eventual standards applied will be empirically based and applied uniformly. While the red team was occasionally provided with standards-related research as part of its core task, nothing presented in this report should be interpreted to speak to the sufficiency or credibility of that research. Similarly, the team cannot judge how the integration and standards-related strains of research will come together to inform a senior policy decision. This is an understandable but important limitation in the overall research design and we recommend that it should be pointed out to those responsible for the ETP decision.

Finally, the scope of the red team’s mission did not include a consideration of the sufficiency or credibility of the Marine Corps’ research about how to best implement policies to integrate women into newly opened positions. Here too, the linkage between analysis to inform an ETP decision and analysis to inform decisions about how integration might best proceed is strong. For example, the Marine Corps is collecting data about the impacts of recently opened positions on the morale and perceptions of Marines (both men and women). The resulting analysis can provide insights into the degree to which morale might be positively and negatively affected should integration be broadened, and for whom. These insights in turn could be used either as an input to a determination that such effects would likely be so detrimental that an ETP request is necessary, or to inform the design and application of a training program to accompany broader integration should it proceed as currently directed. While acknowledging the potential for multi-purpose analysis, the red team focused its efforts on the research that relates most directly to an ETP decision. Its conclusions about the sufficiency and credibility of that research do not extend to its suitability for supporting sound decisions about implementation.
I. Research sufficiency

As the red team’s understanding of the issues deepened, the team ultimately coalesced around seven major issues it believes are most important to the CMC’s fall 2015 ETP decision. Those issues fall into three basic categories: integration’s effects on individuals, on units, and on the institution of the Marine Corps more broadly. In each of the three categories, the red team reviewed the available research to form judgments about how well it might support estimates of potential effects of broader integration. This review formed the basis for the team’s judgments about the sufficiency of that research to inform a CMC ETP decision, and is summarized below. It is followed by a brief discussion of other issues that the red team members considered, but ultimately did not include as among the most important for the upcoming ETP determination.

Effects of integration on individual Marines

In multiple engagements, the red team was presented with a range of research the Marine Corps is exploring to better understand how full integration of women might affect individual Marines. The red team believes that while these effects could be wide-ranging, the most important issues the CMC should consider are whether, and if so how, integration might affect individual Marines’ retention (i.e., decisions to remain in the Marine Corps), attrition (i.e., involuntary exit from training, a unit, career field, and/or the Corps altogether), and career progression, especially the rates of promotion and selection for the key positions that enhance promotion potential.

Retention

The Marine Corps’ research plan clearly recognizes that the retention of qualified officers and enlisted Marines is imperative to maintain sufficient numbers of appropriately trained personnel over time. Retention - that is, the rate at which qualified Marines elect to remain in the service - is a function of numerous and often inter-related factors, to include morale, cohe-

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10 These categories are imperfect – for example, injuries affect individuals, units, and the entire Marine Corps, in different ways. The red team recognizes this reality, but concluded that the main issues could be generally considered in the three categories described here as long as the somewhat fuzzy boundaries between some of them are consciously considered. Based on its interactions, the red team is confident that the Marine Corps appreciates the full scope of the issues described here across the categories as described.
sion, deployments, and compensation. In recognition of this complexity, the research makes clear that it is difficult to isolate the expected effects that broader integration of women might have on future retention decisions. That said, the red team’s review found that the Marine Corps is relying upon a broad range of studies to inform its understanding of whether such effects might be observed, and if so, what their specific nature might be. These include historical analyses of the experiences in other Marine Corps career fields and occupations as they were opened to women, of other countries’ militaries, and of other physically demanding professions. It also includes survey data collected from Marines (both men and women) involved in ongoing experiments capturing perceptions of how broader integration might affect their future retention decisions. (Analysts conducting some of this research acknowledged that such prospective responses are often times difficult to correlate with actual future behavior.) The red team found that, collectively, these studies provide a solid foundation from which the Corps might reasonably project the likely retention effects of broader integration of women.

Attrition

Because of the physically demanding nature of many of the positions currently closed to women, the red team found the Marine Corps’ focus on possible effects of integration on attrition (the involuntary exit of Marines) to be well warranted. However, some red team members also cautioned that attrition should be considered in its entirety, not just in the context of injuries, or (even more narrowly) those injuries due to training. Red team members noted that attrition can occur for a variety of reasons: some due to training injuries, but also to off-duty accidents (some of which are more common for men than women), as well as for reasons like misconduct. The Marine Corps assured the red team that consideration of attrition will

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11 Among others, these included (b) (6), study lead, “Line of Effort 1: Thematic research” (Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Operations Analysis Division: Quantico, VA) 2014; (b) (6), “Implementing force integration: Issues and challenges” (Center for Naval Analyses: Alexandria, VA) April 2014; (b) (6), “An analysis of female representation and Marines’ performance in aviation and logistics occupations” (Center for Naval Analyses: Arlington, VA) April 2015; (b) (6), “Key considerations in assessing the impact of integrating women into Marine Corps infantry units” (RAND Corporation: Santa Monica, CA), January 13, 2014; (b) (6), Differences in Male and Female Predictors of Success in the Marine Corps: A Literature Review (Center for Naval Analyses: Arlington, VA) February 2015; and (b) (6), “Preliminary findings: Accession characteristics of women with the propensity to serve in combat arms MOSs,” briefing as part of Marine Corps Force Integration Plan Quarterly Update (July, August, September) (Marine Corps Recruiting Command: Quantico, VA) October 22, 2014.
include the totality of causes, and the red team reviewed briefings and studies demonstrating that the Corps has multiple analyses examining attrition rates for reasons that go beyond training-related injuries.

High physical demands remain the primary justification for closing many of the positions currently available only to men; given that, the red team concurs that examining how exposing women to such demands might affect attrition is of key importance. The red team was particularly impressed with the Marine Corps’ research in this area, as to its knowledge, the long-term monitoring and analysis plan the Corps has in place to understand the relationships between physiology and injury rates (among other outcomes) is unprecedented in its scope and scale. The red team believes that the longitudinal aspect of this research will provide critical insights that will benefit both male and female Marines (as well as any person engaged in a sustained, very physically demanding profession), though the full data set will not be available for many years.

While there is substantial research to inform projections about what the likely effects of broader integration might be on Marines’ attrition rates, those effects will also be closely tied to the establishment and application of any new physical standards. That is, as the Marine Corps determines what new or additional standards will be used to screen for, award, or maintain a given occupational specialty, those decisions will likely have an impact on injury rates. At the same time, through its research the Marine Corps is identifying various strategies to build greater muscular strength, for example, that will shed light on the degree to which certain types of injuries can be avoided or made less severe. Given the range of variables at play, it will be challenging for the Marine Corps to reliably predict the effects of gender specifically on future attrition. Again, they will be doing so on the basis of more data than has ever previously been available, but the Corps’ understanding of attrition will certainly deepen as its research continues and as additional or updated standards are put in place. The red team endorses the Marine Corps’ initiative to begin conducting exit interviews as an important part of these research efforts.

**Career progression**

The need to “ensure … viable career paths” is one of the guiding principles for integration set out by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2013. The red team shared the view that the CMC should consider the degree to which integrating the GCE might affect the careers of individual Marines. The red team received a number of briefings about analyses the Marine Corps was con-
ducting that examined how gender has related to career outcomes in previously integrated Marine Corps specialties, as well as for military members in of other countries. The red team was also provided with data about how male and female career patterns generally differ for both officers and enlisted Marines, and with analyses exploring sources of bias in the evaluations that influence promotions and other career milestones. At its final meeting, the red team discussed that while the Marine Corps has analysis that will help to inform projections about likely career impacts, patterns may manifest themselves differently in the culture of the Ground Combat Element. Particularly in earlier career stages, the GCE places a heavy emphasis on physical performance. Thus while the red team feels that the Marine Corps is cognizant of the relevant research in this area, it fully supports the Marine Corps’ intent to carefully monitor career impacts as broader integration of women unfolds.\(^\text{12}\)

**Effects of integration on Marine units**

As the red team understands it, the Marine Corps is undertaking groundbreaking research into a range of potential effects that could result from the full integration of women into specialties and units that perform very physically demanding tasks. This research, along with other available information, should help the CMC anticipate the potential impacts of integration on combat effectiveness, unit readiness, cohesion, and morale.

**Combat effectiveness**

The red team shares the Marine Corps’ view that combat effectiveness is of paramount importance in considering whether women should be fully integrated into the Corps. The Marine Corps provided information on this topic drawn from analyses of previously integrated career fields within the Corps, other militaries, and other physically demanding professions. CSIS augmented this research with other publicly available studies on the issue. However, many of these studies’ populations were only loosely analogous to Marine Corps ground combat units. In recognition of this fact, the Marine Corps established a robust and expansive experiment centered on a purpose-built unit known as the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCE ITF). The GCE ITF had a train up period, followed by a series of varied field experiments

\(^{12}\) The use of the term “broader integration” used here is not intended to presuppose decisions about whether the Corps will seek exceptions to policy for one or more occupations. Instead, it reflects the red team’s understanding that some previously-closed positions have already been opened, and that as women enter those positions, information about career patterns will become apparent over time. Whether this extends to the entire Corps or not remains to be seen.
in numerous venues, all of which involved monitoring of both individual and unit performance along numerous dimensions.

Though impressive in its scope, scale, design, and ambition, the red team believes that conclusions that can be drawn from the GCE ITF experiment are intrinsically limited in a variety of ways. Various constraints (time, human subjects protection requirements, cost, etc.) mean that GCE ITF results (which were not yet available when the red team completed its work) will provide novel insights, but that the experiment’s results cannot be fully dispositive of the question about integration’s likely effects. For example, the duration of the GCE ITF effort did not permit replication of the full range of tasks and conditions a ground combat element might encounter. Nor are the personnel who volunteered for the experiment fully representative of the Corps (for example, many of the female volunteers were more experienced than would be expected to be the case in a typical infantry unit). The experimental design attempted to account for these issues to the maximum possible extent, but the red team believes that the Marine Corps still faces a basic conundrum: it is difficult to reliably anticipate how the inclusion of women in ground combat units might truly affect those units’ combat effectiveness without including women in those units and (ultimately) observing their performance in a combat environment. The GCE ITF represents a much more rigorous experiment to help inform projections about what those effects might be than has ever been the case, but by its nature it cannot produce the degree of certainty that the CMC would likely desire in making an ETP decision.

Unit readiness, cohesion, and morale

Though combat effectiveness was not specifically called out by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a key consideration in moving forward with integration, it is closely related to unit readiness, cohesion, and morale (which were explicitly raised). The red team spent some time discussing unit readiness and reviewing existing research, but ultimately concluded that that anticipating how broader integration of women might affect readiness presents a major challenge. Analysis based on the Defense Department’s official readiness tracking system (the Defense Readiness Reporting System) relies on a unit of analysis that is likely too large to reflect the scale of readiness effect that might be expected with the introduction of women in relatively low proportions. (However, some red team members argued that if readiness effects are too small to be captured in existing monitoring systems, this may indicate that they are not likely to have meaningful operational impacts.)
The red team’s review of existing research that has attempted to capture readiness effects of integration in other contexts found some methodological weaknesses. In addition, some of the populations studied were not readily generalizable to Marine Corps ground combat units. With these general caveats, perhaps the most readily quantified aspect of readiness — about which the red team believes the Marine Corps has multiple sources of data — is personnel availability (i.e., the availability of assigned Marines to perform their duties). In this area, the red team was briefed that the Corps is reviewing availability and deployability data by gender across the Corps, over time, and within specific careers or specialties, as well as in various roughly analogous organizations. These data will be further augmented by data from the Marine Corps’ recent experiences with newly opened MOS schools and the GCE ITF. All of this should provide a firm foundation for anticipating how the personnel component of unit readiness could be affected by broader integration of women, but the basis for evaluating how it might affect unit readiness in other ways or more expansively will likely prove a greater challenge. Thus on the whole, the red team found that the Marine Corps has attempted to understand possible unit readiness impacts as best it can, but that the issue is inherently difficult to quantify.

With respect to cohesion and morale, most red team members agreed that any potential negative effects would be important for Marine Corps leadership to understand. However, many members of the team cautioned that such effects, if anticipated, would not be a universally credible justification for seeking an ETP. Specifically, numerous red team members expressed concern that the Marine Corps not be seen as conducting a mere referendum on the advisability of integration, as the expectation would be that there would likely be at least pockets of resistance. Instead, they cautioned, greater credence should be paid to the research indicating that cohesion is driven by performance rather than the reverse, and therefore that any negative cohesion and morale effects, if observed, could in theory be overcome with the performance that would theoretically result from implementation of appropriate universal standards. Thus some members of the red team preferred that the Marine Corps not even examine the issue.

Other red team members argued that evaluating cohesion and morale was necessary if only to inform education and training that might temper any negative attitudes or expectations. This was acknowledged, but some members continued to express concern that data about cohesion and morale effects could not practically be restricted only to decisions about how integration should proceed without “spilling over” into decisions about whether it should happen.
Thus throughout its deliberations, the red team remained divided about research around this topic.

Despite these reservations, the red team offered some recommendations about research, should it continue to be conducted, in this issue area. Specifically, the red team recommended that the Marine Corps ensure its ongoing research captures variability in group cohesion and morale\textsuperscript{13} that might be associated with leadership, and that leadership be included as a variable in all research associated with future integration. The red team was briefed that the Corps had begun to conduct training and education programs aimed at preventing negative cohesion and morale effects. While this effort was endorsed by all, the red team urged the Marine Corps to continue to conduct analysis to determine the degree to which such programs are proving effective.

Overall, the red team found that the complexity associated with unit outcomes is a major obstacle when trying to understand and isolate the effects of changing a single variable (i.e., gender composition). This may be why existing research in this area is generally sparser than it is for various individual effects. However, the importance of unit-level outcomes for the Marine Corps led them to expand existing research in this area in altogether new ways, an effort that will prove valuable in a number of areas. Similar challenges hold for quantifying any readiness impacts, though again the Marine Corps has made a good faith effort to explore the aspects of readiness most amenable to objective analysis. The red team remained divided on the degree to which information about possible cohesion and morale effects of full integration should be considered in CMC decisions about an ETP, though there was a consensus that negative effects can be overcome and that sustained research by the Corps could provide additional insights into progress on that front as broader integration proceeds.

\textit{Institutional effects of integration}

The final set of issues the red team examined as most relevant to a CMC decision was those relating to the institutional effects of full integration - i.e., those that affect the Marine Corps as a whole. One such issue is the degree to which greater integration might affect the Corps’ ability to continue to attract volunteers to become Marines. Another is the potential cost, financial and otherwise, that might be associated with further integration. While the

\textsuperscript{13}One red team member placed particular emphasis on the importance of treating unit cohesion – defined as the ability to work effectively as a team under all conditions – as a separate phenomenon from morale, though the two are closely related.
team does not believe that cost would likely be acceptable to policymakers as the sole basis upon which an ETP might be justified, it could be one of a number of relevant factors (e.g., if the costs associated with overcoming some large negative effect were perceived to outweigh the expected benefits), and is thus worthy of explicit consideration.

**Accession propensity/recruiting**

The red team recognizes that the CMC is responsible for considering both the current and future force. One key element of that future force rests on the continued ability of the Corps to attract a sufficient number of qualified volunteers going forward. The “propensity” of American youth to become Marines is a function of a number of variables, some of which (e.g., benefits) are more directly under the purview of policymakers than are others (e.g., the overall unemployment rate). The Marine Corps presented a range of research to the red team about how changes in integration policies might affect potential Marines’ decisions to join the Corps, which the team found to be careful and thorough. The Marine Corps also presented research that included questions about whether current Marines might have changed either their previous decisions to join or their recommendations to others about doing so in the future, should integration policies change. (The Corps acknowledged that such questions are perhaps better utilized as indicators of the existence and strength of various attitudes than as predictors of actual behavior.) The red team understands that the Marine Corps is also examining other examples of integration in various contexts, both within and outside the Corps, to understand possible recruiting effects of broader integration of women.

**Costs**

Finally, the red team noted that costs, both one-time (e.g., facility renovations) and recurring (e.g., greater relative expense to identify female recruits) are a relevant factor for the CMC to consider in his ETP decision. While the red team did not feel that cost projections were likely to be a sufficient basis upon which to base an ETP decision, the team acknowledged that costs could, in conjunction with other factors, be an aspect of a broader overall judgment about whether an ETP is warranted.

The red team had access to some research that explored the financial impacts of integration that have been experienced in other organizations or countries’ militaries, though these anal-

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14 One red team member noted that under its equal protection rulings, the U.S. Supreme Court has generally held that cost is not a sufficient reason for exclusion of a group from a particular job.
yses acknowledged that isolating integration-related expenses was often difficult. Further, the red team understands that the Marine Corps has commissioned some modeling to estimate potential costs. Overall, the red team found that more precise cost information associated with integration could be required in the future, but that developing that information will likely require greater specificity about how integration might proceed. As the CMC’s options for how to proceed with integration become more refined (e.g., which specialties, over what timeframe, etc.), the red team recommends that the Marine Corps continue to evolve those modeling efforts to support more detailed cost analyses. The resulting estimates should also include the costs associated with mitigating potential negative effects of integration (e.g., for training to reduce possible problems with cohesion and morale, if they are expected, or to provide additional physical training support to GCE Marines as new standards are put in place^15).

In addition to the seven issues above, the red team explored one more area that it believed could have been important to a CMC ETP decision: that of sexual violence.

Sexual harassment/assault

Some red team members wondered whether opening additional positions to women might affect rates of sexual harassment and/or assault within the Marine Corps, and if so, how the CMC might factor this issue into his decision. While all red team members are concerned about sexual violence within the Corps, not all believed that the issue fell within to the red team’s charter. In the end, the red team agreed that the issue would be specifically relevant to a CMC decision (and thus within the red team’s scope) if the rates of sexual violence could be expected to be significantly different in a newly integrated ground combat element than elsewhere in the Corps.

To further investigate this possibility, a subgroup of red team members asked for additional information about the Marine Corps’ assumptions about how this issue might manifest itself in the GCE should integration proceed. Those members had a phone conversation with the relevant Marine Corps experts to develop a greater understanding of previous analyses, as well as the types and limitations of available data. Based on the information presented, the group concluded that there was insufficient evidence to suggest that integration of women into the

^15 The red team believes that such trainers can make a significant difference in decreasing injury rates and increasing performance for all Marines, which will in turn increase the overall readiness of the force, and that the GCE ITF experiment will help to validate this belief.
GCE would present a specific and unique challenge. They further understood that the Marine Corps appreciates that this *could* be true, however, and that the Corps is enhancing its data collection and data classification procedures to better monitor trends as greater gender integration occurs.

**Summary**

Overall, the red team found that the Marine Corps is reviewing, sponsoring, and conducting a wide range of analysis across all of the issue areas that the team believes are most important to a CMC decision about whether to request an ETP. The rigor of the analyses varies, as does their relevance to the particular circumstances that might be experienced in Marine Corps ground combat units and specialties. The research is strongest with respect to the possible effects on individual Marines, and will represent a substantial step forward in what has to date been objectively understood about unit-level effects, especially on combat effectiveness. The foundation is present to understand institutional-level impacts, and in the area of costs in particular, can be refined as the decision options are clarified further.
II. Research credibility

The red team’s second task was to evaluate the credibility of the Marine Corps’ overall research. In this instance the team concluded that it could not make a definitive judgment because the answer will in large measure depend up how the large volume of available research is synthesized and interpreted. That task was not yet completed when the red team finished its work; indeed, the process by which to accomplish it was unclear.

At its final meeting in May 2015, the red team made a number of specific recommendations about how the Marine Corps could improve upon the plan it presented for synthesizing its research results. The red team encouraged the Marine Corps to rely on independent experts to assess the validity and applicability of each element of information to be included in the synthesis process. The team also suggested that the Corps should ensure that presentation of analytic results relating the potential effects of integration in a given area (for example, in male retention) include not only what the primary effect might be expected to be, but also the net effect that might be expected if additional actions were taken. The red team was concerned, for example, that a given experiment might indicate that Marines of a certain height would likely experience a particular injury rate (the primary effect), and that average height differences among genders might in turn suggest higher injury rates for women than males. That same study, however, might also indicate that the injury rate could be reduced with targeted strength training, or with better-fitting equipment, and thus that the net effect could in fact be reduced.

Beyond those specific suggestions, the red team identified a number of issues that it believes will contribute to overall quality of the CMC’s fall 2015 decision. These include how the Corps chooses to define integration’s success, the degree to which the key factors underpinning the decision (especially if an ETP is requested) align with the principles articulated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the ability of the Marine Corps to clearly communicate the rationale behind any differences in the decisions the CMC makes and those made by other service chiefs with similar specialties. Finally, while related but technically outside its scope, the red team also believes that the Marine Corps’ determinations of ground combat specialties’ standards will be seen as more credible if the Corps can demonstrate that it followed processes to develop them that have already been well established in the context of other professions.

Definition of success
The red team repeatedly discussed the issue of how the Marine Corps might choose to define successful integration. The team observed that many of the research efforts were oriented toward identifying contributors to successful integration, but that there did not appear to be a consistent definition of what that success entailed, e.g., the lack of certain negative outcomes or the presence of positive ones, at the individual or unit levels, or over the short or longer term. CSIS staff provided some background research further indicating the absence of a clear consensus about what success might be across numerous previous analyses.

The red team expects that the CMC’s decisions about an ETP will incorporate judgments about whether “success” in some form can be reasonably achieved, and thus that such a definition (or set of definitions) will be an important foundational element for consideration. The team’s discussions with Marine Corps leadership indicated that one aspect of a definition might (for officers) be an equal opportunity for men and women to compete for command at the lieutenant colonel level. The red team found this objective reasonable, but believes a similar objective should be established for enlisted Marines. The red team encourages the Marine Corps to consider whether other elements of success should be made more explicit as part of a decision process, both for the fall 2015 decision and for any subsequent ones about how to best implement broader integration or reexamine any positions that might remain closed.

Alignment with Joint Chiefs of Staff principles

As discussed above, the red team was not specifically asked to evaluate the Marine Corps’ research plan in the context of the principles for integration outlined in the 2013 Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum. However, many on the red team felt that, should the Marine Corps opt to request an ETP, that request would most likely receive approval if the Corps could show that integration would result in abrogation of or a serious compromise to one or more of the foundational principles: (1) the preservation of unit readiness, cohesion, and morale; (2) the assurance of viable career paths for all service members; (3) maintaining the best quality and most qualified people; (4) the validation of physical and mental occupational performance standards for all military occupational specialties (MOSs), especially those currently closed to females; and (5) the assignment of a “sufficient cadre” of mid-grade or senior women “at the point of introduction [of women into closed positions] to ensure success in the long run.”16

The red team found that the Marine Corps has research relating to possible unit readiness, cohesion and morale effects of full integration, but that this research, as discussed in Chapter II, has some intrinsic limitations. The same is true for research relating to viable career paths: it can inform some projections about possible career trajectories for both men and women should full integration occur, but these estimates are likely to be relatively imprecise. The red team explored aspects of Marine Corps research relevant to maintaining the best quality and most qualified people (e.g., for possible attrition and retention effects), but did not holistically examine this issue set and thus cannot judge the credibility of available analysis in this area. Nor did it specifically examine the totality of the Corps’ research to support development of valid universal standards.

The red team did explore research related to how the Marine Corps might determine what a “sufficient cadre” might be to “ensure [long term] success.” (This principle also helped to spur the red team’s discussions about what success might entail). Red team members asked for more information about the analytic basis for determining what the size or nature of a “sufficient cadre” of more senior women might involve. Here, the red team was not able to identify research that provided clear insights into what cadre requirements might involve. Indeed, the team’s review highlighted a tension between two important research findings: one that suggests minorities in small numbers can be subject to “tokenism” and another that suggests that treating minorities differently than the majority (e.g., through “non-routine” gender-based assignments) can increase tensions and make integration more difficult. Given this divergence, the red team believes that any ETP decision that relies heavily on this principle would face some challenges to its credibility.17

In sum, the red team found that the Marine Corps has a fair amount of research that can inform projections about its ability to implement policies consistent with some, but not all, of the principles articulated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This reality would in theory limit the credibility of an ETP decision based on those principles; conversely, a decision based on other criteria may face credibility challenges simply because those criteria were not initially identified and endorsed by the Joint Chiefs.

17 One red team member further recommended that the Marine Corps should undertake a deliberate examination of whether a single female in an all male unit is at greater risk of harassment, isolation, or non-cooperation, an outcome suggested by civilian experience. Another noted that she found no such evidence in a long Army career of often being the only woman in an all male unit.
Comparative evaluation

Ultimately, the Marine Corps’ decisions about an ETP request and about appropriate standards will be reviewed by policymakers alongside the decisions taken by the other services. Given that reality, the red team has repeatedly emphasized that the Marine Corps should be prepared to present a strong and clear rationale in the event different ETP decisions are taken.

Alignment with Bona Fide Occupational Qualification practices

Finally, the red team believes that some policymakers will find any newly established Marine Corps standards more credible if it is clear that the standards were developed in ways that take into account the well-established and broadly accepted practices employed to support Bona Fide Occupational Qualification (BFOQ) defenses claimed under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Even though those statutes do not apply to uniformed personnel, the red team believes that alignment with research protocols and standards developed in the BFOQ context could go far in legitimating the Marine Corps’ standards development efforts, and conversely, failing to account for those protocols and standards could be a source of concern to some policy- and opinion-makers. At its final meeting, the red team received information clarifying how the Marine Corps and civilian BFOQ processes relate. Some team members believe that the Marine Corps can reap handsome dividends in terms of the credibility of its effort by drawing attention to the fact that BFOQ standards are being taken into account going forward.

Overall, the red team believes that the CMC’s decision about an ETP has the potential to be perceived as broadly credible, subject to a number of conditions: (1) that the limitations of the available research are candidly acknowledged and clearly accounted for; (2) that research results are synthesized in a transparent, logical and comprehensible manner; (3) that additional decision factors derived from relevant expertise and experience are clearly articulated; and (4) that the decision rests on the application of universal, “gender-neutral” standards whose basis is clear and generally consistent with BFOQ analysis. The red team believes that the decision’s credibility will be further enhanced if it is presented to policymakers in ways that make clear the relationship to the principles outlined by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and that articulate the rationale for any differences that might exist with decisions taken by other Service Chiefs for similar occupational specialties.
III. Conclusion

The members of the red team are grateful for the opportunity to review the Marine Corps’ research plan on this important topic. The team was designed to reflect different experiences, expertise, and points of view on the topic of full integration of women into the Corps, and hopes that it successfully leveraged those differences to provide useful feedback that will contribute to the CMC’s ETP decision in fall 2015.

The red team found that the Corps’ research plan was expansive and in some ways unprecedented. The team believes that its results will provide valuable information to the CMC and other Marine Corps leaders, and that the research was sufficient to the maximum extent possible given the degree to which the relevant issues were amenable to objective analysis and the time allotted for analysis. The credibility of that research will ultimately depend on how it is synthesized and used to inform an ETP decision.

Irrespective of the outcome, the red team unanimously believes that further knowledge and insight into this issue will be required. Should an ETP be requested and granted, this would provide the Corps with additional time to better understand some of the unit-level effects that are of great interest but remain relatively poorly understood. If an ETP request is not made, or is requested and denied, then the Corps will have a wide range of opportunities to identify best practices, refine policies, and assess outcomes over longer time periods. The red team understands that the Marine Corps intends to pursue a long term research plan that will continue to examine the implications of physiological differences by gender, and in some other areas as well. The red team fully endorses this objective, as well as the Corps’ ongoing efforts to better understand how best to attract and manage the talented Marines - both men and women - it has had in past, has now, and will have in the future.
Appendix A : Red Team Biographies

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Appendix B: Summary of Red Team Activities

Meeting: August 26-27, 2014
Kickoff meeting: Marine Corps Force Integration Program (MCFIP) Red Team
Red Team attendees: all
Location: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC
Topics/presenters:
  - Introduction to Marine Corps’ MCFIP effort - Headquarters Marine Corps
  - Submarine integration - Vice Admiral, US Navy (Ret)
  - Marine Corps’ integration effort - Marine Corps Force Innovation Office (MCFIO)
  - All services’ integration efforts - Office of the Secretary of Defense
  - Summary of research findings on related organizations’ integration efforts - RAND
  - Integration research plan - Operations Analysis Division (OAD), U.S. Marine Corps
  - Standards - Training and Education Command (TECOM), U.S. Marine Corps

Webinar: October 21, 2014
Overview of literature review and information requests relating to critical mass, integrated training, female attrition, number and types of closed positions, infantry task comparison, readiness metrics, equipment modifications and sexual harassment/violence
Red Team attendees: (b)(6)
Presenters:
  - Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
  - MCFIO

Webinar: October 29, 2014
US Army integration research efforts
Red Team attendees: (b)(6)
Presenters:
  - U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)
  - U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM)

Teleconference: November 18, 2014
Marine Corps research protocols
Red Team attendees: (b)(6)
Presenters:
  - MCFIO
  - OAD

Meeting: December 1, 2014
Second Meeting: Marine Corps Force Integration Program (MCFIP) Red Team
Red Team attendees: all
Location: CSIS, Washington, DC
Topics/Presenters:
  - Long- and short-term research questions - MCFIO
Unit Cohesion/Morale/Combat Effectiveness - OAD/Marine Corps Operational Test and Evaluation Activity (MCOTEA)
Physical Standards- TECOM/MCOTEA/University of Pittsburgh
Recruiting- Marine Corps Recruiting Command/Joint Advertising and Market Research Support (JAMRS)
Other factors of integration- OAD

Teleconference: January 12, 2015
Results of literature review/discussion on definition of successful integration
Red Team attendees: (b) (6)
Presenters:
CSIS

Teleconference: February 12, 2015
Data on sexual harrassment/sexual assault in the Marine Corps
Red Team attendees: (b) (6)
Presenters:
U.S. Marine Corps Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO)

Meeting: March 18-20 and 25-37, 2015
Field visit to Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCE ITF) evaluation
Red Team attendees: (b) (6)
Location: Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Twentynine Palms, CA
Presenters:
Command group, GCE ITF
MCOTEA
OAD
Volunteers, GCE ITF

Meeting: May 19-20, 2015
Final Meeting: Marine Corps Force Integration Program (MCFIP) Red Team
Red Team attendees: all but (b) (6)
Location: CSIS, Washington, DC
Presenters/topics:
GCE standards development research - TECOM
Research integration and synthesis - OAD
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Appendix D

Additional Views on the Report of the Red Team’s Assessment of the Marine Corps Force Integration Plan

In addition to, and separately from, the views of the Red Team of the Marine Corps Force Integration Plan in this report, the undersigned adds the following statement on integration during recruit training.

During the course of its examination, the red team was told that the Marine Corps did not intend to revisit its current policy to segregate recruit training, and, for Marines training on the West Coast, Marine Combat Training. We acknowledge that the Marine Corps’ practice of segregating training early on was endorsed by all of the former Marines that took part in the red team, of both genders; our exposure to different models forms the basis for our concern.

Specifically, we believe that taking longer to expose male and female enlisted Marines to each other could inculcate or reinforce biases. These biases may in turn contribute to some of the challenges to integration observed or experienced today, which may be exacerbated if additional positions are opened. For example, they may increase the hurdles to developing positive morale or unit cohesion, or could manifest themselves in decreased combat effectiveness.

We therefore recommend that the Marine Corps reexamine whether the analytic foundation for its current policy of segregating entry level training remains sound. We further recommend that the Corps analyze whether that model could be a causal factor in any negative impacts on cohesion and morale, performance, or other important outcomes that might be observed.

Respectfully submitted,