I. INTRODUCTION

First, I’d like to introduce myself and my colleague . . .

Q1: *Have you been told anything about why you are here today?*

RAND is a nonprofit research organization that serves as a federally funded research and development center of OSD, the Air Force, and the Army. As part of our work for OSD, we are studying the accession and career progression of minority and female officers. This research is supporting an officer pipeline study being conducted by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the request of Mr. Perry. Our study team has already talked to the headquarters offices responsible for officer management policy in all the services. We are also interviewing officers who have sat on promotion boards to get their views.

Our purpose in talking to you today is to further develop our understanding of the development of officer careers and to get your views on what steps an officer must take to be competitive for promotion to O-5 and O-6. We’re going to be asking you a series of questions about training, assignments, milestones, evaluations, and so forth. While we’ll occasionally ask questions directed at eliciting straightforward pieces of information, most of our questions will try to elicit your opinions and observations of how the process works.

Your participation in this discussion is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may leave. Also, please feel free to not answer any questions that you are uncomfortable with. We will keep
everything you say confidential. We will not keep a list of your names. (X) will be taking notes during our discussion, but will not insert your name into the notes. We will not show the notes to anyone outside of RAND. Our report will include only a general description of the people who participated from all the services and a summary of the discussions from which the identity and views of the participants cannot be inferred. We also ask each of you to commit to keeping today’s discussion confidential. What each of you says should remain in this room.

At the end of our discussion, we will pass out a very short evaluation form. If there are any issues you prefer to discuss with us privately, you can indicate on the form how we can contact you. You should also feel free to call any of us at the number listed on our business card.

Q2: Before we get started, do you have any [further] questions about us, RAND, or the purpose of this discussion or project?

Q3: Please introduce yourself and tell us briefly about your background: college, accession source, rank, occupation/branch and years of service

II. BECOMING AN OFFICER (10)

A. Motivations

Q1: Why do people choose to become officers
Q2: What choices and actions signal career intentions
Q3: Do motivations affect career-related decisions

B. Accessions

Q1: What influence does source of commission have
Q2: Are officers from different commission sources equally prepared for their career
III. FIRST YEARS (15)

A. Failures

Q1: What reasons are there for separation in first year or two: problems in basic school, lack of fit
Q2: What might explain race/gender differences in separation rates during this period

B. Key Events

1. Choice of Occupation

Q1: What factors affect an individual’s choice of occupation
Q2: Does occupational choice affect later career chances
Q3: Are individuals aware of this when they make choice
Q4: How does an officer learn this and influence the assignment
Q5: Are there occupations minorities/women are more likely to choose

2. First Assignment

Q1: How much does one’s first assignment matter
Q2: Are there good/bad assignments
Q3: How does an officer learn this
Q4: How does an officer influence the assignment

IV. BEYOND INITIAL OBLIGATION (15)

A. Decision

Q1: Why are some more likely than others to leave after their initial obligation
Q2: What internal/external pressures act on women at this time
Q3: What’s the constancy of intentions from time of accession
B. Ticket punches

Q1: In the 4–6 years period, what experiences are officers trying to get: command, school, early augmentation
Q2: What assignments are considered good/bad
Q3: How does one learn about the tickets to punch and influence the ability to get them punched

C. Mentors

Q1: How important to have a mentor in first 6–7 years
Q2: Who has/doesn’t have mentors, why
Q3: What do mentors provide: information, access, influence

V. 0-5 AND BEYOND

A. Ideal career track

Q1: What does the ideal career track look like: assignments, commands, school attendance, timing of these factors
Q2: Other "hidden" requirements?
Q3: How do you get information on the ideal career track
Q4: How do you influence the ability to fill boxes

B. Who makes it /who doesn’t make it

Q1: Why might someone choose not to pursue the O-5–O-6 rank
Q2: How easy to juggle career and family
Q3: How early in a career can you identify those who will be COL v. those who won’t make LTC
Q4: What particular factors might directly affect women and minorities at this stage
VI. EVALUATIONS AND BOARDS

A. OERs

Q1: Beyond job performance, how can an officer work to get best possible evaluation: personal relationship with supervisor, background, interests, tastes, cultural, geographic

Q2: How do perceptions/misunderstandings due to race/gender affect evaluation

Q3: What other than job performance affects one’s reputation as an officer: social, volunteer, sports/hobbies, spouse

Q4: Does race/gender affect perceptions and expectations in these areas, positive/negative

Q5: Other important informal rules, in what career segments

B. File

Q1: What can officer do to ensure file is accurate

Q2: How proactive are officers in doing this

C. Perception of board deliberations

Q1: Does race/gender affect promotion chances or chances before other boards

VII. RACE AND GENDER ISSUES

A. Social relations

Q1: Is there social self-segregation

B. Misunderstanding/expectations

Q1: Do misunderstandings arise

Q2: Are their perceptions or expectations that lead the misunderstandings to arise

Q3: Have issues related to sexual/racial harassment affected interactions between males and females
Q4: Does the fear of sexual/racial harassment influence choices made by individuals regarding their military career

C. Superiors’ comfort with race/gender

Q1: Are some superiors/senior rates more comfortable with individuals of a different race and gender

D. Assignments and requirements

Q1: Are some assignment environments more comfortable for those of a different race and gender

Q2: Do some educational/technical requirements and assignments affect perceptions of a person’s authority on the basis of race/gender

E. Does race/gender still matter?

Q1: Does race/gender still matter? Justify your answer in light of the observed differences in promotion and separation