



Base Realignment and Closure

An Opportunity to Reassess DoD's Civilian Education and Training Infrastructure

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To maintain the high quality of its civilian employees, the Department of Defense (DoD) offers opportunities for education, training, and professional development (ET&D) both within and outside the DoD. Many ET&D institutions are located on military bases. Thus, when bases and other infrastructure are reconfigured through the base realignment and closure (BRAC) process, ET&D institutions can experience complementary change, including physical relocation, governance change, or organizational restructuring.

During past BRAC rounds, although there was not necessarily an explicit focus on ET&D infrastructure, base realignment and closure decisions had dramatic effects on ET&D institutions that serve DoD civilians as well as military personnel. Some of these institutions welcomed change; others resisted it. These varying responses raise questions about the degree to which ET&D institutions, their sponsors, and related system-level stakeholders—e.g., the BRAC Commission, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD (P&R))—can or should influence decisions regarding efficiency improvement initiatives such as BRAC.

These issues are especially relevant with a new round of BRAC currently under way. For this round, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) assembled an Education and Training Joint Cross-Service Group, which provided recommendations to the BRAC Commission. However, the group's recommendations focused mainly on military education and training—specifically, flight training, military professional development, and specialized skill training for military personnel. As in previous rounds, civilian education and training has not been an explicit focus of the review.

To shed light on issues relevant to this area, recent RAND research examined the ways in which selected ET&D institutions have been

Key findings:

- Education, training, and professional development (ET&D) advocates in OSD have a system-level view and can help balance considerations of quality and efficiency in decisions about infrastructure change.
- Stakeholders at the system level can set guidelines for the roles institutional leaders and sponsors play in the change process.
- System-level stakeholders can provide visibility for ET&D customers.
- Efficiency improvement efforts initiated at high levels in the DoD can reconfigure ET&D infrastructure and improve support of DoD civilian ET&D missions.

affected by and have responded to past efficiency improvement initiatives such as BRAC. Of particular interest in the current BRAC round are the lessons learned about the ways in which system-level stakeholders can help facilitate the process of change for ET&D institutions that serve DoD civilians. From a policy perspective, system-level stakeholders with purview over multiple ET&D providers, sponsors, and customers are important because of their ability to look across sites and identify goals and objectives that address broad, high-level issues.

Defense Infrastructure Change Poses Challenges for ET&D Institutions

RAND researchers conducted three case studies to examine the effect of the BRAC process on ET&D institutions. Key details of the case studies are summarized in the table.

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Case Studies of BRAC’s Effect on ET&D Institutions

Institution	Year	Proposed Change	Result
Defense Information School (DINFOS)	1991	Relocate school due to recommended closure of two host sites: Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado; and Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana	Three service-run schools at three different locations were consolidated into one institution and relocated to Fort Meade, Maryland
DoD Polygraph Institute (DoDPI)	1995	Relocate after planned closure of host institution, Fort McClellan, Alabama	Institute was relocated to Fort Jackson, South Carolina
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC)	1993	Relocate DLIFLC to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and close host base, Fort Ord, California	Center arranged to stay at original location despite closure of Fort Ord

Although two of these institutions (DLIFLC and DINFOS) serve primarily military members, the experiences of these organizations are also relevant to institutions serving primarily civilian students, because both types of institutions can be located on military bases, offer similar services, and share similar sponsorship structures. The different scenarios faced by the ET&D institutions in the case studies provide a sense of the range of potential challenges and opportunities surrounding proposed infrastructure change.

Relocation. The relocation of a facility offers both a challenge and an opportunity in terms of identifying an appropriate and affordable new site. Problems can arise when decisionmaking authority over the move is not coordinated among multiple sponsors or when adequate preparations are not made to address potential staff turnover and move-related stress.

Remaining after closure of a parent installation. ET&D institutions often require resources that only a large military facility can provide. To remain in a location after the parent institution closes, an institution must be capable of operating without that broad support and/or must find other sources of support, which DLIFLC did in the city of Monterey, California.

New facility construction. Although institutions cannot invite themselves into the BRAC process, institutions and their sponsors that anticipate being affected by the process might consider how to seize opportunities presented by BRAC to benefit the institution and its stakeholders, such as construction of a new state-of-the-art facility that enhances staff’s ability to communicate, collaborate, and produce high-quality work.

Consolidation of institutions. In some cases, infrastructure change can also mean organizational consolidation. Such change provides an opportunity to eliminate redundancy in instruction and governance, but it also poses challenges when different work cultures and work styles must be brought together.

ET&D Institutions, Sponsors, and System-Level Stakeholders Have Varying Degrees of Influence on Infrastructure Change

In past BRAC rounds, decisions about ET&D institutions affected by base closure decisions were influenced by at least five groups of stakeholders:

- the institutions themselves
- the communities in which the institutions are located

- the institutions’ sponsors (e.g., command, resource, functional, policy)
- the institutions’ customers
- system-level stakeholders (e.g., the BRAC Commission, the Secretary of Defense).

Because there was very little formal guidance about the roles of each stakeholder in the decisionmaking process, the degree of involvement and influence of each stakeholder group varied greatly across cases.

During the most recent BRAC round, which was initiated in 1995, executive agents were the only ET&D sponsors with a formal role in determining where an institution should be located if its host installation were closed. The executive agents were typically the resource sponsors (i.e., the funding organizations) of educational institutions. The formal process called on the host organization to coordinate with the institution and its executive agent to identify special considerations or requirements and discuss a preferred new location. Once a location was agreed upon, the recommendation would be included in the Secretary of Defense’s Report to the BRAC Commission, and the host would determine facility requirements and coordinate movement timelines.

During the 1995 BRAC round, no formal role was played by the institution’s leadership or sponsors other than its resource sponsors, although those other stakeholders were indeed able, in most cases, to influence decisions about an institution through informal means. Similarly, the communities in which an institution was located and the institution’s customers were able to participate informally in decisions about ET&D infrastructure. At the system level, the Secretary of Defense and the BRAC Commission played the central roles; however, responsibility for the DoD ET&D system was largely decentralized at the time, and the structure remains essentially the same today.

In past BRAC rounds, recommendations made by the services to the Secretary of Defense that involved ET&D infrastructure were almost always passed on to the BRAC Commission without disagreement. Understandably, the Secretary of Defense and the BRAC Commissioners are focused on the reconfiguration of the larger DoD infrastructure, and they delegate decisions about installation tenants—including ET&D institutions—to stakeholders lower in the decisionmaking hierarchy. The experiences of the ET&D institutions that RAND studied demonstrate the variation

with which institutions and their sponsors are formally or informally able to influence and/or implement infrastructure change.

In some cases, sponsors can exert considerable influence during the change process. For example, DINFOS's resource sponsor, the American Forces Information Service (AFIS), was able to use funding made available through the BRAC process to improve public affairs training through the construction of a newly upgraded and consolidated facility and to move to an improved location near Washington, D.C. Sponsors can also play more indirect roles. DLIFLC's policy and functional sponsor at the time, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence, helped raise awareness of the institution's desire to remain in Monterey and provided analyses showing that moving the Institute to Fort Huachuca, Arizona, would not result in significant cost savings.

Changes at an institution's parent organization can result in governance and administrative changes over which the institution has little control. If a move requires construction of a new facility, an ET&D institution has little chance of securing the needed funding on its own outside BRAC. On the other hand, some institutions have successfully participated in infrastructure change decisions. For example, members of DoDPI staff were involved in the selection of Fort Jackson as the school's new home.

System-Level Stakeholders Can Help Facilitate Decisions About Civilian ET&D Infrastructure and Governance

Despite the variability in experiences of ET&D institutions, the RAND study did not indicate any serious problem with the status quo. However, the study did identify ways in which the decision-making process leading to change might be improved to reduce the possibility of turbulence and yield better outcomes for the ET&D system as a whole. The research identified four powerful contributions that system-level stakeholders such as the BRAC Commission, offices in OSD charged with oversight of civilian ET&D, or OSD-appointed Joint Cross-Service Groups can make to facilitate decisions about ET&D infrastructure.

System-level ET&D advocates can work to balance considerations of quality and efficiency in decisions about ET&D infrastructure. Some ET&D institutions serving the DoD are sponsored by more than one organization. In such cases, responsibility for an institution's funding, policy direction, and curriculum oversight can be split among separate sponsors, thus complicating decisions about infrastructure change. Offices at the system level

such as OUSD (P&R) are uniquely positioned to play a coordinating role between different sponsors with an interest in the same institution. They can facilitate communication, provide guidelines for decisionmaking, and act as arbiters in contentious cases.

Stakeholders at the system level can set guidelines for the roles institutional leaders and sponsors play in the infrastructure change process. There is currently a high degree of variability in the types and extent of stakeholder involvement in decisions about ET&D infrastructure. This variability is due to the limited formal guidelines currently in place, coupled with differences in sponsors' management styles. It might be worthwhile for the USD (P&R) to better specify the roles of institutional leaders and of sponsors other than resource sponsors in the decisionmaking process. For instance, institutions could be formally assigned the responsibility of providing up-to-date and accurate data to sponsors, and functional sponsors could be given the explicit role of anticipating the effects of different options on the quality of ET&D offered.

System-level stakeholders can provide visibility for customers of ET&D who might otherwise be left out of the decision-making process. Customers—both civilian employees and service members who participate in ET&D activities—are a stakeholder group that currently lacks a formal role in BRAC decisionmaking in advance of DoD's presentation of recommendations to the BRAC Commission. Capturing the customer perspective is essential if ET&D demand considerations are to be incorporated in decisions about ET&D infrastructure. Stakeholders at the system level (e.g., joint cross-service groups formed during the BRAC process or a more permanent central authority for DoD civilian ET&D, such as the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy) are positioned to advocate inclusion of customer perspectives in decisionmaking when appropriate.

Efficiency improvement efforts initiated at high levels in the DoD can reconfigure ET&D infrastructure and improve support of ET&D missions. System-level stakeholders are in a position to consider overarching ET&D system needs in the context of BRAC and other efficiency improvement initiatives. The lack of a clear formal role for offices charged with oversight of ET&D may have resulted in missed opportunities during past efforts. As noted above, responsibility for DoD civilian ET&D is currently largely decentralized. However, if established, a system-level ET&D advocate could potentially use DoD-level efforts to eliminate gaps or overlaps in ET&D offerings and enhance the quality and efficiency of the services provided to DoD personnel. ■

This research brief describes work done for the RAND National Defense Research Institute documented in *Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and Organizational Restructuring in the DoD: Implications for Education and Training Infrastructure*, by Dina G. Levy, Joy S. Moini, Tessa Kaganoff, Edward G. Keating, Catherine H. Augustine, Tora K. Bikson, Kristin Leuschner, and Susan M. Gates, MG-153-OSD (available at www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG153), 2004, 123 pages, \$20, ISBN: 0-8330-3557-6. MG-153 is also available from RAND Distribution Services (phone: 310-451-7002; toll free: 877-584-8642; or email: order@rand.org). The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. **RAND®** is a registered trademark.

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