The questions below were asked at the September 2017 Career Development Symposium, San Diego CA.

What is CNP doing to ensure that a diverse workforce is recruited?
Diversity in all of its forms has been a consistent priority for Navy leadership and Navy Recruiting is steadfastly committed to improving diversity due to the advantage it brings to our problem solving ability and ultimately our warfighting capability. Navy’s enlisted force is more ethnically and racially diverse than the general U.S. population. In our officer corps, representation of African Americans, Hispanics and female officers are has been climbing steadily for the last ten years.

Navy Recruiting Command's diversity strategy encompasses the following lines of effort:

1) Affinity Groups - The Navy partners with education-based, Science Technology Engineering & Math (STEM) focused, non-profit organizations that represent several sectors of society (African American, Asia-Pacific Islander, Native American, Latino, and Female). Through those partnerships, the Navy recruits at the national and regional levels via STEM conferences with supported career fairs, speaking engagements and workshops to find the best and brightest individuals from differing backgrounds to serve in the Navy.

2) Navy Visibility Days - Navy Recruiting is hosting exclusive Navy events on university campuses with a diverse student population across the nation. This differs from affinity group engagement because of the critical nature of local relationships between Navy Recruiting Districts and the universities. The goal is to build and sustain long-term relationships directly between the Navy and these universities for long-term success.

3) Navy City Outreach - Navy Recruiting engages America's youth using STEM education to generate awareness about technology and future opportunities that await them in a naval career. Navy currently hosts underwater robotics competitions (Sea Perch) for middle school and high school students in five major metropolitan areas across the nation to support this initiative.

I'd like to know why, if we value diversity, we are adopting gender neutral uniforms. If we value diversity, women shouldn't have to dress like men.

Diversity of race, gender, ethnicity, background and ideas continue to be important to the Navy. Navy's Inclusion and Diversity Strategic Principle, Diverse Workforce: Attract, recruit, develop and retain talent, is one of the cornerstones of our inclusion and diversity strategy. One of the main objectives of Navy regarding its uniforms is to improve appearance form, fit and function. The recent changes in female uniforms are meant to better align and enhance uniformity in appearance between female and male Sailors, which contribute to a more professional look and foster inclusion throughout the ranks. An additional benefit to the design changes included less upfront and long term out-of-pocket costs to the Sailor and for the Navy. Adopting the similar uniform standards in no way takes away from this strategic imperative or diminishes the importance of diversity in the fleet. Per NAVADMIN 236/15, the intent is to end segregation by uniforms and instead foster a climate of inclusion among all sailors.

How to apply these tools in our lives and careers?
Inclusion and diversity are two of Navy's tools to confront the forces we face. Studies have shown that solutions developed by homogenous teams are 30% more risky, while solutions developed by diverse teams are 20% more innovative and 58% more accurate when assessing a
situation. Additionally, gender diverse organizations are 15% more likely to outperform other organizations, while ethnically diverse organizations are 35% more likely to outperform others. CNO's "One Navy Team" states that "actively being inclusive and open to diverse perspectives will produce leaders and teams who learn and adapt to achieve maximum possible performance." It's all of our jobs to embrace Navy's culture of inclusion and leverage the diverse perspectives of everyone on the team in order to see problems and issues from all sides and develop innovative solutions. You can learn more about Inclusion and Diversity tools by visiting the I&D Commander’s Toolkit which can be accessed at http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/organization/bupers/InclusionDiversity/Pages/Commander's-Toolkit.aspx.

With the initiative to keep more women in the Navy, why is it that our leadership always men and even the panel demographics is all men providing perspective from a man and not a woman? or a person of color providing a diverse point of view?

Navy continues to increase female representation in the most senior paygrades but we have room for improvement. We've been steadily recruiting and retaining more women over the past 30 years and gender-restrictive career opportunities, such as service on combatant ships, began to be lifted in the 1990s and were fully abolished in 2016. ADM Michelle Howard became the Navy’s first 4-star admiral and served as our Vice Chief of Naval Operations. Throughout the fleet, women have served in many senior operational roles such – Commander US Naval Forces Europe/Africa, Director of Naval Intelligence, Commander US Third Fleet, etc, which may preclude them from taking place in panels such as this one at the CDS. However, we have tools in place to give all of our senior leaders diverse perspectives, regardless of their race, gender or ethnicity. The CDS is one of the tools. As we continue to move forward, current Navy policies are designed to be inclusive and attract more female and diverse candidates, ultimately resulting in a more diverse leadership team.