R. Philip Deavel, a member of the Senior Executive Service, is Director of the Air Force Review Boards Agency, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Washington, D.C. He is responsible for the management and operations of ten different Secretariat level review boards, eight operating on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, and two operating on behalf of the Defense Department, with a total of 120 assigned military and civilian personnel. The Review Boards Agency provides independent, professional adjudication of individual personnel actions ranging from security clearance appeals to resolution of complaints of employment discrimination. Their fundamental purpose is to ensure a healthy and fair employment environment by providing military members, Air Force military veterans and civilian employees credible administrative forums to resolve their personnel requests, grievances and complaints without resort to federal court litigation or seeking individual relief bills in Congress. These boards include the Air Force Personnel Council, Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records, Air Force Civilian Appellate Review Office, Air Force Personnel Security Appeal Board and the Department of Defense Physical Disability Board of Review. In total, the Air Force Review Boards Agency adjudicated over 12,000 individual military and civilian personnel actions in 2011.

Since 2006, in four different senior executive positions, Mr. Deavel has made consistent, enterprise-wide improvements to the continuity of government through the holistic development of managers and executives. Career civilian employees have a unique and important role in the military departments. They provide the "corporate memory" in organizations with constant turnover of military personnel and expertise in professional business skills from law to financial management. However, the long-term development of civilian employees can present a challenge in departments focused on the profession of arms and the development of the uniformed force. Mr. Deavel has been a key innovator of multiple, enterprise-wide initiatives to improve the long-term effectiveness of the federal government and the Federal workforce. Before 2007, the 400 civilian attorneys in the Department of the Air Force had never had the benefit of a formal career development program. In 2007 Mr. Deavel changed this paradigm by painstakingly negotiating and shepherded through the Air Force corporate structure a single unified, civilian development program covering all civilian professionals in the Office of the General Counsel and Judge Advocate General’s Corps. For the ensuing two years he served as the first Chair of the Air Force Civilian Legal Community Development Council, instituting the first orientation course for all new civilian attorneys joining the Air Force and the first cross-command civilian attorney exchange program. Thanks to his efforts, civilian legal professionals across the Air Force now have a program that actively manages their deliberate development, enriching their individual careers and the quality of legal services for the Air Force.

In 2006 the Department of Defense attempted a radical departure for the management of its civilian workforce by jettisoning the federal general schedule pay and evaluation rules for a performance based system called the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). While NSPS promised greater pay and faster promotions for high performing employees, it also created anxiety for over 100,000 Air Force civilian employees because it took away the iron predictability and security of longevity based pay riases. This new system also created anxiety for supervisors across the Air Force because it created a new obligation to provide civilian employees formal written feedback on their performance during the year that would be directly reflected in salary raise decisions at the end of the year. As the Chief of Dispute Resolution for the Air Force, his office undertook the enterprise-wide responsibility for conducting NSPS introductory training across the Air Force, ultimately overseeing the training for over 30,000 supervisors on the skills required to negotiate NSPS performance plans with their employees. This training focused not on the regulatory requirements of NSPS, but the often more difficult task of professionally providing performance feedback to subordinates that would directly translate into salary decisions, for a workforce with little or no experience with pay for performance personnel systems. As a result of his lean-forward approach to candidly addressing the emotional reactions created by the introduction of a pay for performance system in a government agency, supervisors across the Air Force were far better prepared to transition into NSPS without workforce disruptions.

What Mr. Deavel preached at the enterprise level, he practiced at the organizational level, when in 2007 he was selected by the Air Force General Counsel to serve as the first NSPS Pay Pool Manager for the Office of the General Counsel. He astutely led the Office of General Counsel efforts in the seamless transition of over 60 civilian attorneys from the General Schedule to the NSPS. A fundamental aspect of NSPS was a belief, taken from the personnel rating system of General Electric, that any group of employees, regardless of how elite the organization is in the aggregate, can be stratified based on their performance during a given year, and that it is a management abdication not to make those stratification decisions. His calm and deliberate leadership was visible when as Pay Pool Manager he led six other SES divisions chiefs in the Office of General Counsel in helping them make the difficult performance stratification decisions required by NSPS.

The NSPS experiment lasted four years. It could have had a grievously negative impact on the continuity of government operations in the Air Force if such bold personnel changes had not been managed with skill and empathy for the adaptation required of the workforce. Mr. Deavel was one of the pivotal leaders in the Air Force whose efforts ensured this personnel experiment did not harm that continuity of government.

Since being appointed first as the Chief of Operations and then Executive Director of the Air Force Review Boards, Mr. Deavel has continued to produce great results in the development of managers and executives. Presiding over an eclectic organization of over 120 personnel composed of active duty military members, reservists and civil service personnel he has worked tirelessly to provide his board presidents the resources they require to collectively adjudicate over 12,000 cases a year. He has shown the skill to successfully advocate in the Air Force corporate process for the additional professional staff that was required to fairly and promptly adjudicate cases. The Review Board's telework program is one of the most extensive and successful in the Air Force. He empowers and rewards those subordinate managers who show diligence and creativity. Above all he has an infectious sense of optimism and ability to harness the energy of his workforce by showing them that together they can make government service meaningful and productive.

As both a senior government attorney and senior management executive Mr. Deavel has made tangible and significant contributions to the development of a government workforce that aptly serves the public and ensures continuity of operations through good times and bad.