Brig. Gen. Greg Masiello (left) speaks to participants about his life experiences during AAPI’s video teleconference Nov. 9.

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Naval Aviation employees must continuously engage in personal and professional development to best position themselves for advancement, according to Naval Air System Command (NAVAIR) Assistant Commander for Logistics and Industrial Operations Brig. Gen. Greg Masiello during an Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Development/Advancement Sub-team professional development video conference Nov. 9.

“I am a believer in exercising all options—education, training, rotations—so that when opportunities arise, you are in a position to take them,” he said.

Masiello, the featured speaker at the diversity event, spoke on how his experiences propelled his career in the Marine Corps and at NAVAIR and how attendees can apply those lessons to their professional goals.

Part of his success, Masiello said, stems from a personal philosophy of “perspective, persistence and perseverance.”

“Perspective is about why we do what we do,” he said. “Working in an acquisition
Opportunities come when you are prepared

environment means we don’t normally see firsthand the end product of our work. But always keep in mind the deployed Marine, Sailor and Airman and how and why they use the products we produce,” he said.

Recounting how his 4-year-old daughter woke him up at 3 a.m. to color with her because it was the only time he was home, Masiello advised employees to be aware of life-work balance.

The demands of the job must be weighed against other responsibilities, he cautioned. “There is no model for this,” he said. “Look across the spectrum, reconcile what is important to you and balance.”

Because of the early morning conversation, Masiello said he now tries to adjust his schedule to spend more time with family.

Masiello learned the lesson of persistence, the second point in his philosophy, when he applied to the U.S. Naval Academy. After being denied, he visited with the academy’s leadership and explored other opportunities for admission, including spending a year in preparatory school, and trying out for the soccer and lacrosse teams. “Once I figured out how things worked, I kept coming back,” he said. He graduated from the academy in 1987.

Performance—the third point in his philosophy—matters, he said. “It’s how others judge you and how I judge myself. You are your sharpest critic. You don’t have control over timing of opportunities. What you can control is how well you do your job.”

Growing professionally should be uncomfortable, Masiello advised. “I was quite content when I served as program manager for the Presidential Helicopter Program. In 2006, I was assigned as V-22 program manager (PMA-275). In 2015, [NAVAIR Commander Vice Adm. Paul] Grosklags tapped me for Air 6.0. Every move challenged me. I was successful because I relied on others’ expertise.”

“It should feel similar to sitting in a chair and leaning back to the point you almost fall,” he added. “How else are you going to learn?”

Masiello also shared a Gantt Chart of his résumé and recommended each person create one. “Layout the different types of jobs you’ve held. List your skill sets and review the circumstances of your accomplishments. It’s a tool to assess effort and represents progression to goals. Ask yourself, what is it telling you? Are you on your way to your goals? If not, ask, what opportunities can I presently take advantage of right now to get me there?”

He also encouraged them to read more. “Engage and broaden your mind,” he said.

Event organizer Ian Leong, Naval Mission Planning System Joint Mission Planning System
Framework Project lead and C-130 Mission Planning Environment System Engineer lead, took Masiello’s advice to heart. “We are all busy balancing work and family and he reminded us to slow down, examine what we want and set a plan to get there,” she said. “It was inspiring to hear how he prioritizes tasks and his approach to achieving goals.”

Mike Yu, H-53 Heavy lift Helicopters Program (PMA-261) Advanced Technologies manager, said Masiello’s advice made him think. “How to look at your career using a chart was especially insightful,” he said. “There are so many things that can impact a career. I agree that perseverance and performance are the key drivers of what will take us forward, especially in the acquisition community.”

NAVAIR Master Black Belt Ann Dickens said Masiello’s appointment to the V-22 program office and Air 6.0 underscored the need to network. “It’s not about who you know, but who knows about you,” she said. “If nobody knows what your skills sets are, they won’t see you as a candidate for the position. Then, there’s no opportunity.”

Masiello encouraged the group to not worry about the next step in their careers but to bloom where they are planted. “Somethings you don’t plan but then the opportunities come along. You need to be ready to take advantage of it and you do that by always preparing yourself.”

AAPI is one of several NAVAIR diversity groups focused on the development and advancement of military and civilian employees at NAVAIR.