

Joint EEO Advisory Committee Statement

The Joint Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Advisory Committee is composed of the following five authorized committees: Advisory Committee for African Americans (ACAA); Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee (APAAC); Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD); Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee (FWPAC); and Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee (HEPAC). The EEO Committees work in concert with the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) to contribute to the agency goal of creating "a work environment that provides opportunity for all employees to optimally use their diverse talents in support of NRC's mission and goals." The EEO Advisory Committees contribute to achieving this goal by providing advice and recommendations to the Director, SBCR regarding factors that may impact policies, procedures, and practices related to the selection, promotion, placement, training, upgrading, and career development of NRC employees or selection of applicants for employment.

The agency's commitment to EEO and diversity management goals is clearly stated in the NRC's Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Diversity Management Plan (CDMP). Specifically, NRC will take the necessary steps to "foster a work environment that is free of discrimination and provides opportunities for all employees to optimally use their diverse talents in support of the NRC's mission and goals." We also view the EDO's current effort to include standard EEO and Diversity goals in all offices' operating plans a positive step towards ensuring accountability by the agency's management team for achieving progress. In this regard, the agency should continue to promote a discrimination-free work environment and to practice EEO and diversity management principles when making recruitment, staffing, and placement decisions based on merit.

While progress has been made, especially in the area of minority recruitment for entry level positions at the grade levels GG-5 through GG-12, much remains to be done. NRC's goal is to build a high performing diverse workforce that is reflective of America's diversity at all levels in the organization: entry level, mid-level, supervisory, and senior management level. The EEO Advisory Committees are working with SBCR and HR to help assure that the agency continues to move toward its goals.

However, other challenges remain:

1. The primary challenge facing the agency is to enhance representation of women and minority groups at all grade levels. For fiscal years (FYs) 1999 through 2004, the percentage of women in NRC's workforce dropped from 38% in FY 1999 to 37% in FY 2004. Over the same period, the representation of minorities increased from 22.4 to 25.6 % (FY 2004). The commitment to increase representation in entry level positions should be maintained.

- Representation of minorities in the Senior Executive Service (SES) has not shown significant gains. The data for fiscal years 2000 and 2004 show that, with the exception of an improvement in the representation of white women, there has been no significant change in percentage in minority representation in the SES over this period:

African American	6 to 5 (decrease)
Asian Pacific American	4 to 4
Hispanic	1 to 1
Native American	0 to 1 (increase)
White Women	11 to 15 (increase)

The SES Candidate Development Program provides an excellent opportunity for the NRC to continue to demonstrate its commitment to diversity. However, such a commitment to diversity is not demonstrated by the latest data on advancements to SES and SLS positions. Consistent with the CDMP, we recommend a sustained focus on increasing representation of under represented groups in management, SES, and senior level positions and enhancing representation in feeder groups (Grades GG 13-15) for SES, non-SES management, supervisory, and senior level positions. Succession plans should also include consideration of diversity.

We believe that this situation also stands a better chance of improvement if more qualified women and minorities are hired at mid-levels and provided challenging assignments and exposure to management through rotations.

To support career development, management should stress mentoring relationships between senior staff, managers, and junior staff. It is well established that good advice, sound guidance, coaching and inspiration are keys to staff development at the NRC. Many minority and junior employees would benefit from a positive and enriching mentoring relationship with senior staff and managers. Supervisors should be cognizant and supportive of staff development for employees under their supervision and should continue to place emphasis on this effort by providing minority employees with challenging opportunities. In addition, fast track strategies for retention of minorities and women should include exposure to senior management to facilitate advancement beyond the GG-12 level.

- NRC continues to support diversity in career development activities such as demonstrated in the Leadership Potential Program Class of 2004. This class is composed of 44% minorities, 36% white males and 20% white females. From a total of 25 selections the breakdown of the proportion (44%) of minorities in the LPP is: 24% (6) African Americans, 8% (2) Hispanics, and 12% (3) Asian Americans. Consistent with the CDMP, we recommend a sustained focus on increasing representation of under represented groups in the Leadership Potential Program.
- A gap still exists in the developmental opportunities in the administrative ranks at Headquarters and in the Regions. We appreciate NRC's issuance of a yellow

announcement that provided information regarding developmental opportunities for administrative support staff. We further recommend emphasis on effective utilization of the full workforce be expanded to include increasing advancement opportunities in particular for administrative support personnel.

5. We are still exploring the causes of decreasing performance appraisal ratings for some older employees and are exploring alternatives for addressing this issue.

In conclusion, the EEO committees are encouraged by the efforts made by the agency thus far and we recommend the following road map for success:

- A. Make management accountable, through each individual manager's appraisal, for meeting the agency's outcome measures defined in the CDMP. Managers should consider all employees equally when assigning work to ensure that all groups are provided an equal opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities to receive and perform tasks of increased complexity and responsibility. Consider diversity when identifying highly qualified candidates for assignment to senior positions.
- B. The Commission should identify a time frame goal for meeting the CDMP outcome measures. Show on an annual basis, progress at all levels toward the CDMP demographic goal. Ensure that the hiring of Native Americans is emphasized.
- C. Make a commitment to better support the developmental needs of minority employees with both internal and external training. Aggressively plan for rotations and challenging assignments to expose more women and minorities to management. This will allow high performers to be recognized and accelerated to more responsible positions.
- D. Increase the focus on issues concerning the advancement of administrative staff. Identify clear career paths for administrative personnel.
- E. More fully utilize experienced senior staff and managers in transferring their knowledge and experience to junior staff and particularly to new hires. Involve senior staff in the important work of the agency and utilize them as mentors to transfer valuable knowledge, skills, and experience. Provide incentives for senior staff members with NRC corporate knowledge (expertise and experience) to transfer, through mentoring, their knowledge to junior staff.
- F. Conduct interviews with a sample population of non-supervisory employees over the age of 50 with at least 10 years of service whose performance appraisal scores have deteriorated. The purpose of the interviews with this targeted group and their supervisors will be to determine the causes of the deterioration.
- G. Establish a database, starting with FY 2000, that contains demographic characteristics, i.e., age, length of service, etc., of those selectees included on the "Best Qualified" or "A" candidate lists for competitive promotions. This information could be used by all of the EEO Advisory Committees to more adequately provide advice and assistance to the Commission on matters related to age related EEO matters.