

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Title: Briefing on EEO Program

Docket Number: (not applicable)

Location: Rockville, Maryland

Date: Wednesday, August 15, 2001

Work Order No.: NRC-382

Pages 1-80

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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BRIEFING ON EEO PROGRAMS

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PUBLIC MEETING

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Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North
Rockville, Maryland

Wednesday

August 15, 2001

The Commission met in open session, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., the Honorable RICHARD A. MESERVE, Chairman of the Commission, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- RICHARD A. MESERVE, Chairman of the Commission
- GRETA J. DICUS, Member of the Commission
- JEFFREY S. MERRIFIELD, Member of the Commission
- EDWARD McGAFFIGAN, JR., Member of the Commission

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1 STAFF AND PRESENTERS SEATED AT THE COMMISSION TABLE:
2 ANNETTE L. VIETTI-COOK, Secretary
3 KAREN D. CYR, General Counsel
4 WILLIAM TRAVERS, Executive Director of
5 Operations
6 PATRICIA NORRY, Deputy Executive Director for
7 Managmeent Services
8 IRENE LITTLE, Director, Office of Small
9 Business and Civil Rights
10 PAUL BIRD, Director, Office of Human Resources
11 LUIS REYES, Regional Administrator, Region II
12 BRET LESLIE, Co-Chair, Hispanic Employment
13 Program Advisory Committee
14 SEE-MENG WONG, Asian Pacific American Advisory
15 Committee
16 MICHAEL MARSHALL, Co-Chair, African American
17 Advisory Committee
18 JANE GUNN, Chair, Federal Women's Program
19 Advisory Committee
20 BUCK IBRAHIM, Chair, Committee on Age
21 Discrimination
22 BOBY ABU-EID, Co-Chair, Joint Labor Management
23 EEO Committee
24 DALE YEILDING, National Treasury Employees
25 Union

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(9:30 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Good morning. The Commission meets this morning to hear the current status of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Program. The goals of this program are to foster equal opportunity for all employees, to encourage diversity, and to prohibit discrimination of any kind. These are very important goals. Not only is this the right thing to do, it also serves the Agency's interest in assuring that we get the benefit of all the insights from all of our staff. We look forward to hearing your report on the progress in this area.

Let me turn now to Dr. Travers.

DR. TRAVERS: Thank you, Chairman Meserve. We're glad to be here and we're glad so many of the staff could join us. We are here, of course, to provide you with status on the progress of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Program, as you have just mentioned.

Before we proceed, let me briefly introduce the people at the table and those seated behind me. On my right is Pat Norry, Deputy Executive Director for Management Services; Irene Little, who is the Director of the Office of Small Business and Civil

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1 Rights; Paul Bird, to Irene's right, is the Director
2 of the Office of Human Resources; on my left is Luis
3 Reyes, joining us from Region II, Regional
4 Administrator; and Bret Leslie, who is the Co-Chair of
5 the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee,
6 and he is going to provide a perspective on employee
7 issues.

8 Also participating in the briefing and
9 seated in the first row just behind me, from left to
10 right, is See-Meng Wong, who is a representative of
11 the Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee; Mike
12 Marshall, Co-Chair of the African American Advisory
13 Committee; Jane Gunn, who is the Chair of the Federal
14 Women's Program Advisory Committee; and Buck Ibrahim,
15 who is the Chair of the Committee on Age
16 Discrimination, and Boby Abu-Eid, who is the Co-Chair
17 of the Joint Labor Management EEO Committee. Also
18 joining us is Dale Yeilding, of the National Treasury
19 Employees Union.

20 I'd like to begin with some brief remarks
21 today by highlighting the Agency's strategic plan and
22 the significance we place on EEO and diversity in
23 maintaining the Agency's strategic direction.

24 One of our four corporate management
25 strategies included in the plan is to sustain a high-

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1 performing, diverse workforce. Our efforts to support
2 this strategy include ongoing monitoring of
3 recruitment, hiring and development activities to
4 ensure fairness and equity in these processes.
5 Related activities include increasing our focus on
6 internal communications and on the continued
7 development and accountability of our supervisors and
8 managers.

9 The demographics of our workforce are
10 changing somewhat. In Fiscal Year 1997, women and
11 minorities represented about 46 percent of the total
12 workforce, and 18 percent of the SES management.
13 Today, women and minorities represent slightly more --
14 49 percent of the total workforce, and 22 percent of
15 SES managers. Our focus on enhancing the diversity in
16 our workforce is multi-faceted, but it is directed
17 towards new hires and the development and retention of
18 women and minorities who are already a part of the NRC
19 family.

20 As you know, given our aging workforce, we
21 face a significant overall challenge in assuring that
22 NRC maintains its competency in the years to come.
23 Part of our efforts in meeting this challenge
24 actually, we believe, include an opportunity to
25 increase our diversity. There are certainly many

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1 obstacles to meeting this outcome, but it is the
2 outcome we seek.

3 I mentioned internal communications as an
4 important element in achieving our diversity in EEO
5 goals. There are many aspects of this, but let me
6 mention one example. One area of communications which
7 can impact our diversity goals and which needs
8 improvement, I believe, is the need for candid and
9 timely feedback to employees. Providing feedback
10 during the appraisal process, providing feedback to
11 unsuccessful candidates for promotions, and discussing
12 employee development needs are necessary for mutual
13 understanding of expectations and successful job
14 performance.

15 As managers, I believe we must be
16 accountable for integrating this kind of ongoing
17 dialogue into our routine management practices.
18 Similarly, senior Agency managers must model open
19 communication in order to expect and encourage the
20 same between subordinate management and staff, and
21 really throughout the Agency.

22 Along these lines in preparation for this
23 briefing, I met with each of the EEO Advisory
24 Committee Chairs and with members of the National
25 Treasury Employees Union, to solicit their input

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1 regarding problems, progress and the status of EEO
2 within the Agency. I believe this was a productive
3 effort, and Pat and Irene are going to discuss in more
4 detail in a few moments.

5 Last year, we reported that a separate EEO
6 subelement for evaluating the EEO performance of SES
7 managers had been established, and SES managers were
8 evaluated against this new criterion during the past
9 rating period.

10 Since our last briefing, we have
11 established an EEO subelement for evaluating the EEO
12 performance of all supervisors, and we are taking
13 steps to include this new criterion into non-SES
14 supervisor performance plans for the upcoming Fiscal
15 Year 2002 rating period.

16 In conclusion, I'd like to just mention
17 that we intend to enhance and maintain an open
18 dialogue with the staff, and institutionalize our
19 efforts to foster respect, trust, fairness, and equity
20 in all of our management decisions. Consistent with
21 your direction, we intend to attract and maintain a
22 highly qualified and diverse workforce. It is going to
23 be and continues to be a top priority. Overall, we
24 believe our Agency success in carrying out our safety
25 mission depends upon it.

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1 Now I would like to turn to Pat Norry, who
2 is going to discuss some of the accomplishments and
3 initiatives since our last briefing. Pat?

4 MS. NORRY: Thank you, Bill. Good
5 morning. As Bill said, we have made some progress in
6 enhancing representation of women and minorities
7 throughout the workforce, and we have put in place
8 some strategies that we believe will continue to yield
9 results in this area.

10 One of our greatest challenges is the low
11 number of minorities in the Grade 13 through 15
12 pipeline, or SES supervisory and SLS positions. I'd
13 like to talk about some of the significant efforts.

14 The first initiative is our strategy for
15 filling SES and supervisory positions. Recently, 23
16 employees completed the 18 months training requirement
17 that qualifies them to be SES managers. Fourteen of
18 these graduates have already been placed, and we have
19 now established that this candidate program has been
20 the single source for filling SES positions during the
21 past year. This has resulted in increased diversity
22 in the SES management ranks.

23 We will be establishing soon a new program
24 to make sure that our pipeline for SESers is always
25 there. This new one might be a little more targeted

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1 in specific areas where we know we are going to have
2 openings.

3 The second initiative is the new
4 Leadership Potential Program, for which 42 selections
5 were made in June of this year. The graduates of this
6 program will provide a diverse pool of highly
7 qualified candidates for supervisory positions at the
8 Grade 14 and 15 levels. And I'd just like to note
9 that there is great interest in these candidates in
10 the leadership program, as evidenced by the
11 enthusiastic response that HR received from all
12 offices, from the Commission on down, for rotational
13 opportunities for these candidates. So, I think this
14 program holds great hope.

15 The third strategy is the new NRC Nuclear
16 Safety Intern Program. This is designed to place
17 highly qualified recent college graduates in reactor
18 materials or administrative training and development
19 track. Forty-six entry level employees have been
20 hired, from which those who meet the Intern Program
21 eligibility requirements will be selected. The Intern
22 Program provides an opportunity for selecting from a
23 pool of diverse candidates. Upon completion of the
24 program, these employees will be placed into an NRC

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1 career ladder position, with noncompetitive promotion
2 potential to Grade 13.

3 The fourth strategy relates to recruitment
4 and advancement of minorities within the Agency. Dr.
5 Travers mentioned that we had met with the EEO
6 Advisory Committees in preparation for this meeting.
7 Previously, the Chairpersons of the African American
8 Advisory Committee had discussed with me several
9 issues of concern in the areas of hiring, development
10 and mentoring, so I gathered a group of African
11 American technical and administrative employees
12 together to talk in more detail about what the issues
13 are that they believe may have adverse impact on equal
14 opportunity for African Americans in NRC. I presented
15 these concerns and their recommendations to office
16 Directors and Regional Administrators during the
17 recent Agency Action Review meeting in June.

18 As a result of all this, we are developing
19 an action plan to address many of these issues, most
20 of which apply to all minorities. The plan will
21 include such actions as recruitment strategies,
22 particularly at historical black colleges and
23 universities, to attract highly qualified African
24 American applicants, and other focused recruitment
25 activities which will be focused on Asian Pacific,

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1 Hispanic, and other minorities, which have proven to
2 be highly successful. These include the preview of
3 resumes prior to attending a recruitment event, making
4 on-the-spot job offers, enhanced liaison efforts with
5 targeted universities that provide the greatest
6 potential for identifying highly qualified minority
7 candidates.

8 In my meeting with the African Americans,
9 it was clear that there was a great concern on the
10 part of that group, as well as others, that the
11 pipeline SES positions is not there, and we need to
12 use some of the strategies I mentioned earlier to move
13 people into position to take those jobs when the aging
14 workforce finally does leave.

15 Additionally, the group recommended
16 enhanced awareness of the need for sponsorship and
17 mentoring for African Americans and other employees
18 who seek to obtain career information and guidance.
19 And I would mention, as Bill did, one of the
20 highlights of the discussion was the need for candid
21 early feedback because, if this does not happen, then
22 people have no perceived avenue for how to make their
23 opportunities better, so we need to work on that.

24 For several years now, the NRC has had a
25 facilitated mentoring program which matches new or

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1 junior employees with more experienced senior level
2 employees. The primary goal of this program is to
3 share and transfer corporate knowledge to facilitate
4 career development.

5 Based on input from the Advisory
6 Committees, mentors need to place greater emphasis on
7 proactive efforts to enhance visibility and awareness
8 of available employee talents. In other words, more
9 active involvement is probably what is called for
10 here.

11 One other initiative I want to mention is
12 the continuing oversight efforts of the Executive
13 Resources Board EEO Review Group, a group that's been
14 in existence for quite some time. It is chaired now
15 by Margaret Federline. This group is responsible for
16 ensuring that applicants, including women and
17 minorities, receive fair consideration for supervisory
18 and other management positions at the Grade 15 level
19 and above.

20 With information that they've gathered
21 over the course of these reviews, they have
22 successfully promoted the use of consistent rating
23 factors in vacancy announcements, encouraged increased
24 diversity on rating panels, and identified and shared
25 best practices among the offices and Regions.

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1 The ERBEEO Review Group provides an
2 effective interface with the ERB Staffing and
3 Development Committee, which is the committee I chair
4 that has Office Directors and Regional Administrators
5 on it, by telling us of issues that could adversely
6 affect or impact the hiring and retention of a highly
7 qualified diverse workforce. I agree with Dr. Travers
8 that we are making good progress, but obviously much
9 remains to be done.

10 I will now ask Irene Little to provide the
11 highlights of the progress of the Agency's diversity
12 activities.

13 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Pat. I will
14 highlight some of the progress and accomplishments
15 that we've made during Fiscal Year 2001, and I will
16 address briefly the program emphasis for 2002. But
17 before I do that, I will ask Bret Leslie if he would
18 make a statement on behalf of the EEO Advisory
19 Committees. We worked very closely with them in
20 facilitating progress and coming up with initiatives.
21 Bret?

22 MR. LESLIE: Thank you, Irene. Good
23 morning, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. We
24 appreciate the opportunity to address you today and to
25 share with you some positive actions the Agency has

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1 taken. I will also address the remaining overriding
2 concern of the Equal Employment Opportunity
3 Committees. There appears to be no overall coherent
4 and transparent Agency plan to resolve issues
5 affecting diversity.

6 The five points we raised in the Joint
7 Statement within the Commission Paper reflect a
8 consensus of the committees. These recommendations,
9 which may be expanded upon later by the committee
10 chairs, are not new.

11 We recommend continuation of enhanced
12 recruitment efforts. Second, the Agency should strive
13 to increase representation of minority employees in
14 senior staff, supervisory and management positions.
15 There must be accountability of managers and
16 supervisors in the performance appraisals for equal
17 employment opportunity success. We must continue to
18 provide a "family friendly" workplace. Finally, we
19 must effectively deal with potential loss of corporate
20 knowledge because of retirement of senior staff and
21 managers.

22 As I noted before, these concerns have
23 remained substantially the same over several years.
24 Why these concerns haven't been solved is an obvious
25 question. The staff have taken steps to address the

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1 concerns -- in fact, they have taken many steps to
2 address these concerns. For instance, some of the
3 offices -- and as you heard earlier, the Executive
4 Director of Operations -- are addressing concerns by
5 directly interacting with Equal Employment Opportunity
6 Committees. These efforts and other creative actions
7 by the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights and
8 the Office of Human Resources are positive and must
9 continue.

10 Nevertheless, there appears to be no
11 overall integrated Agency plan to systematically
12 resolve the issues affecting diversity. To explain
13 this point, let me discuss a recent Agency action in
14 the equal employment opportunity area.

15 The Agency undertook a focused recruiting
16 effort in Puerto Rico to address the large
17 underrepresentation of Hispanics at NRC relative to
18 their representation in the Federal workforce and in
19 the national workforce. Staff spent substantial time
20 and effort and extensively coordinated the reactions.
21 Twenty entry level Hispanics have joined or will soon
22 be joining the Agency. This was a success. However,
23 this approach may have also adversely impacted the
24 Agency's capacity to hire a diverse entry level
25 workforce. This is because the Agency has the goal

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1 that 25 percent of all hiring should be at the entry
2 level. The large numbers of entry level Hispanics
3 lessened the Agency's flexibility of hiring a diverse
4 entry level workforce.

5 Moreover, if the Agency continues to focus
6 solely on entry level Hispanics to address
7 underrepresentation, this will lead to a large portion
8 of the Hispanics at NRC being entry level. This will
9 only worsen our concerns of achieving a diverse
10 workforce at all levels.

11 Can that creativity that led to success
12 also be applied to the other 75 percent of the hiring
13 that the NRC conducts? We believe the answer is
14 "yes". Accountability must be one part of the
15 solution in resolving the diversity problems. The
16 Agency has made changes to both the SES and non-SES
17 supervisors and managers performance elements to
18 address EEO issues. We appreciate these necessary
19 changes. However, unless there are clear metrics to
20 judge the overall success of the Equal Employment
21 Opportunity program, both the ability of managers and
22 supervisors to be evaluated fairly against the EEO
23 criterion and their opportunity to succeed will be
24 limited.

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1 Thus, the Agency seems focused on treating
2 the symptoms and not necessarily systematically
3 eliminating the ailment. Any plan procuring the
4 diversity issues must include both near-term and long-
5 term approaches and address recruitment, hiring,
6 retention, and career advancement. Unless there is an
7 overall coherent plan with clear metrics to solve the
8 diversity issues, you will likely only be seeing
9 different faces from the different EEO committees at
10 the table expressing the same concerns.

11 We believe that with your guidance and
12 with the assistance of the EEO committees, the staff
13 can respond to this fundamental challenge. Our hope
14 is that by the time of the next Diversity Day we truly
15 will have a cause to celebrate our Agency's diversity.
16 Thank you.

17 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Bret. We, of
18 course, continue to work with the committees on
19 issues. They bring those to us, and we discuss them,
20 and we will continue to do that.

21 As Dr. Travers mentioned earlier, EEO and
22 diversity play a significant role in maintaining the
23 Agency's strategic direction. It is our collective
24 responsibility, both managers and employees, to ensure
25 that our actions are guided by the Agency's four EEO

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1 guiding principles that are outlined in the
2 Affirmative Employment Plan.

3 Several themes have been touched on this
4 morning, including greater emphasis on management
5 accountability that was touched on by Ms. Norry, Dr.
6 Travers, and Bret Leslie; improved communications
7 throughout the Agency, specifically in feedback to
8 employees in many arenas; and employment and
9 advancement of women and minorities. My remarks will
10 focus on accomplishments supporting the four guiding
11 principles to successfully manage a diverse workforce.

12 Successfully applying these four
13 principles will promote good communication in our
14 interactions with each other, will encourage maximum
15 support for employing and developing a diverse
16 workforce, will help to address EEO issues that arise
17 as quickly as possible, and will foster a work
18 environment of mutual trust, respect, and high
19 productivity.

20 Dr. Travers highlighted the enhanced
21 management accountability through the new subelement
22 for evaluating EEO performance of supervisors and
23 managers. Additionally, about five years ago, a
24 Managing Diversity Process was initiated within the
25 Agency. This process was designed to help managers and

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1 employees understand ways to value and leverage
2 workplace diversity, to enhance individual and
3 organizational performance.

4 This year, we successfully concluded
5 diversity training for employees. We have
6 subsequently worked with several offices to facilitate
7 implementation of follow-up activities that address
8 office-specific issues related to managing a diverse
9 workforce.

10 Specifically, NMSS took an early lead in
11 focusing on identifying and addressing factors that
12 impact staff performance and program operations in a
13 diverse workforce. With contractor support, we are
14 also providing assistance to other offices, including
15 the CIO, ACRS and Region III to date.

16 The Agency has been aggressive in its
17 recruitment efforts to attract and hire highly
18 qualified women and minorities, especially Hispanics.
19 The recruitment schedule was increased from 35 events
20 in Fiscal Year 2000 to 65 events in Fiscal Year 2001,
21 and 49 of those events were targeted for minorities
22 and women.

23 Somewhat as a consequence of those
24 activities, at midyear 63 employees had been hired and
25 an additional 47 are scheduled to enter on duty later

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1 this fiscal year. This has resulted in an overall
2 increase in the number of Hispanic employees, and
3 Hispanic employees now represent 3 percent of the
4 workforce. A year ago, they represented 2 percent of
5 the workforce. Representation of all other groups in
6 the workforce has not been adversely impacted, has
7 remained relatively the same.

8 The use of new recruitment strategies,
9 such as implementation of recruitment bonuses for new
10 hires, development of a new Student Loan Repayment
11 Program, and overall changes in the Agency's
12 recruitment process should enable the Agency to remain
13 competitive in today's job market.

14 I want to briefly share information on the
15 Agency's handling of EEO complaints. We have used,
16 for the past 18 months, an Alternative Dispute
17 Resolution process, or ADR, and that approach is
18 gaining acceptance and is increasingly being used as
19 a preferred option to discuss and resolve EEO issues.

20 The process provides a neutral environment
21 to facilitate discussion and resolution of issues
22 between employees and managers. To date in this fiscal
23 year, 31 employees requested EEO counseling. Of
24 those, 13 requested the use of the Alternative Dispute
25 Resolution process, and five cases were settled.

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1 These settlements were between the employee and the
2 management official. Four employees withdrew their
3 complaints, and in three of the cases, although no
4 settlements were reached, they did not pursue formal
5 complaints.

6 We believe the Alternative Dispute
7 Resolution process is an effective method for
8 resolving allegations of discrimination, and will help
9 to build effective working relationships between
10 managers and employees. To date this fiscal year, 13
11 formal EEO complaints have been filed, compared to 16
12 formal complaints filed in FY 2000.

13 We continue to attribute NRC's relative
14 low level of complaint activity to the effective role
15 that the EEO counselors play in facilitating informal
16 resolution of EEO issues, and the role of the managers
17 in working with the counselors and the ADR process to
18 resolve these issues.

19 The EEO Advisory Committees, as I stated
20 earlier, also play a role in maintaining a
21 discrimination-free work environment. They provide
22 advice and recommendations regarding issues of
23 fairness and equity in the workplace.

24 As Dr. Travers mentioned earlier, the
25 committees recently met with him, Ms. Norry, and

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1 myself, and Paul Bird, and provided input regarding
2 problems, progress, and status of the program. It is
3 our goal to continue to obtain staff input regarding
4 EEO program accomplishments, and to develop action
5 plans to improve overall EEO program objectives.

6 Mr. Leslie has mentioned some of those
7 activities that the EEO Advisory Committees are
8 supporting or are involved in, and they are:
9 continuing the high level of management participation
10 in recruitment activities, enhanced management
11 accountability for successful EEO performance,
12 capturing corporate knowledge of seasoned workers, and
13 continuing support for a family-friendly workplace.

14 The committees were also supportive in
15 encouraging employee focus on special emphasis events
16 and, as a result, management has now approved an
17 annual Diversity Day celebration, the first of which
18 was held on July 12, 2001. This event was coordinated
19 by my office, the Office of Small Business and Civil
20 Rights, but it was supported by numerous managers and
21 employees throughout the Agency. This event was
22 designed to celebrate the nation's broad cultural,
23 ethnic, racial and gender diversity and, based on the
24 overwhelming positive feedback from employees, we
25 believe this event was a smashing success. Our goal

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1 for future events is to maintain the level of program
2 excellence and to enhance management support and staff
3 attendance, especially at the kick-off event. That
4 was somewhat disappointing.

5 Collectively, many strategies for EEO and
6 diversity success have been discussed this morning.
7 We will continue to focus on management accountability
8 in improving internal communication and providing
9 early and effective feedback, and seek an early
10 resolution of EEO issues and allegations through the
11 Alternative Dispute Resolution process and through the
12 informal EEO counseling process. We will continue to
13 strive to enhance the representation of minorities
14 through development of programs and activities and, as
15 a result, change the demographics for the SES
16 supervisory and SLS positions. These are all
17 strategies that are necessary to successfully maintain
18 and manage a diverse workforce. Thank you.

19 MS. NORRY: Thank you, Irene. And now
20 Luis Reyes will discuss Region II's Equal Employment
21 Opportunity Program.

22 MR. REYES: Thanks, Pat. Good morning.
23 I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide the
24 Commission an overview of Region II's Equal Employment
25 Opportunity Program.

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1 Region II fully supports the Agency's EEO
2 and Diversity Policy, and we are proud of our
3 accomplishments in this important area. After a brief
4 summary of Region II's demographic profile, I will
5 discuss the recruitment, staff development,
6 accomplishments and challenges associated with our EEO
7 program.

8 Regarding our demographics, Region II
9 currently has 315 full- and part-time employees.
10 Thirty-one percent of the staff are minorities and 31
11 percent are women. Specifically, we have a
12 composition as follows: 24 percent of the staff is
13 African American; 5 percent of the staff is Hispanic;
14 2.5 percent is Asian Pacific American; we have one
15 employee who is an American Indian; 13 percent are
16 white female, and 56 percent are white male.

17 Since July 2000, Region II has filled 15
18 positions, a third of those which have been at the
19 entry level. The hires include two African American
20 men, one African American woman, one Hispanic man, one
21 Hispanic woman.

22 Recruiting emphasis for Region II has been
23 twofold: attracting and maintaining the skills mix to
24 carry out the Agency's mission, and enhancing the
25 Region's workforce. To this end, we systematically

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1 determine our current and future skill needs and use
2 this information to develop our recruitment approach.

3 Targeting schools and organizations
4 located in our general geographic area improves the
5 job acceptance rates. We have targeted Georgia Tech,
6 Alabama A&M, the University of Puerto Rico, and North
7 Carolina State University. We have developed an
8 effective working relationship with the Society of
9 Hispanic Professional Engineers and the National
10 Society of Black Engineers at the Georgia Tech campus.
11 A direct benefit of these networking efforts has been
12 greater access to a more diverse candidate pool for
13 scientific and engineering positions. Additionally,
14 the summer hire program serves as a bridge to future
15 entry level hiring. Summer hires for this year
16 includes two African American men and one Hispanic
17 man. Job offers were extended to two of the
18 individuals who are in their senior year in college.

19 Region II employees skills matrices to
20 determine employee skills needs. Using these skills
21 matrices, training needs are identified and training
22 is conducted. During the past year, course offerings
23 have included Managing Change -- and this is offered
24 to all employees; a Cable Failures course and a Fire
25 Protection course for technical staff; Customer

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1 Service Excellence for Administrative Staff; and Risk
2 Communications and Communicating with the Public for
3 managers and supervisors.

4 To develop and diversify our potential
5 management pool, we have established several GG-14
6 Team Leader positions in the Division of Reactor
7 Safety. These Team Leaders will participate in Level
8 1 supervisory training and will gain experience in
9 providing oversight to the staff. These positions are
10 posted and filled competitively for a period of two
11 years, and will help to create a larger, well
12 qualified pool of candidates from which selections may
13 be made for future supervisory vacancies.

14 Rotational assignments are used creatively
15 as a significant tool for developing staff. For
16 example, a branch chief from the Region was assigned
17 to assist in a Headquarters project. A woman Team
18 Leader from Region II was rotated to act as the branch
19 chief during his absence. A Hispanic man senior
20 specialist was promoted to the Team Leader position
21 and an African American man was temporarily promoted
22 to the senior specialist position. So, with one
23 opportunity, we developed four different individuals
24 in the Region.

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1 Rotational assignments are used to
2 backfill during planned absences of senior resident
3 inspectors at the power plants. In addition, two
4 secretaries were rotated to the Human Resources Staff
5 for six months, and two administrative support staff
6 backfilled the secretarial positions. To assist in
7 ensuring that rotational assignments are benefitting
8 the individual as well as the Agency, at the close of
9 each rotational assignment either the Regional
10 Administrator, myself, or my Deputy obtains feedback
11 from the participant. Region II also encourages
12 rotations into the Region. During Fiscal Year 2001,
13 we sponsored rotational assignments for an African
14 American woman from the Office of Nuclear Materials
15 Safety and Safeguards and an African American man from
16 the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. Our
17 Director of the Division of Resource Management and
18 Administration was shadowed by a Department of Labor
19 Hispanic woman who was a participant in a DOL
20 development program.

21 In Region II, we strive to reward those
22 employees who exemplify the Agency values of
23 performance, integrity, excellence, service, respect,
24 cooperation, commitment and openness. During the
25 February 2001 Awards Ceremony, 46 employees received

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1 awards: five African Americans, two Asian men, one
2 Hispanic man, eight white women, and 20 white men.

3 In Fiscal Year 2001, ten employees have
4 been selected as Employee of the Month, including
5 seven African American women, one white woman, one
6 African American man, and one white man. During the
7 same period, four African American women, three white
8 women, one Hispanic man, one Native American man, and
9 13 white men received Instant Cash Awards. To further
10 support our appreciation of employee efforts, we
11 present an NRC logo shirt to Employees of the Month
12 and to employees nominated for the Atlanta Federal
13 Executive Board Award. To reinforce noteworthy
14 performance which may not rise to the level of a cash
15 award, I personally present to employees ink pens
16 bearing the logos of "Attitude is Everything" and
17 "Teamwork". This practice has increased camaraderie
18 among the staff, and healthy competition to achieve
19 high performance.

20 Even though we have all these
21 accomplishments, challenges do remain. I am committed
22 to the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and to
23 employing a highly motivated, skilled workforce. The
24 Region II management team has been given the tools to
25 accomplish this, however, we must remain committed to

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1 our goals. As we come close to reaching our hiring
2 goals, we must concentrate on retention and
3 development to ensure that the Region has the proper
4 skills mix while improving workforce diversity. We
5 must continue to devote time and resources to a
6 successful recruitment, development, and retention
7 program. Most importantly, we must emphasize that
8 diversity is not a separate, distinct goal, but an
9 integral part of our overall management mandate. Our
10 challenge lies in providing the work environment
11 necessary to help all employees feel valued as
12 contributing, worthwhile members of our organization.
13 By meeting regularly and encouraging open dialogue, we
14 in Region II attempt to identify any workforce
15 concerns at an early stage and address impediments to
16 our success. Thank you.

17 DR. TRAVERS: Mr. Chairman, that concludes
18 staff's presentation this morning.

19 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I'd like to thank you
20 all for a very helpful presentation. Although we
21 clearly have important challenges ahead of us, it is
22 also clear that we have made some great progress.

23 Let me turn to my colleagues for
24 questions. First, Commissioner McGaffigan.

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1 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Mr. Chairman,
2 does the other group speak now, or do they speak at
3 the end?

4 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: At the end.

5 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Why don't I
6 pursue one issue with the staff that Mr. Leslie
7 raised. We have the success in the recruiting, it's
8 documented in the back of the paper in some of the
9 statistics, but he points out we have this 25 percent
10 goal for entry level hires, and if we fill the goal
11 largely with Hispanics, 25 percent of the people that
12 we hire will be entry level, then that could have
13 adverse effects on other folks. How do we deal with
14 that? We don't want smashing success in one area to
15 sort of stunt success elsewhere, so --

16 DR. TRAVERS: I agree, and it may be a bit
17 of a miscommunication or a misunderstanding that's
18 developed. We have not been achieving great success
19 in meeting what I will call the minimum goal of 25
20 percent entry level hiring, but we have redoubled our
21 efforts to achieve better in that realm. I wouldn't
22 look on it as a cap, however, that you could look on
23 as potentially affecting our efforts at minority
24 hiring in other areas.

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1 I think I heard Luis mention that fully a
2 third of his hires in Region II, for example, recently
3 have been entry level. So the way to look at the goal
4 that I had something to do with establishing is in the
5 face of an aging workforce, in the face of not having
6 substantial success recently in attracting new entry
7 level people, we have redoubled efforts, and it is not
8 meant to offset progress in other areas.

9 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: That's an
10 important clarification. The goal is at least 25
11 percent entry level because before we were not getting
12 very many at all, and the offices tended to want to
13 hire people who were fairly senior, who could hit the
14 ground running and replace somebody instantaneously,
15 and now we are investing in younger people who
16 hopefully we are going to be able to retain and grow
17 with the Agency. So, the goal is at least 25 percent.

18 DR. TRAVERS: Right. We do still
19 recognize the need, though, in instances to hire
20 experienced people, and it's actually emphasized in
21 some respect by -- the aging workforce puts you in a
22 number of dilemmas, one of which is as real
23 experienced people leave, you are going to have to,
24 from time to time to -- you won't have the luxury at

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1 the time, in some instances at least, to grow your own
2 in that respect.

3 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: In the coming
4 years, it may be, depending on how budgets go -- you
5 know, our budget has been approved for the coming year
6 with a \$10 million increase, and we're going to have
7 an opportunity to hire -- for the first time in some
8 years, to grow the workforce. At the same time, we
9 have a large number of people eligible to retire, as
10 GAO points out -- we already knew -- and more in the
11 future years.

12 So, it strikes me -- well, let me ask a
13 question. How do you see the total number of hires
14 being in Fiscal Year 2002? Do we have -- if the
15 budget comes out as it's been approved by both Houses
16 at the moment, with minor glitches between them, and
17 if we have whatever projected retirement rate you
18 assume, and the attrition rate in the workforce, how
19 many new people might we be hiring next year?

20 MR. BIRD: My estimate on that is
21 somewhere in the range of 150 to 175. That would
22 include people that we are projecting to retire
23 basically the remainder of this year as well as the
24 beginning of next year.

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1 MS. NORRY: Is that the number of
2 retirements or hires?

3 MR. BIRD: That would be the number of
4 hires.

5 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: That's my
6 question. So that's more than 5 percent of the
7 workforce. It could be 6 percent of the workforce.

8 MR. BIRD: That would be about right in
9 our estimate that would leave the Agency both through
10 retirement and --

11 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: And that's a
12 fairly extraordinary change from when I arrived here
13 in '96 and '97 when we were constantly downsizing and
14 whatever. Do you recall off the top of your head the
15 number of new hires, say, in '96 or '97, or wherever
16 the low point was?

17 MR. BIRD: Just happen to have that right
18 in front of me. We didn't practice this.

19 (Laughter.)

20 MR. BIRD: In '97, we hired 109 new
21 employees; in '98, 116; in '99, 102; in 2000, that
22 went to 161; and so far this year, as of July 31st,
23 we've hired 120. So we are on a pace this year to be
24 similar to last year. And I would think that we would
25 probably be in a position to hire because, one, the

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1 ceiling is fairly stable, and we know we are going to
2 get some growth in retirements, more in the next year
3 than we would this year, and that's why my estimate is
4 around 175, on a steady pace of replacement. And, as
5 Bill said, while we're targeting 25 percent at entry
6 level, that's not all meant to be restrictive. We're
7 trying to draw the balance with the offices, and the
8 offices are working very successfully with us to try
9 to not have so many entry people that we can't invest
10 the time that it takes to develop entry people. And
11 so there's a balance to be drawn there.

12 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: With regard to
13 the one program that was mentioned, I think, by Irene
14 in passing, the Education Payback Program, is that in
15 effect at this point, or about to be in effect?

16 MR. BIRD: No, we just recently got --
17 OPM, for accepted service agencies, just recently
18 promulgated their regulations. We have a manual,
19 directive, in the process of review that should be in
20 place by the beginning of the next fiscal year. We
21 have money in the budget that would support that, if
22 the Commission supports the budget as it stands today,
23 and so we would be in the business next fiscal year of
24 actually administering a program of student loan
25 repayment.

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1 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: As of October
2 1st?

3 MR. BIRD: We should have the mechanisms
4 in place by then to be able to start the program, we
5 believe.

6 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: That could be
7 especially for minority or poorer students -- I was
8 once one -- an attractive recruitment tool.

9 MR. BIRD: Absolutely.

10 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Mr. Leslie, you
11 mentioned the notion of having a more detailed plan
12 with clear metrics. Can you elaborate on -- these
13 folks feel that they have at least some plans, maybe
14 not totally understood plans -- you know, this 25
15 percent thing we started with. What do you have in
16 mind that goes beyond what is currently the document
17 that we get from folks, and what sort of metrics do
18 you have in mind?

19 MR. LESLIE: I phrased it "apparent", and
20 this may be a problem of communications, that these
21 metrics already exist and, as Ms. Norry indicated,
22 they are in the process of developing a more focused
23 plan and, you know, I guess we're somewhat unaware of
24 that. Some of the groups obviously know about it, but
25 I guess if we knew a better picture of where all the

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1 pieces fit together, and I think there's a lot of
2 efforts ongoing, but where the pieces fit together, I
3 think we could see that the path is going forward.

4 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Some parts of
5 this, like the improved mentoring that I think both
6 Ms. Norry and Ms. Little talked about, I'm not -- you
7 know, you can come up with metrics like number of
8 times mentor meets with mentoree, or something, but
9 that may not be -- you know, the quality of the thing.
10 So, I'm just searching. There's clearly a commitment
11 to try to do better in the development area, but if
12 there were metrics that made sense -- I think in
13 recruitment we're going to get there. It's very
14 visible recruitment, and we have opportunities as we
15 just discussed -- 175 people -- and I think that's
16 going to be the trend in the following years. I mean,
17 if advanced reactors actually occur, it could be
18 larger in 2003. But in the development area, it isn't
19 as clear what the metrics -- I mean, what the metrics
20 should be for how to help development.

21 MS. NORRY: With respect to specifics that
22 were listed under the EEO subelement in the SES
23 managers contract, we did not put in things like
24 numbers of people hired, or numbers of training
25 opportunity, simply because that would really vary

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1 depending on the circumstance. However, it's real
2 clear in there the areas that we expect to be
3 addressed by each SES manager as they are given the
4 opportunity, which includes hiring where that's
5 appropriate, training, managing well a diverse
6 workforce, being available to participate in
7 recruitment activities where that is required, working
8 on retention of minorities. So, we listed all of
9 these with the expectation that it would be -- all of
10 these areas need to be addressed in the evaluation,
11 and we'll be doing the same thing for non-SES
12 supervisors and managers.

13 DR. TRAVERS: One of the things that
14 resonated in some of the discussions we had, or at
15 least that I participated in with the Advisory
16 Committees, was that all employees, including those
17 that are represented by the Advisory Committees, are
18 interested in having opportunities demonstrating their
19 wares, if you will, and those opportunities aren't
20 limited, but include opportunities for rotational
21 assignments and training and that sort of thing. So,
22 I think that there is some opportunity to look across
23 NRC and see whether or not we, in fact, are providing
24 some reasonable set of opportunities -- and
25 opportunities, of course, cut both ways. You either

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1 demonstrate your wares, or you demonstrate that you
2 don't have those wares. And the positive there,
3 though, to me, is you have the opportunity for
4 feedback in areas where you need to improve or develop
5 further, and then to get that sort of developmental
6 assistance. So, I think it's a win-win in the context
7 of opportunity. Opportunity seems to me have been the
8 thing that resonates across all the committees -- in
9 fact, all employees of the Agency.

10 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: This will be my
11 last comment. Just based on my own career, you sort
12 of have to seize the opportunities. I would have been
13 horrible for the personnel system here. When I was in
14 the State Department, aside from my first assignment
15 which I won through a competition out of the initial
16 Foreign Service class, I never got another assignment
17 through the personnel system. I got all of my further
18 assignments through direct contact with potential
19 bosses, and worked outside the system. And then I
20 left the State Department before they could get even
21 with me.

22 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Sounds like you're
23 proud of it.

24 (Laughter.)

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1 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: And so, you
2 know, I think you have to seize opportunities and make
3 them yourself, to some degree. That may not be what
4 your mentors tell you, but that's what I would tell
5 you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you.
7 Commissioner Merrifield.

8 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
9 Chairman. A couple of initial comments I want to make
10 to Irene. I unfortunately had a -- we had some
11 differences in the scheduling of Diversity Day
12 celebration, and I had a prescheduled conflict and
13 agreed to let it go forward despite the fact I
14 wouldn't be there, but I just wanted to make it clear
15 for the record that it was unfortunate I wasn't able
16 to participate. Had I been in the greater D.C. area,
17 I would have.

18 MS. LITTLE: You're excused this time,
19 sir.

20 (Laughter.)

21 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Commissioner
22 Merrifield, I should indicate as well, in my opening
23 statement I acknowledged that you had wanted to be
24 there, and you had spoken to me about this, you had

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1 wanted to be there but a prior commitment prevented
2 you from being there.

3 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: I appreciate
4 that.

5 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: You missed the
6 Chairman and Commissioner Dicus dancing.

7 COMMISSIONER DICUS: We weren't going to
8 talk about that.

9 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: I stayed firmly
10 in my seat because I had a broken bone in my foot at
11 the time, and I managed to avoid the dancing and
12 embarrassing myself.

13 COMMISSIONER DICUS: He also missed Carl
14 Papparilla dancing, who I think needs dancing lessons.

15 (Laughter.)

16 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Well, I suppose
17 diversity should include bad dancing. Anyway, that's
18 my first comment.

19 COMMISSIONER DICUS: You've lost your
20 train of thought, haven't you?

21 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Yes, sort of.

22 (Laughter.)

23 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: The second
24 comment I would make would be directed towards Luis
25 Reyes. We are going to lend you to our former sister

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1 agency, Department of Energy. We are going to lend
2 you to them for three months, and I, at least for my
3 part, fully expect that you'll be reporting back will
4 not lend to increasing the diversity at DOE.

5 MR. REYES: You and my wife both.

6 (Laughter.)

7 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Well, she
8 obviously is much more important than I am in that
9 regard, but I'm fully supportive of her efforts in
10 that respect. I wish you well and hope you can
11 provide a lot of good instruction to them as, in many
12 cases, they need it but, nonetheless, we want you to
13 come back.

14 I want to go back to Irene Little. I want
15 to compliment on activities associated with ADR. As
16 I may have mentioned previously, I'm a big fan of ADR.
17 If we can get lawyers out of the system sometimes,
18 that generally seems to improve things.

19 There were some instances in which those
20 who went through that may or may not have filed formal
21 complaints afterwards. There were some in which
22 people went through it and they decided not to file
23 complaints. Given those options, are we getting the
24 full benefit out of ADR that we think, and are there

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1 some further lessons we can take, or are we in the
2 right place, do you think?

3 MS. LITTLE: I think that we are where we
4 want to be based on 18 months of operation. We do ask
5 the participants to give us an evaluation of their
6 experience and, by and large, those evaluations have
7 been positive. A majority of those who have gone
8 through ADR have settled. There have been a couple
9 that -- one person withdrew before -- it was planned,
10 withdrew before the date and did not go through with
11 it for various reasons.

12 There was one complainant who had asked
13 for ADR, and prior to the date of ADR the manager
14 called our office and said, "Do you mind if I sit down
15 and talk to the person without the mediator?" And we
16 said, "By all means". So they resolved the complaint
17 without going through the formal process and paying
18 the money.

19 We've had only a couple out of the 13 or
20 so ADR where the employees filed a formal complaint
21 after going through ADR. So, we think that's a good
22 track record.

23 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: We have -- I had
24 an occasion -- and I mentioned this to Irene so it
25 shouldn't be a surprise to her -- I had an occasion

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1 recently to visit with Congressman Benny Thompson of
2 Mississippi, who during our time together inquired
3 about our activities relative to historically black
4 colleges and universities, and what we could be doing
5 in that respect. Now, obviously, he'd like to have us
6 come down and go to the colleges and universities in
7 his district, but obviously we want to make sure we're
8 having a wide range in that respect.

9 Can you go into a little bit more detail
10 about some of the activities we have in that area, and
11 how we are planning on going forward with that in the
12 future?

13 MS. LITTLE: We have two initiatives with
14 historical black colleges. One that we did not report
15 on in the paper is we have a program where we fund the
16 participation by students and faculty at historical
17 black colleges to participate in research that is
18 ongoing at DOE labs on NRC-type projects.

19 We have, I believe, about \$250,000 set
20 aside this fiscal year, and maybe it's going up a
21 little bit next fiscal year, where we fund these
22 students to participate in this research so that they
23 can develop the capability and hopefully major in
24 science and engineering and eventually come and work
25 for us. That is one of the things we have.

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1 And the other one that we're developing as
2 a result of Ms. Norry's meeting with the African
3 American group, where we're trying to now establish a
4 closer liaison with some of the historical black
5 colleges for recruitment purposes.

6 As we talked earlier, one or two of those
7 colleges are in the Congressman's district, and we are
8 working with HR to determine if that's a college where
9 we can get some payoff and recruitment benefits.

10 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: As you were
11 answering the question, it struck me, in terms of the
12 grant program, we work through the Department of
13 Energy in concert with them, and we have our own lab,
14 albeit a private one -- the Center for Nuclear Waste
15 Regulatory Analysis -- and I wonder if there's ever
16 been consideration whether we might be able to somehow
17 direct some of our money through that entity for
18 similar purposes because we have, obviously, a very
19 close direct tie-in with the Center. You don't need
20 to answer that, I just -- it may be something
21 worthwhile to look at.

22 MS. LITTLE: I'm sorry, I didn't get the
23 name of the lab.

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1 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: It's the Center
2 for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analysis, it's part of
3 the Southwest Center in San Antonio, Texas.

4 Mr. Bird, you reported in terms of the
5 fact we have gone from 35 to 65 universities and
6 colleges that we are going to be recruiting at, from
7 last year to this year we've gone from 35 to 65. And
8 49 of that 65 were targeted toward minorities and
9 women. What are our plans going forward in that
10 respect? Is that the right number? Do we need to --
11 where are we going to go?

12 MR. BIRD: Quite frankly, we believe that
13 was perhaps too ambitious, too many whistle stops and
14 not enough investment in some of those stops, so for
15 this coming year we are planning 43 events, which is
16 somewhere in the middle of those two, and that is a
17 mix of minority schools, HBCUs and so forth, and the
18 traditional places where we do visit, such as Penn
19 State, N.C. State, and Georgia Tech, and so forth.

20 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Part of that
21 effort -- given the success of the efforts in Puerto
22 Rico, will part of that effort include efforts to
23 replicate along the lines of what we did in Puerto
24 Rico, and try to in other areas where we have
25 underrepresentation?

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1 MR. BIRD: Yes. We can't do that in every
2 case because of the investment that it takes to do it,
3 but right now we are targeting, in fact, two HCBU
4 schools for that purpose. We are planning a visit
5 back to the University of Puerto Rico, and I believe
6 Luis may be true to his commitment to leave DOE just
7 momentarily to help us with that event. And we've
8 been talking about the potential for some targeted
9 event, perhaps on the West Coast, associated with
10 Asian Pacific. We have not tied that down yet because
11 of the nature of the proximity of our offices to the
12 West Coast, but certainly those are very focused
13 events that involve a lot of senior management
14 activity, a lot of front-end work, the early
15 development of resumes, the potential to go down with
16 on-the-spot offers, and so forth. So, we're not doing
17 that 43 times.

18 Some of the events are job fairs, and we
19 try to go to the schools that have been good
20 recruitment sources. We do meet with the minority
21 groups at those schools, in conjunction with those
22 events. And we'll continue to do that, but we're
23 certainly not as ambitious as we were in the previous
24 year in trying to make 60-some visits.

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1 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Dr. Travers, one
2 of the issues that we have been focusing on as a
3 Commission over the course of the last year is the
4 possibility of new reactor orders or restarts, and
5 have been enhancing our abilities to deal with that if
6 it does raise itself.

7 To that extent, since we will be again re-
8 entering areas in which our skills are not as vibrant
9 as they once were, have we done as much as we can to
10 tap into our more seasoned workforce who may have
11 worked on new reactor orders and restart-like issues
12 in the past, who we perhaps haven't fully utilized in
13 our workforce today?

14 DR. TRAVERS: I want to make sure I
15 understand, are you talking about people who have left
16 or are still with the Agency?

17 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Who are still
18 with this Agency.

19 DR. TRAVERS: I think we can always do
20 better. In fact, one of the concerns that has been
21 raised from time to time by the Advisory Committee on
22 Age Discrimination is the value of this very resource
23 that you've pointed out, Commissioner, and one of the
24 things that we are doing to see if we can't bridge the
25 gap that potentially is -- well, maybe more than

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1 potential, we will be facing -- is to see if we can't
2 hire people in enough advance to give us an
3 opportunity to use these resources that we have of
4 older NRC employees to help bring these younger people
5 up-to-speed.

6 And so we're looking at an initiative that
7 would enhance that, and it would include over-hiring
8 in some instances where we know, for example, that a
9 particular employee is intending to leave the Agency.
10 So, that's one element of the question, but to answer
11 your question more broadly, I'd say we can do more,
12 and probably should do more, to tap into that
13 resource.

14 MS. NORRY: The other related initiative
15 that will help in that is the one that HR is
16 conducting over the next several years, and that is
17 the identification of core competencies across the
18 Agency. We will have -- when that is concluded, and
19 we've already started it with certain targeted
20 branches throughout all the Program Offices, we will
21 have a really good knowledge of all of the
22 competencies in the various technical disciplines that
23 we need in the future.

24 MR. REYES: Commissioner, if I could add,
25 at least from an office perspective, because there's

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1 a potential that there's one of the units that could
2 restart in the future, and some of the early site
3 permit applications seems to be included in the
4 geographical area of Region II, we have taken what Pat
5 mentioned, identified individuals who had some
6 construction pre-op and start-up experience, and
7 assumed that those individuals will go to those kind
8 of activities, and then taking a look at what skills
9 we need to fill behind them to make sure we can do
10 that transition, and we are doing that with the
11 recruitment. In other words, an individual has a lot
12 of pre-op and start-up experience, but he currently,
13 or she currently, are doing mechanical engineer kind
14 of inspections, and we are hiring a mechanical
15 engineer on the assumption that that individual would
16 go to the new licenses and new facilities, and we are
17 using this interval time to try to educate them on the
18 more routine, and that will bridge that gap. So there
19 is some effort going on in the offices that perhaps we
20 haven't all put together in a plan document. There is
21 a lot of forward thinking going on, and the same thing
22 with the summer hires.

23 When we go for summer hires, we look at
24 their skills -- mechanical engineers, electrical
25 engineers and power systems, chemical engineers -- it

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1 is the same anticipation that they are going to come
2 and work for us, we're going to give them job offers,
3 and they are going to fill behind a skill that is
4 going to be a move to a new reactor or maybe
5 retirement in the near future.

6 So, I know at the office level, the line
7 management is doing a lot of that forward-looking
8 thinking into the incoming skills and the potential
9 diversion of skill for new work.

10 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: I appreciate
11 those answers. Part of what I was trying to get at
12 with that question -- and I leave this with you, I
13 don't want you to answer it because I've got another
14 question I want to ask Mr. Leslie -- and that is, this
15 may present us an opportunity for individuals in that
16 cohort who have been here and who are seasoned and who
17 have worked on those issues, have further
18 possibilities for advancement. So, I would sort of
19 implore the staff, as we are looking at staffing up
20 those offices, that that possibility at least be
21 reviewed as well.

22 DR. TRAVERS: Just a quick answer. Some
23 SL positions are opening in certain technical
24 expertise that do provide -- as opposed to management
25 positions -- senior technical level. I'll stop there.

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1 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Thank you. Mr.
2 Leslie, one of the issues that I wanted to go into a
3 little bit more and get your sense, in the briefing
4 that we received from the staff, one of the notes was
5 that there were 23 employees that competed and were
6 selected for positions that offer upper mobility in
7 the form of promotions or lateral reassignments to
8 para-professional and professional positions. That
9 has, again, been an area in which there has been
10 concerns raised by the Advisory Committees, making
11 sure that we are enhancing opportunities for people
12 who are already here to move up.

13 What is your reaction to that statistic,
14 and are we making progress in that area?

15 MR. LESLIE: I'm not sure I can answer
16 that for all the people, so I will give you my
17 personal answer, which is I think it is a good thing.
18 I think there has been progress in certain areas, and
19 that's one of the areas in which we are seeing
20 positive movement, but I really can't answer for all
21 of the committees on whether they view it the same
22 way.

23 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman.

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1 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. At our last
2 EEO briefing, we had a lot of discussion about the
3 importance of establishing connections throughout the
4 Agency, and we had a lot of emphasis on the problems
5 of having rotational opportunities. And we haven't
6 had as much discussion -- Commissioner McGaffigan did
7 touch on them.

8 Coming out of the SRM from that briefing,
9 we had a discussion about having a contract that would
10 be in place in order to facilitate rotational
11 assignments by having some backfill opportunities and
12 so forth.

13 How is that working? Is the fact we
14 haven't discussed that as much here today a reflection
15 that this is diminished as an issue? What is your
16 sense?

17 MR. BIRD: I think I can speak to that.
18 That contract is now in a bid process. It will
19 basically set up a foundation of a private sector temp
20 contractor who could come in and do work for the
21 Agency to relieve people who might not otherwise be
22 able to do rotational assignments. That will be
23 funded by offices, that is not a centrally funded
24 contract. However, offices that would want to do

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1 rotations or support rotations could tap into that.
2 So, that's working on its own.

3 I think -- and this is my personal opinion
4 with regard to rotational assignments with both the
5 SES candidate development program and particularly
6 through the Leadership Development Program -- the
7 Agency managers and supervisors have truly embraced
8 the concept of rotational assignments as a means of
9 helping people grow into better employees, better
10 managers, and to get experience which really shows the
11 potential that they may have for advanced assignments,
12 supervisory assignments, and so forth.

13 I believe there has been a better effort
14 to try to do that. I don't have statistics on that
15 specifically, but my own perception is that is working
16 fairly well, and we haven't had a lot of -- that have
17 come to my attention -- discussions related to people
18 who aren't being allowed to do rotational assignments
19 in a timely way. And, again, I'm speaking from my own
20 experience, so I'm not sure I have --

21 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Mr. Leslie, do you have
22 a perception on this issue?

23 MR. LESLIE: Again, this would be the
24 perception of the Hispanic Committee and not
25 necessarily the Joint Committee, but we do see that as

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1 a positive step forward, that there are these higher
2 visibility positions, rotational assignments becoming
3 available and being filled by minorities.

4 MS. LITTLE: If I could make one comment,
5 I think what we are seeing improvement in is that
6 minorities and women are given a fair opportunity,
7 there is no balance in that. I agree with Paul that
8 there is some improvement there. It's still a
9 challenge for managers to permit key people to rotate.
10 That is a challenge, and we still hear that from some
11 employees that are attempting to do that, but that is
12 something that has to be worked out in individual
13 situations because if a person is in a key job, it has
14 to be worked through, and there is a timing mechanism
15 there. But I think there is improvement in that
16 you're not seeing the very low numbers of minorities
17 on rotation and high numbers in other areas. There is
18 some balance there.

19 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: But I want to
20 understand, it could be getting better with a contract
21 in place, which is now out for bid, that should
22 facilitate this.

23 MR. BIRD: That will relate mostly to
24 clerical employees.

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1 MS. NORRY: With respect to rotations in
2 general, I think it's important to note that we are
3 making progress in -- and this starts with the
4 committee that Margaret Federline chairs --
5 identifying areas where people who apply for positions
6 and are consistently not able, or not being chosen
7 because of a lack of a certain opportunity for
8 experience, those are now being identified, and that
9 feedback goes back to offices in terms of needing to
10 provide that kind of rotational opportunity. So,
11 we're making progress that way, too.

12 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I noticed in the SECY
13 paper that you make reference to DOD's Computer
14 Electronic Accommodations Program, which is obviously
15 a program to assist people with disabilities. Have we
16 had occasion to really use that yet, and are employees
17 aware of those opportunities? Is this something
18 that's just so fresh that we don't have a feel for it
19 yet?

20 MR. BIRD: We've had -- this relationship
21 has been in place now for I think about four months,
22 and we have had some interactions with DOD wherein
23 they have funding and they do provide equipment and
24 support, and certainly are on the cutting edge of
25 technology innovations for that purpose.

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1 I know that we have had sort of a
2 marketing campaign here, in a general sense, to try to
3 make known that that's available to employees and that
4 that type of equipment can either be acquired through
5 DOD or through our own sources. In many cases, we've
6 done this in the past on our own, out of our own
7 sources and our own funding. And we do periodically
8 go out and remind people that this is available to
9 them, and we have had people who are disabled, who
10 have taken advantage of it. I don't know exactly how
11 many times we've done that through DOD, but that is a
12 good working relationship, and they are certainly in
13 a position to do some innovative things with that
14 program through DOD that we can take advantage of.

15 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Let me say that reading
16 the SECY paper was the first time I became aware of
17 this. I'm not sure whether I'm characteristic of NRC
18 employees on this, but I just wonder whether we might
19 do a better job and start making sure that people are
20 --

21 MS. NORRY: We could probably publicize it
22 better. This is one case where it's an advantage to be
23 a small agency. The only reason we have access to
24 that program at DOD is because we are officially

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1 defined as a "small agency", so we get to participate,
2 and we could probably publicize it better.

3 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Mr. Leslie, I'd like to
4 pursue a point you made and make sure I understand it,
5 that you indicated that we had a very successful
6 effort on recruitment of Hispanics, which I think we
7 all see and applaud. And you raised two concerns
8 about it. One was that adding a large number of
9 Hispanics might mean reduced opportunities for others,
10 and I think that Commissioner McGaffigan's comments
11 were intended to address that, at least on the entry
12 level, that hiring 25 percent isn't a cap, and I think
13 that the lesson all of us have taken from this is what
14 we had done in targeting this aggressive effort on
15 Hispanics, we ought to expand to other groups and do
16 a better job elsewhere, it's not that this is a
17 disadvantage.

18 The other point you made was that this had
19 the effect that meant that if you were successful in
20 recruiting a large number of people at the entry
21 level, that that meant that there was a
22 disproportionate percentage of that group who are at
23 the entry level. It seems to me almost inevitable
24 that that has to be the consequence, and I don't know
25 what conclusion we're supposed to draw from that. I

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1 mean, I would not want to impede our doing aggressive
2 efforts at entry levels because we are having trouble
3 attracting people at advanced levels. And I recognize
4 that there is the statistical effect, that that means
5 that if you are successful at entry level recruiting,
6 that you will have a larger percentage of people who
7 are at the entry level, but I don't see how we can
8 deal with that other than do what we can at all
9 levels.

10 MR. LESLIE: My concern is that we fully
11 explore and use the creativity that went into that
12 focused recruiting for the entry level positions, to
13 go back and look at are there things that we haven't
14 done for more advanced level employees that are
15 minorities? So, can we think even further outside of
16 the box? Are there activities that we can do where we
17 can focus recruiting on advanced skilled Hispanics
18 and/or Asians and/or African Americans, that we
19 haven't done before because if, in fact -- I agree
20 with your statistics -- that if underrepresentation is
21 only done by Hispanics, almost 45 percent of them will
22 be entry level. And our problem with Hispanics is
23 retention. They don't see fulfillment up the ladder.

24 So, I think even though you might get a
25 lot of people in, are you going to retain them?

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1 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Well, we very much want
2 to do that, obviously, and I think the suggestions
3 that you and your colleagues on the groups have how we
4 can improve the access at all levels and also make
5 sure that we retain the people we hire would be
6 something that we all want to do.

7 Let me turn now to Commissioner Dicus.

8 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you. Let me
9 begin by congratulating Ms. Little on Diversity Day.
10 You and your staff did a really great job, and the
11 others that helped. Hopefully next year I won't have
12 to dance.

13 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I think that's going to
14 be a regular --

15 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: I think the
16 Commission wants to be in the second row.

17 COMMISSIONER DICUS: No, I'm going to be
18 in the back. But congratulations, I very firmly
19 support it, and I do want to say to Luis, it is a
20 rotational assignment. You will be back.

21 Ms. Norry, a question for you. I may or
22 may not have heard your statement right, so you can
23 correct me, but I thought you said that like at the
24 SES/SLS levels, your targeting them to where we know
25 we will have openings. Did I hear you right?

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1 MS. NORRY: What I meant to say was that
2 in the next candidate program, which is going to be
3 coming probably starting out within the next few
4 months, we will not perhaps have as broad a
5 representation of disciplines. Let me just give an
6 example. For instance, in the current candidate
7 program, we have a number of administrative people,
8 candidates for administrative positions. They will be
9 placed eventually, but their placement is not as quick
10 because the positions are fewer, they don't open up as
11 often. So, we would probably not target as many of
12 the candidates in the next program for those, but
13 rather in the technical areas, the program areas where
14 we know we are going to have the greater need.

15 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Will we be able to
16 deal with diversity under those sets of circumstances?

17 MS. NORRY: I think we will, we will deal
18 with it. We will deal with it. That's obviously one
19 of the goals --

20 COMMISSIONER DICUS: That's where I'm
21 going with the question.

22 MS. NORRY: -- for the program, and we --
23 I can tell you that the senior managers are very much
24 aware of that as a goal, and so, yes, we will.

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1 COMMISSIONER DICUS: The only other two
2 questions I have are really update status questions,
3 and one of them has to deal with the last briefing we
4 had. I had asked the question about -- because it was
5 an issue that had been raised, that our clerical and
6 support staff get the sponsored training that they
7 need, and we were dealing with contracting for that.
8 And you've talked about contracting for rotational, is
9 that the same thing, or where are we with -- or am I
10 lost here -- but how are we dealing with being able to
11 get our clerical and support staff trained?

12 MR. BIRD: Well, we have several training
13 programs that are aimed right at that. Certainly, our
14 inhouse training --

15 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Because they didn't
16 think they were getting the training.

17 MR. BIRD: We do have a specific program
18 for that that is career-enhancing, if you will, and we
19 have a lot of training available, and this is not in
20 a program sense, but we have an administrative skills
21 program that would potentially enhance, for example,
22 a secretary to more advanced administrative skills,
23 and we will continue to provide that. And then we
24 have, of course, the individual training opportunities
25 that can be dealt with with an individual. If they

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1 have a target position, for example, they can come in
2 and do a series of training events both inhouse,
3 potentially, and out-of-house, that would give them
4 better potential to be competitive for those jobs.

5 MS. NORRY: The other thing that I think
6 relates to the contract that Paul discussed earlier is
7 that to the extent that there is a problem with
8 providing training to clerical/secretarial employees,
9 because they are needed on the job, then this contract
10 thing could also help in that situation.

11 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. The other
12 question I would ask -- and it brings up something
13 that Mr. Leslie mentioned on corporate memory. What
14 is our status of attempts to have a formal program
15 inhouse to maintain or capture the corporate memory
16 when someone leaves, because we know that's a problem.
17 It's a problem with our fitness-for-duty rule, for
18 example. So what are we doing there?

19 MS. NORRY: One thing that will help is
20 the over-hiring authority that we asked for in the
21 budget that says that we're not going to let someone
22 leave without -- someone who has critical skills that
23 we're going to need, to bring someone in to work side-
24 by-side with that person. That's why we asked for

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1 that, for that extra amount in the budget, to
2 facilitate that. Now, that's one piece of the effort.

3 DR. TRAVERS: We've also gotten some
4 limited authority to bring people back and compensate
5 them -- you know, we could always bring them back.

6 COMMISSIONER DICUS: I'm wanting this on
7 the record, where I'm going with this.

8 DR. TRAVERS: They could be compensated in
9 a way that might make it seem attractive. So, in
10 limited fashion, in instances where perhaps someone
11 has left and we haven't been able to in advance take
12 advantage of some of those strategies that you heard
13 tell about today, we have some ability to bring them
14 back for a time and pay them.

15 MR. REYES: Commissioner, from an office
16 point of view, we have worked with HR, and in many
17 cases now we have posted and filled some of the jobs
18 in anticipation of a loss, and we actually have
19 double-incumbency for a while, and that was a practice
20 that was hardly ever used in the past, and working
21 with Paul we have moved into that. We have done that
22 both at the sites with the resident inspectors may be
23 leaving because of continuity is important on what
24 issues, et cetera, et cetera. So, I think you're
25 going to see more and more double-incumbency and early

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1 advertisement of jobs to try to have some more
2 corporate memory transfer.

3 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Very good. We do have
6 a large number of various representatives of the EEO
7 Advisory Committees who are here, and I'd like to
8 provide them with an opportunity to provide some
9 additional statements, if they should choose to do so.

10 Mr. Wong is here as the representative of
11 the Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee.

12 MR. WONG: Good morning, Chairman Meserve
13 and Commissioners. On behalf of the Asian Pacific
14 American Advisory Committee, we appreciate the
15 opportunity to address the Commission today.

16 In the past year, we put forward a set of
17 recommendations to enhance EEO objectives and
18 diversity goals. To some extent, our recommendations
19 helped facilitate a successful outreach program that
20 resulted in a large increase in Hispanic American
21 representation in the Agency today. However, we note
22 that while the Agency is improving its targeted EEO
23 objectives, we feel that the recruiting efforts aimed
24 at targeted minority groups such as Asian Americans
25 and African Americans were not as effective. Simply

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1 put, we would also like to emulate the success of the
2 outcome of the Hispanic American recruitment efforts.

3 We acknowledge the Agency's current
4 efforts in the areas of recruitment and retention,
5 succession planning, and open communications.
6 However, we note that the number of Asian Pacific
7 Americans in the feeder groups for management
8 advancements and in the SES ranks continued to be
9 historically low compared with the available pool of
10 highly technically qualified Asian Pacific Americans
11 in the Agency today. We would like greater management
12 focus on the issue of advancement of Asian Pacific
13 Americans to management positions, and also to higher
14 grade level positions.

15 We recommend that management focus in the
16 following areas: improve Asian Pacific American
17 representation in senior management assignments;
18 encourage active participation in formal as well as
19 informal sponsorship between SES managers and Asian
20 Pacific American employees to enhance help develop
21 career advancement potential; broaden Asian Pacific
22 American experience and participation in leadership
23 and management assignments as part of the retention
24 effort; finally, we recommend active participation of
25 all Program Offices to increase efforts in targeted

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1 recruitment and in career development of Asian Pacific
2 Americans.

3 Absence of Asian Pacific Americans in
4 senior level management positions and in the pipeline
5 to higher grade level positions critically undermine
6 the Agency's diversity goals. Therefore, we urge that
7 these recommendations be effectively addressed in the
8 near future. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you, Mr. Wong.
10 Mr. Marshall. He is here for the Advisory Committee
11 for African Americans.

12 MR. MARSHALL: Good morning, Mr. Chairman
13 and Commissioners, and thank you for this opportunity
14 to discuss areas of concern to the Advisory Committee
15 for African Americans.

16 We have two areas that we think warrant
17 management attention. The first area has two parts,
18 SES and non-SES supervisory representation of African
19 Americans. The second part of that would be the
20 number of African Americans in the pipeline for SES
21 and non-supervisory SES positions. As was mentioned
22 earlier, there is a very small pipeline for African
23 Americans to those positions. The second area is
24 hiring of African Americans at the entry level, at the

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1 experienced levels, and also with regard to hiring is
2 also retaining the people that are hired.

3 There is an increased clear focus on entry
4 level, the number of recruitment to HBCUs, for
5 instance, but we think it is also important to start
6 putting more effort into hiring experienced African
7 Americans into the Agency.

8 We met with Dr. Travers and Ms. Norry to
9 discuss these, and they were very receptive.
10 Actually, we felt it was very positive to get the
11 action plan going that we felt was a result and a very
12 positive outcome of discussing these concerns.

13 Specifically in the action plan, areas
14 that we're very interested in, again, as mentioned
15 before, was sponsorship and mentoring, specifically
16 providing feedback to African American employees on
17 what are the development assignments that would lead
18 to promotion and advancement in the Agency. What are
19 the opportunities? Sometimes not everybody is fully
20 aware of the opportunities that are out there, and
21 hopefully with the enhancement this will become clear.

22 There has been progress. If you notice,
23 we only have two issues this time. In the past, it's
24 been four. One issues that's been addressed was the
25 EEO element in the non-SES management position, and

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1 the other was upward mobility. Talking with SBCR, it
2 is clear there has been advancement in that, and we're
3 satisfied, but we believe these two areas are actually
4 very important at this time in NRC because of the
5 changes occurring in NRC, the number of hirings, the
6 turnover in management, and actually this is a time
7 for NRC where we might be shaping the NRC, how it
8 looks for the next number of years. And so right now
9 is the time to address advancement of African
10 Americans into the management positions and hiring of
11 African Americans into the Agency. Thank you again.

12 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Ms. Gunn,
13 from the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee.

14 MS. GUNN: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,
15 Commissioners. FWPAC feels that overall women are
16 much better in the Agency today than they ever have in
17 the past. We believe that the Agency-wide approach to
18 EEO will continue to enhance opportunities for women
19 in all grades to advance in the NRC and increase the
20 number of women in the applicant pool for future SES
21 and SLS positions.

22 We believe this plan should model itself
23 on some of our current successes, such as the upward
24 mobility positions in Region IV, and the recruiting

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1 initiatives that we've discussed quite a bit today in
2 Headquarters and Region II.

3 During the next year, FWPAC intends to
4 focus on identifying and helping women to get into
5 developmental opportunities, such as rotations between
6 the regions and Headquarters, and once again these
7 opportunities for women in all grades to move up.

8 We would like to thank management for
9 their support, and we look forward to continuing to
10 work with you on these issues in the future.

11 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.
12 Ibrahim, who is from the Committee on Age
13 Discrimination.

14 MR. IBRAHIM: Good morning, Mr. Chairman
15 and Commissioners. On behalf of the Committee on Age
16 Discrimination, I would like to express my
17 appreciation to you for giving us the opportunity to
18 address the Commission on aging issues. The Committee
19 would also like to thank the EDO, Dr. Bill Travers,
20 for meeting with us last month to discuss our concerns
21 and goals.

22 In addition, we thank Ms. Irene Little and
23 her staff for their cooperation in providing us with
24 recent performance appraisal data for our continuing
25 analysis for age discrimination issues. Based on this

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1 analysis, we would like to take the opportunity to
2 bring some of our concerns to your attention.

3 One of the continuing goals is to ensure
4 fair performance appraisals for older workers at NRC.
5 In a previous briefing, the committee has indicated
6 that this is an issue of concern, and based on the
7 analysis of year 2000 data it remains a concern.

8 CAD recommends that some action be taken
9 to inform and sensitize management to ensure fair
10 performance appraisals and promotion. We will
11 continue to work diligently with SBCR and analyze
12 additional data and report our findings to you. We
13 hope that in future briefings we can report to you
14 that progress has been made towards more equitable and
15 fair performance appraisal and promotion for older
16 staff.

17 My next issue has been touched greatly on,
18 and that is 40 percent of NRC workforce eligible for
19 retirement, to transfer experience and knowledge to
20 younger staff needs to be a high priority. Also, in
21 addition to hiring recent college graduates, NRC
22 management should increase their hiring of persons
23 with significant industrial experience. The committee
24 also recommends exploring options to retain retirement

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1 eligible employees to complete their knowledge
2 transfer.

3 Finally, I would like to say that the
4 committee was pleased to learn that NRC is exploring
5 ways to rehire some of the retirees who possess
6 critical job skills and experience they have gained
7 through their successful career with NRC. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr. Abu-Eil
9 is here, and he is with the Joint Labor Management EEO
10 Committee.

11 MR. ABU-EIL: Good morning. On behalf of
12 the Joint Labor Management EEO Committee, I would like
13 to thank the Commission, the EDO and the SBCR for the
14 opportunity to present the committee's views and
15 recommendations regarding EEO issues and affirmative
16 actions.

17 The committee recognizes the extensive
18 effort of diversity and acknowledge the EEO progress
19 made since the last briefing. The Joint Labor
20 Management EEOC believes that the Agency needs to
21 continue to build momentum in addressing EEO and
22 diversity issues implementing affirmative actions, and
23 pursuing achieving the NRC's main goal of
24 discrimination-free environment.

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1 In my briefing, I would like to recognize
2 progress. I do not just like to ask for what needs to
3 be done, although I will touch, of course, on these
4 issues.

5 I would like to recognize that tangible
6 progress has been made by the Office of Small Business
7 and Civil Rights, and NRC offices. Since the last
8 briefing, the office Directors and managers of NMSS
9 and NRR have met with the Joint Labor Management EEOC
10 and discussed specific committee issues. To give you
11 examples, NMSS and NRR also plan to continue to meet
12 with these committees and the progress made as
13 follows: Both offices assigned senior managers to
14 work with our committee and with the rest of the
15 committees to help addressing particular EEO and
16 diversity issues. NMSS management, for example,
17 coordinated with SBCR and conducted a diversity survey
18 and met with the staff to discuss survey results
19 immediately. NMSS established a diversity panel which
20 we would like to see also in similar cases with the
21 other offices to tackle EEO and diversity issues and
22 provide recommendations for resolutions. That is a
23 good approach.

24 Several NMSS divisions conducted staff
25 meetings to discuss diversity and solicited staff

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1 suggestions. The Joint Labor Management EEOC
2 acknowledges NRC's continuing efforts to recruit women
3 and minorities. We see progress in this area. And
4 also we see progress in improving communications.

5 More recently, as you know, the EDO
6 allotted time to meet with each individual committee
7 on separate basis, not as chairs of these committees,
8 each individual committee, to discuss and address EEO
9 issues. We believe this is a progress. This is
10 improvement in communications and feedback.

11 The Joint Labor Management EEOC believes
12 that the Agency needs to continue to build momentum.
13 In this regard, the Joint Labor Management EEOC
14 recommends that NRC focus on the following EEO and
15 diversity issue. As the other groups mentioned, we
16 would like the NRC remain diligent in its activities
17 and focus its efforts to increase opportunities for
18 advancement of women, minorities, and disadvantaged
19 groups to professional, supervisory, management,
20 executive, and senior level positions.

21 We would like the Agency to continue to
22 implement the mentoring program and strongly encourage
23 participation of women, minorities and disadvantaged
24 groups in the program.

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1 The Agency should continue to improve
2 internal communications and awareness of EEO,
3 diversity and affirmative action goals and objectives.

4 Another important issue which was raised
5 by Commissioner Dicus, NRC should encourage a
6 workplace where the knowledge NRC's aging population
7 is rewarded with respect. We would like to give these
8 people rewards and respect in order to give us their
9 knowledge. One way to achieve that would be to
10 develop a program to encourage the transfer of
11 knowledge through an on-the-job training process that
12 pairs new employees with those older staff with
13 corporate knowledge. I call this a pairing program.
14 This way, it will give incentive to the new employees,
15 give them corporate knowledge, at the same time you
16 learn from the new employees.

17 The last issue I would like to address is
18 since Federal agencies have moved in the direction of
19 recognizing the value of a family-friendly workplace,
20 NRC must ensure that managers do not discriminate
21 against those staff with family obligations, but
22 should work to encourage creative solutions to retain
23 valuable employees.

24 The Commission must emphasize that a
25 family-friendly workplace is essential to retain

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1 experienced staff and to establish a more productive
2 working environment.

3 In addition, as an example, part-time
4 employees should be given similar opportunities for
5 rewards and promotion as full-time employees.

6 In conclusion, the Joint Labor Management
7 EEOC is encouraged by the new initiatives of SBCR, HR<
8 NMSS, and NRR in addressing EEO and diversity issues
9 and we are optimistic that further progress will be
10 made. The committee appreciates the Commission
11 attention, as usual, and their continuing efforts to
12 bring about significant changes to improve EEO and
13 diversity at the NRC. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr. Leslie
15 has earlier participated here with us as basically a
16 representative of all of the Advisory Committees. I
17 would like to provide you with an opportunity, if you
18 would like to take it, to make a statement with regard
19 to the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee,
20 of which you are the Chair.

21 MR. LESLIE: Thank you once again for the
22 opportunity to address you today. I will acknowledge
23 some successes, expand on some of my earlier comments,
24 and highlight a few other equal employment
25 opportunities that impact Hispanics specifically.

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1 The focused recruiting effort in Puerto
2 Rico is the Agency's most visible success. Other
3 positive actions include the representation of
4 Hispanics in the Leadership Development Program, the
5 Executive Leadership Program, rotational assignment
6 high visibility positions, and the coordination of
7 efforts between the offices and HEPAC Committee. We
8 urge that these positive steps be continued.

9 We believe continued innovation and
10 adequate preparation are necessary for future success,
11 especially in the recruitment area. For instance,
12 creative efforts to address persistent
13 underrepresentation of Hispanics at all levels of the
14 Agency must be pursued.

15 As I touched on earlier, retention of
16 Hispanics in the Agency needs to be more fully
17 addressed. The annual departure rate of Hispanics is
18 almost twice that of the Agency as a whole. This loss
19 of Hispanics decreases the effectiveness of focused
20 recruiting efforts. The use of other agencies' Web-
21 based management tools to address Hispanic EEO issues
22 may assist in combatting the NRC's Hispanic retention
23 problem.

24 Finally, we look forward to hearing the
25 insights that Ms. Norry will bring back from her

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1 participation in the InterAgency Council which is
2 addressing underrepresentation of Hispanics in the
3 Federal workplace.

4 This Council is a result of the recent
5 reaffirmation by President Bush of a previous
6 Executive Order. That Executive Order outlines steps
7 that agencies should take to address
8 underrepresentation of Hispanics in the Federal
9 workplace. We look forward to seeing the Agency's
10 response to the request outlined in the Executive
11 Order. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. I would
13 like also to provide an opportunity for Mr. Yeilding
14 to make a presentation to us on behalf of the National
15 Treasury Employees Union. Mr. Yeilding.

16 MR. YEILDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 The National Treasury Employees Union would like to
18 thank the Commission for the opportunity to comment on
19 the Agency's EEO progress and highlight areas the
20 Union has assisted the Agency in improving.

21 As you know, the Union supports the
22 statement from the Joint Labor Management Committee,
23 which is the Union's representative in the EEO
24 process.

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1 The Agency and NTEU has successfully
2 completed eight months of negotiations that resulted
3 in over 75 changes to the Collective Bargaining
4 Agreement. I'd like to briefly describe a few of
5 those changes that relate to EEO issues.

6 Both the grievance process and the EEO
7 process include the opportunity for employees to
8 resolve a problem using mediation, short of litigating
9 through arbitration, and the new contract will only
10 permit that mediation process to be used once to
11 prevent unnecessary duplication.

12 Even though it has always been the case,
13 the contract now clarifies that employees, during an
14 initial 30 days of EEO counseling, may be accompanied
15 by a Union Steward to assist them in any of their
16 discussions or resolution meetings.

17 Since employees with an EEO concern have
18 undergone a 30-day period of counseling, the informal
19 grievance process will no longer be utilized.
20 Employees electing to have NTEU assistance will
21 process their case directly to a Step A grievance.
22 That will also streamline the process a little bit.

23 And discrimination based on sexual
24 orientation may now be addressed through our internal

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1 procedures, even though employees, as yet, do not have
2 rights under Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act.

3 Touching base, my last topic on employee
4 retention, the retention of employees is key to ensure
5 the EEO progress is not erased by the Agency's
6 attrition. Recruitment in many areas will have no
7 long-lasting effect if employees simply use the NRC as
8 a training ground and move on to other agencies or the
9 private sector.

10 As we all know, flexible workplace
11 conditions are being expanded throughout the Federal
12 Government as a result of proven retention statistics
13 in the private sector. Flexiplace or work-at-home is
14 a prime example. NTEU and the Agency have reached
15 recent agreement to expand our work-at-home program
16 and have documented this agreement in the new
17 Collective Bargaining Agreement which will become
18 effective the first week in October. The first step
19 of implementing this is for office Directors and
20 Regional Administrators to identify those positions
21 for which employees will be permitted to participate.
22 It is the Union's hope that the Agency will embrace
23 this new concept and open up opportunities for
24 employees to work at home a portion of their work
25 week. This might be a future metric when we are

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1 identifying metrics to identify the expansion of the
2 flexiplace program.

3 I'd like to close by saying the National
4 Treasury Employees Union looks forward to working with
5 the Agency to establish a better work environment and
6 improved diversification in the workplace. Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you, Mr.
9 Yeilding. Actually, I'd like to thank all of the
10 members of the Advisory Committees and the Union
11 representative as well. I think that it's clear that
12 we have made progress in this very important area. I
13 think it's also equally clear from all of your
14 statements that there are issues that remain to be
15 addressed. We are aware, I think, of items that you
16 have raised with us, and I think they do demonstrate
17 that this is some continuing obligations for all of us
18 to be able to look for continuing progress and
19 winnowing away of the issues that we have in front of
20 us. You all play a very important role in that
21 process in sort of providing us with insights and
22 providing others at the table with insights as to how
23 the process should work.

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1 Before I bring this to a close, let me
2 turn to my colleagues and see if any of them have any
3 comments or questions that they'd like to raise.

4 (No response.)

5 If not, let me just say I speak for all
6 the Commission when I say that equal employment
7 opportunity is essential to the success of this
8 Agency. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that
9 all employees have the opportunity to participate in
10 the accomplishments of the Agency, to be able to
11 advance their career goals, and to work in an
12 environment that is absolutely free of discrimination.

13 I'd like to thank all of you for your
14 candid views of our efforts in this area, look forward
15 to briefings in the future.

16 I'd also like to wish Luis great success
17 in his hopefully brief departure to Department of
18 Energy, and want you to know that we all --

19 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: That hopefully -- you
20 need to scratch that "hopefully".

21 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Scratch "hopefully".

22 MR. REYES: Emphasizing the "brief" part.

23 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Emphasize the "brief".

24 We look forward to your return. With that, we are
25 adjourned.

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1 (Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the Commission
2 was adjourned.)
3

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