

POLICY ISSUE INFORMATION

December 8, 2000

SECY-00-0229

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO) BRIEFING

PURPOSE:

To inform the Commission of the status of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program at the NRC.

BACKGROUND:

The Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended, requires the NRC Executive Director for Operations (EDO) to report to the Commission, at semi-annual public meetings, on the problems, progress, and status of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program. For the next briefing, scheduled for January 9, 2001, the staff is providing a discussion on the "Impact of Affirmative Employment and Workplace Initiatives on Equal Employment Opportunity," consistent with the four guiding principles listed in the NRC's 5-Year Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP). The four guiding principles are: a) create a discrimination-free work environment, b) ensure Agency policies, processes, and procedures provide employees the opportunity to participate in the Agency's mission and enable fair and equitable competition for career enhancement and advancement, c) employ a competent, highly skilled and diverse workforce in a positive work environment, and d) recognize and value diversity; thereby demonstrating trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the Agency. The discussion will specifically address new initiatives related to Hispanic recruitment, hiring, and retention; leadership development; implementation of a separate EEO subelement in 2001 SES performance appraisals; and use of the summer-hire and cooperative education programs. It will also present a review of the employee survey results regarding Special Emphasis/Diversity Day observances. The Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM) following the last briefing on March 30, 2000, requested no specific follow-up actions.

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This report also includes a statement by Stuart Reiter, Acting Chief Information Officer, on the implementation of EEO policies within his office (Attachment 1). Also included are workforce profile data by grade, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and age for FY 1996 thru FY 2000 (Attachment 2); and a joint statement from the five EEO Advisory Committees and a statement from the Joint Labor Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (Attachment 3).

DISCUSSION:

1. Create a discrimination-free work environment.

A discrimination-free environment has at its foundation a well-informed workforce. Managers and employees are routinely made aware of their roles and responsibilities related to equal opportunity, and are expected to apply sound principles of fairness and equity. Two primary goals are established to facilitate this effort: 1) educating the staff regarding human resource management, equal opportunity, and managing diversity; and 2) enhancing awareness of policies and procedures that facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities.

Since the last EEO briefing, the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR), with support from Agency management, has continued implementation of the Managing Diversity (MD) process. The MD process underscores our effort to maximize employee potential in achieving the Agency's strategic objectives. The MD process further enhances awareness of a discrimination-free workplace and the impact subtle biases can have on individual and organizational performance. The process was initiated in FY 1998, starting with sessions for managers and supervisors in headquarters and the regions.

During FY 2000, a total of 15 sessions were conducted for employees in Headquarters, the Technical Training Center, and the regional offices. These sessions emphasized employee roles and responsibilities in managing diversity and assisting in maximizing the potential of all employees in pursuit of the Agency's mission. Employees and managers identified diversity management challenges within the Agency and developed SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound) measurements for pursuing solutions to issues. These measures are tailored to specific issues raised by employees. The Director, SBCR, and the Affirmative Employment and Diversity Manager met with office directors and regional administrators to discuss feedback from the employee sessions and appropriate follow-up action regarding the issues.

EEO Advisory Committees also play a role in creating a discrimination-free work environment. Committees routinely provide advice and recommendations to SBCR regarding recruitment, hiring, promotion, placement, training, and career development for minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. In a Joint Statement, included as an attachment to this paper, the Advisory Committees have identified their most critical issues. The primary issues addressed in this Joint Statement are managing diversity, increased management involvement with staff to address EEO related concerns, and increased management accountability through application of a separate EEO subelement for evaluating SES performance. To address these concerns, the Committees recommended

continued support of the managing diversity process, committee participation in meetings directly with office management to highlight office-specific and Agency-wide EEO related concerns; and monitoring of EEO accomplishments by SES managers. SBCR and HR will continue to work with the committees to address these issues.

A pilot EEO course for managers and supervisors was conducted in early FY 2000. As a result of the pilot, SBCR and HR are working to revise the course. The revised course will include the latest developments in the EEO complaint process, discussions related to the prevention of sexual harassment, reasonable accommodation under the law, the Agency's new Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process, and the impact of managing diversity on major Agency objectives. The new course will be presented to managers and supervisors in the second half of FY 2001. This will be a required course for all new supervisors, and current managers and supervisors will be encouraged to attend.

The Agency's EEO counselors continue to play a pivotal role in working with employees and managers to facilitate informal resolution of EEO related issues. The informal counseling process and the ADR process are used to attempt resolution of issues informally and at the lowest possible level. The Agency's ADR process, which was implemented in January 2000, has been used on three separate occasions--two resulted in settlements. Additional information regarding the ADR process will be provided in an NR&C article summarizing the objectives of the process and encouraging its use for resolving issues.

There was no significant increase in informal counseling initiated by employees in FY 2000, and there was no change in the number of formal complaints filed during that period. The following data reflect the status of informal and formal allegations of discrimination:

Informal Counseling Activity

Pending at end of FY 1999	9
Initiated in FY 2000	25
Closed in FY 2000	30 (9 withdrawn, 1 settled, 20 Notices of Right to File issued)
Pending at end of FY 2000	4

Formal Complaint Activity

Pending at end of FY 1999	13
Filed in FY 2000	16
Closed in FY 2000	10 (7 settled, 3 Final Agency Decisions issued)
Pending at end of FY 2000	19

The Agency continues to accommodate employees with disabilities. In FY 2000, 46 requests for reasonable accommodations were approved: 22 requests for sign language interpreters and 24 requests for special equipment. This represents a slight decrease in requests from FY 1999.

2. Ensure Agency policies, practices, and procedures provide employees the opportunity to participate in the Agency's mission, and enable fair and equitable competition for employee career enhancement and advancement.

It is the policy of the NRC to implement a human resource management program consistent with the goals and objectives of EEO. SBCR and HR provide leadership in such areas as targeted recruitment, hiring and retention, promotion, training and development, and

performance evaluation. In FY 2000, the following initiatives were implemented or initiated in support of affirmative employment:

- a. Limited on-the-spot hiring was authorized for several offices to enhance NRC's ability to attract highly qualified and diverse applicants. During FY 2000, we made 1 on-the-spot employment offer, to date, and in FY 2001, we have made 15 on-the-spot employment offers.
- b. A new Leadership Development Program (LDP) was developed to prepare individuals at the GG-13 - 15 grade level for supervisory and management positions at the GG-15 level. The LDP will address the following needs: development of technical managers from program offices who need to learn first-level supervisory and management skills; and development of administrative staff from program, regional, and support offices who need broadening in various administrative/support functions and supervisory/management skills. The LDP will start in May 2001 and serve as a feeder group to senior management positions.
- c. A separate performance subelement for evaluating EEO performance of SES managers was added for the rating period beginning on July 1, 2000. Accomplishments under the new criterion will be evaluated in performance appraisals due at the end of the current rating period.
- d. The EDO holds managers accountable for ensuring that the Agency's performance evaluation criteria are accurately and fairly applied. In FY 2000, the EDO issued a memorandum to office directors and regional administrators regarding evaluating employee performance. This memorandum directs managers and supervisors to provide honest feedback to employees regarding their performance and to complete appraisals consistent with the criteria.

SBCR has traditionally recognized managers and staff who consistently demonstrate noteworthy accomplishments in equal opportunity and diversity management. During FY 2000, based on recommendations from the EEO Advisory Committees, four managers received EEO awards.

Since the last EEO briefing, the President has signed several Executive Orders (E.O.) and one Executive Memorandum that impact human resource management policy and workforce diversity. SBCR and HR have begun to review and address these new policy directives. Following is a brief summary of these E.O. requirements:

- a. Executive Order 13160, dated June 23, 2000, mandates that educational programs in Federal agencies follow the same principles of non-discrimination as state and local governments and private institutions that receive Federal financial assistance. This E.O. also added "status as a parent" and "sexual orientation" as bases of discrimination.
- b. On July 26, 2000, two Executive Orders and one Executive Memorandum were signed relating to employment of persons with disabilities in Federal service. The first E.O. directs each Federal agency to prepare a plan to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. NRC's plan was issued on September 15, 2000, with a hiring/advancement goal of 10 qualified individuals with disabilities over the next five-year period. The second E.O. requires Federal agencies to establish written procedures for

processing requests for reasonable accommodation by employees and applicants with disabilities. Agencies are required to establish such procedures by July 26, 2001, in accordance with guidance published by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Executive Memorandum directs agencies to review positions and related requirements necessary to permit employees, including employees with significant disabilities, to work at home or at other off-site facilities. Work activities, such as the processing of insurance claims, financial transactions, or customer service calls, that can be relocated to home-based or off-site facilities, will be identified and if feasible, action plans developed by executive agencies.

- c. Executive Order 13166, signed August 14, 2000, directs each Federal agency to prepare a plan to improve access to its Federally conducted and Federally assisted programs by persons who are not proficient in the English language. NRC's plan is due to the Department of Justice by December 11, 2000.
- d. On October 12, 2000, an E.O. was signed which mandates that each Federal agency assess and eliminate systemic barriers to recruitment and consideration of Hispanics, and prepare a plan for recruiting Hispanics that creates a fully diverse workforce. HR and SBCR have developed an aggressive program to improve recruitment of Hispanic applicants. These efforts are described later in the paper

3. Employ a competent highly skilled and diverse workforce in a positive work environment.

The key to achieving a highly skilled diverse workforce is an aggressive recruitment program. To further this goal, since the last briefing, we have engaged in the following activities:

The FY 2000 recruitment schedule included 35 events (college career fairs and professional conferences), of which 22 were targeted for minorities, women, or persons with disabilities. The number of hires increased from 102 in FY 1999 to 161 in FY 2000. Table A below shows the demographics and hiring activity during FY 2000.

Table A - Agency Demographics and Hiring Activity

	On Board As of 9/30/99	FY 2000 Hires	FY 2000 Departures	On Board As of 9/30/00
Total	2832	161	165	2828
African American	366	19	18	368
Asian Pacific American	196	11	11	196
Hispanic	63	11	4	71
Native American	9	0	2	7
White Female	731	55	54	731
White Male	1467	65	76	1455

We have established an even more aggressive recruitment schedule for FY 2001. Fifty-five events targeting minorities, women, or disabled applicants are scheduled.

The staff increased efforts to recruit Hispanics. The Deputy Executive Director for Management Services convened a team composed of staff from SBCR, HR, and members of

the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee (HEPAC) to develop creative strategies to identify and attract highly qualified Hispanic applicants. A significant outcome of this effort was a recruitment trip led by HR, which included a team of senior managers and a member of HEPAC. They attended a job fair October 5 - 8, 2000, at the University of Mayaguez in Puerto Rico. Fifty-five interviews were conducted, 15 on-the-spot job offers were made, and 20 applicants were identified and invited to visit NRC for additional interviews. HR accelerated the application and review process for applicants. HR and SBCR coordinated schedules for the applicants to participate in interviews by Headquarters staff on November 8, 2000. SBCR and Members of the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee assisted in hosting the students during their visit to the NRC. To date, 25 offers have been extended; and thus far one applicant has accepted our offer. We anticipate several more acceptances after students have had an opportunity to consider and weigh employment options.

The number of Hispanics in permanent positions increased from 63 to 71 (13%) in FY 2000. Hispanics now makeup almost 3% of the Agency's workforce compared to 2% in previous years. To date in FY 2001, two Hispanics have been selected for permanent positions and will be starting at the NRC later this year.

Senior level managers took a more active role in the recruitment process. During FY 2000, a total of 48 administrative representatives and 56 technical employees, including 11 managers and supervisors, served as recruiters. Research consistently shows that a diverse representation among recruiters, including managers, is a key strategy for attracting highly qualified and diverse applicants. Senior managers will continue to participate in these events.

Entry-level hiring was used to attract minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. In March 2000, the Agency established a goal to hire at least 25% of new employees at the entry-level. During FY 2000, 132 of the 161 new employees were professional hires, and 12 of 132 professional hires were entry-level/intern hires. Although we did not reach our Agency-wide entry-level goal, office directors and regional administrators are continuing to work toward the annual 25% goal for entry-level hires. New strategies initiated to achieve this goal include building relationships with academic institutions and professional organizations, increasing the number of managers who participate in recruitment activities, and more expedient follow-up with potential applicants.

The Summer Program introduced students to the NRC. NRC's FY 2000 Summer Program was successful in attracting minorities, women, and disabled students. A total of 44 summer employees, from a cross-section of colleges and universities, were hired to fill positions in four occupational categories: 19 technical, 11 administrative, 2 legal, and 12 clerical. Participants included 2 African American males, 8 African American females, 1 Hispanic male, 1 Asian Pacific American male, 14 White females and 18 White males. HR has already begun efforts to identify Agency needs and potential applicants for the FY 2001 program.

Cooperative (Co-op) agreements with educational institutions increased from 5 to 12. Program offices expressed increased interest in hiring Co-op students. This was done in an effort to enhance student interest in NRC. These additional agreements should lead to increased student participation in the co-op program. During FY 2000, a total of three Co-op students were hired including one Hispanic male.

Staff participated in outreach efforts to increase student interest in engineering and scientific curricula. SBCR staff and Montgomery County's Task Force on Mentoring co-chaired the County's 9th Annual Mentoring Conference held at Gaithersburg High School on October 5, 2000. The objective of the conference was to foster support for mentoring efforts among County schools, businesses, and members of the community; and to support strategies to improve academic achievement of County students. To maximize outreach efforts to young students, an NRC entry-level employee provided conference participants with information regarding NRC's mission and programs.

4. Recognize, appreciate, and value diversity; thereby demonstrating trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the Agency.

Appreciation of employee talent and recognition of employee contributions are achieved through articulation of clear performance expectations, candid feedback, fair evaluations, and appropriate recognition of performance. As shown in Table B below, during FY 2000, a total of 2108 non-SES performance awards were given to employees. The percentage of awards given to employees in each group, including minority groups and women, is close to their respective representation in the NRC workforce with the exception of Asian Pacific Americans (APA). The percentage of awards to APAs remains at 5%, while their representation in the NRC workforce is 7%.

Table B - Non-SES Awards

	FY 00		FY 99		FY 98		FY 97		FY 96	
Totals	2108	100%	2000	100%	1742	100%	1679	100%	1530	100%
Female	861	41%	871	44%	694	39%	705	42%	671	44%
Male	1247	59%	1129	56%	1048	61%	974	58%	859	56%
African American	278	13%	300	15%	218	13%	224	13%	212	14%
Asian Pacific American	111	5%	103	5%	98	6%	77	5%	68	5%
Hispanic	52	2%	38	2%	38	2%	34	2%	24	2%
Native American	7	3%	8	4%	4	2%	5	3%	4	3%
White Female	588	28%	607	30%	504	29%	512	30%	489	32%
White Male	1072	51%	944	47%	880	51%	827	49%	733	48%

The performance appraisal (PA) process is used to provide feedback to employees regarding job performance. Writing fair employee evaluations and maintaining a positive employee-supervisor dialogue are steps needed to effectively enhance productivity and improve communication between managers and staff. We continue to use training as one management tool for improving the PA process. For example, in an effort to maintain and improve managers' performance evaluation skills, the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards and the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation requested HR to provide their managers guidance on writing employee performance plans and evaluations. Two sessions of the *Performance Appraisal Refresher* course were conducted with contractor support.

Each year SBCR, with assistance from the EEO Advisory Committees, sponsors ceremonies to celebrate the nation's racial, gender, cultural, and ethnic diversity, and recognize the contributions of minorities and women. Specific groups recognized have included African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and women. During FY 1999, a Diversity Day pilot was sponsored to provide an opportunity for all employees to jointly celebrate their cultural heritage.

The EEO Advisory Committees, along with SBCR and HR, developed and disseminated an employee survey in an effort to obtain employee input regarding a Diversity Day and continuation of special emphasis celebrations. Four hundred and sixty employees responded to the survey and 70% of those responding indicated a preference for an annual Diversity Day in lieu of individual Special Emphasis Programs. Starting in FY 2001, a single Diversity Day, in lieu of Special Emphasis Programs will be conducted. Results of the survey, including management's decision, were published and distributed to all employees in early December.

Summary and Conclusion

Employees are our most valuable asset. To ensure that employee potential and productivity are maximized, we must continue implementation of strategies to create a discrimination-free workplace and a positive work environment. We have made significant progress since the last briefing. We have implemented a process to hold managers accountable for fostering a discrimination-free work environment. Our recruitment efforts have led to increased representation of Hispanics in the workforce. We have effectively used the Summer Employment and Co-op Programs to introduce students to NRC; we are developing a new non-SES Leadership Development Program as a feeder group to the SES; and we completed Managing Diversity Training for all employees. SBCR will continue to work with office directors and regional administrators to incorporate realistic EEO goals in operating plans; and to assist managers in achieving the Agency's equal opportunity and managing diversity goals and objectives.

/RA/

William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

Attachments:

1. Statement by Stuart Reiter, Acting, Chief Information Officer
2. Equal Employment Opportunity Workforce Profile Data
3. EEO Advisory Committees Joint Statement

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Executive Director for Operations

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Statement by Stuart Reiter, Acting, Chief Information Officer

Attachment 1

EEO PROGRAM POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE IN THE
OFFICE OF CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Stuart Reiter, Acting Chief Information Officer

I welcome this opportunity to give the Commission an overview of the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program. I and the OCIO staff fully support the Agency's EEO and Diversity Policy, and we are proud of our accomplishments in this important area. After a brief summary of the OCIO's demographic profile, I will discuss the initiatives, accomplishments, and challenges associated with our EEO program.

Demographics

OCIO has 170 employees. The table below shows OCIO's workforce by ethnic background and gender. Of these 170 employees, 45 (26%) are minorities, and 125 (74%) are Caucasian. There are 83 (49%) females and 87 (51%) males. The 30 minority women represent 15% of the staff, 19 minority men represent 11% of the staff, 57 white women represents 34% of the staff, and 68 white men represent the remaining 40% of our staff.

Staff Diversity (As of 9/30/00)			
Ethnic Background	Female	Male	Totals
African American	21	16	37
Asian Pacific Amer.	4	1	5
Hispanic		2	2
Native American	1		1
Caucasian	57	68	125
Totals	83	87	170

Of our 17 supervisors and managers, 2 (12%) are African American, 2 (12%) are Asian Pacific, and 6 (35%) are women, including 2 members of the Senior Executive Service. Of our 13 team leaders, 4 (31%) are white females and 3 (23%) are African American men. Of the 10 new hires in FY 2000, 3 (30%) were white females, 1 (10%) was an African female, and 1 (10%) was an Asian-Pacific American male who was hired into a key branch manager position.

Staff Recognition and Development

A top priority in the OCIO is to recognize individuals whose performance sets an example in achieving excellence in the workplace. To accomplish this, we established an Awards Review Committee composed of division directors to ensure consistency and equity of the awards process. In addition, the union, through its representatives on our office Labor/Management Partnership Committee, reviews and comments on awards.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2000, the OCIO presented 110 performance awards to its employees. Minorities received 26 (24%), white women 40 (36%), and white men 44 (40%). OCIO also recognized exemplary performance throughout the year with Special Act and Instant Cash Awards for employees who completed assignments by demonstrating great dedication and initiative. During FY 2000, we presented 125 Special Act and Instant Cast Awards, of which 29 (23%) were given to minorities, 32 (26%) were given to white women, and 64 (51%) to white men.

In addition to the standard performance awards, special act awards and instant cash awards, I have instituted an OCIO Team Player Award to recognize those who demonstrate a positive, supportive attitude; share knowledge, skills, and advice freely; encourage and facilitate cooperation of others; establish effective working relationships with others; and make a significant contribution toward the achievement of OCIO goals. Those who are nominated for this award are nominated by their peers within OCIO. Two Team Player Awards have been awarded this past year. One was a white male and the other was a white female.

My office continues to be attentive to the development of its employees and continues to provide a wide variety of opportunities for the staff to participate in developmental assignments. During FY 2000, we promoted 10 employees: 3 (30%) were minority women, 1 (10%) was a minority male, and 2 (20%) were white women. The remaining 4 (40%) were white males. We also facilitated rotational assignments for 19 employees, of which 6 (31%) were minorities, 5 (26%) were white women and 8 (42%) were white men.

We encourage our staff to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to help establish well thought out career goals and a plan to follow until they attain their goals. We also encourage them to modify the plan as they progress or, perhaps, decide over time that they would like to switch to a different career.

We have worked with our Small Business and Civil Rights staff to ensure that our staff knows the opportunities available and the benefits of participating in the agency's mentoring program. I believe this program is one of the keys to successful implementation of an IDP. I am pleased that we have several employees who, as part of their development plans, obtained college degrees in information technology fields and have seen their hard work and perseverance result in successful entry into a professional technical field and, indeed, advance in that field. I was pleased to be present at an awards ceremony last November to see Cynthia Dekle honored as a graduate of the General Services Administration's (GSA's) "1K by 2K" program. GSA initiated this program several years ago to pursue having 1000 Government professionals who were in a masters degree program additionally certified in information technology or information management specialties by the Year 2000. Ms. Dekle graduated last December from the University of Maryland in Information Systems Management. Ms. Dekle worked for many years in our central word processing unit before her hard work earned her a professional position in information technology. She gives much credit for the advancement of her education and career to employing the IDP process and NRC's mentoring program.

Challenges

The OCIO also supports needs of staff with disabilities. We also supply employees who have special needs with equipment such as large monitors and tracking balls. We have reviewed our public website for compliance with Federally mandated disability access requirements. Our most frequently accessed public website pages are in full compliance with Federal disability access standards. In the future, we will continue to comply with Federal guidance in determining how we support those with special needs.

We are trying to improve the morale and improve the working environment for our employees. I have regular brown bag lunches with small groups of OCIO employees in my office to become acquainted with them and to learn of their concerns. We also hold quarterly meetings for all OCIO employees to ask questions, to share information, recognize staff achievements, and provide OCIO employees an opportunity to better understand what is going on in the office and agency. In fact, some of you have participated in these meetings, and provided our employees the opportunity to ask their questions or share their concerns with you directly. We will continue to ask for your support with our all-hands meetings. Communications between managers and staff continue throughout the year. OCIO division directors and branch chiefs have regular staff meetings to exchange information, encourage staff to ask questions, and recognize their staff's achievements.

I have personally met several times with Irene Little and her staff to find ways of educating our staff on the diversity goals of the agency and raising their awareness of associated issues. Ms. Little and Ms. Williams have met with many of my staff, at all levels within the organization, both individually and as a group to raise their awareness on diversity goals and issues.

Conclusion

I am confident that these activities and plans will help us improve both the morale and the working environment for our employees. I am aware that this is a continuing challenge, and I will continue to meet with my managers and supervisors to ensure that we make our office a desirable and "diversity aware" place in which to work.

Equal Employment Opportunity Workforce Profile Data

Attachment 2

Joint Statement by:
The Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees

Statement by:
The Joint Labor Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee

EEO Joint Statement January 2001 Briefing

The EEO Advisory Committees (Committees) continue to appreciate these opportunities to brief the Commission. These briefings are important for meeting the Committees' goal of identifying issues that may impact equal employment opportunities for all employees and providing recommendations to address those issues. This joint statement acknowledges the progress that the Committees have recognized since the last briefing and summarizes what the Committees have collectively identified as the top EEO issues.

The Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) and the Office of Human Resources (HR) continue to work with the Committees and Office Directors to address the EEO issues confronting the Agency. Since the last briefing, the Office Director for Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) has met with each individual Committee to discuss the Committee's issues. In addition, NRR has assigned senior managers to work with each Committee to help champion issues with the Committee. Also, the Office Director for Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) has met with all the EEO Advisory Committee chairpersons to discuss EEO issues and plans to continue to routinely meet with the group. Both Office Directors took these opportunities to explain their considerable ongoing efforts to address EEO issues within their respective offices. Another positive step noted by the Committees was the addition of a specific subelement in SES managers' elements and standards that assesses managers' EEO efforts. This was a recommendation by the Committees and using those subelements to measure supervisors' and managers' performance remains one of our top issues. The Committees wish to acknowledge the recent managing diversity (MD) training and recommend continued support of the managing diversity initiative. The MD initiative should lead to a better understanding by employees and managers of the Agency's managing diversity process and its goals. The Committee also acknowledges the success of the Agency's recent efforts to attract and hire highly qualified Hispanics from the University of Puerto Rico. The Committees appreciate SBCR's, HR's and Office Directors' efforts in pursuing and implementing these positive measures.

The following are the top ten issues and recommendations by the Committees. In developing these top EEO issues, the Committees demonstrated the spirit of the diversity program, distinct and separate groups working together to solve common problems and achieve common goals.

TOP EEO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hold managers and supervisors accountable for their EEO performance through the appraisal system.
- Continue targeted recruitment and hiring goals for entry and upper level positions for minorities and women. Apply approaches to attract and hire applicants of under-represented groups similar to strategies recently used to attract Hispanic applicants.
- Encourage fair performance appraisals.
- Increase representation of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities for management, supervisory, professional, and technical positions.
- Increase representation of women, minorities, persons with disabilities and persons over 40 for rotational assignments.
- Develop process to capture valuable corporate knowledge of staff, especially of older workers.

- Continue to provide EEO training to all employees and managers.
- Encourage the establishment of upward mobility positions to provide opportunities for advancement of existing lower graded employees.
- Enhance marketing and management support of employee welfare/family-friendly initiatives.

Attached statements of the individual Committees will elaborate further on these issues and recommendations. The EEO Advisory Committees and Subcommittees appreciate the support the Commission has given to the Committees' issues as reflected by this past year's successes and we welcome your continued support for our top ten issues.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS
JANUARY 2001 EEO BRIEFING STATEMENT

The Advisory Committee for African Americans (ACAA) welcomes this opportunity to address the Commission on EEO-related issues that impact the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Our issues have been discussed amongst the EEO advisory committees, the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and our constituency here at the NRC.

During the year 2001, the ACAA will focus its activities on three key areas that, in our view, would result in significant gains in EEO for the Agency. These areas are:

1. Increase the number of African Americans in supervisory, management, SES, and senior level positions; and in the feeder groups (Grades GG-13 - 15) that support these levels.

SES, management, and supervisory, and senior level positions continue to be elusive for African Americans and other minorities. For example, in a number of past briefings, it has been stated that over the next 3-5 years, the few African Americans in SES positions will become eligible for retirement. This could result in very little to no representation of African Americans at the senior and managerial levels within the Agency. The ACAA strongly recommends that the Agency undertake new and/or bold merit staffing initiatives (i.e., hire at the SES, management, and supervisory levels and encourage existing staff to apply for supervisory and other developmental opportunities) to enhance representation of African Americans in these levels. Also, we recommend that the feeder groups include selections of African Americans at the GG-13 through GG-15 levels, as appropriate, to prepare them for the senior level and managerial positions.

2. Increase the number of new hires (entry-level and experienced) for African Americans.

During FY 96 through FY 2000, the hiring of African Americans had a significant downward trend. The hiring of African Americans should at least be consistent with their representation in the labor force. This would facilitate the succession of anticipated future losses of African Americans over the next 3-5 years, and enhance the pool of current and future candidates for SES, managerial, and supervisory positions.

Furthermore, hiring efforts via recruitments could be improved. We recommend use of similar strategies as applied in recent recruitment efforts at the University of Puerto Rico including use of diversified recruiting teams; senior level personnel with "on-the-spot" hiring authority; shorter evaluation time to review prospective candidates, and keeping candidates informed on progress regarding their application. This approach to further enhance minority recruitment efforts should enhance our ability to identify qualified African Americans and other minorities. Accordingly, the ACAA will continue to participate in the Agency's recruitment efforts with a focus on expanding the recruitment to new sources, including job fairs, conventions, and outreach to academic and professional institutions.

3. Encourage the establishment of upward mobility positions to provide opportunities for advancement of African Americans and other minorities.

As stated in previous briefings, we believe that the upward mobility program could be more effective if it is better defined and advertised. For specific occupational categories (e.g., clerical and administrative) this program could provide meaningful training opportunities for both new and current employees. A February 23, 1999, SRM addressed promoting from within the Agency and placed particular emphasis on employees who have acquired degrees and/or special training. We believe that the upward mobility program can be used to train and develop existing employees to a level where they can be better utilized. We again recommend that each office and region give serious consideration to allocating at least one administrative position each fiscal year to be staffed under the upward mobility guidelines.

COMMITTEE ON AGE DISCRIMINATION
JANUARY 2001 EEO BRIEFING STATEMENT

The Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD) once again appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission on aging issues. CAD continues to enjoy the active participation of its members, and successful communications with the other EEO committees and the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR).

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) applies to employees over the age of 40. In recognition of the NRC's aging population, CAD studies aging issues for several age groupings over the age of forty. The full and productive use of the NRC's older employees is in the best interest of all NRC employees, managers, and the goals of the agency. However, CAD firmly believes that American society consciously, or unconsciously, supports the concept that a youthful workforce is better than an older work force. CAD believes that, to some degree, this is also reflected in NRC's thinking and practices regarding aging employees. CAD hopes to continue to work with SBCR, NRC management, and the Commission, to make the NRC an example of progressive thinking and innovative actions regarding aging workforce issues in government, industry, and society as a whole.

In working with SBCR, NRC management, and the Commission, the CAD wishes to acknowledge some successes. The addition of a subelement to the SES Standards and Elements addressing SES performance in promoting the EEO program was a positive step. The Diversity Day agenda, featuring a panel for discussing aging issues, was a first. The CAD wants to especially emphasize our appreciation for the yellow announcement signed by the Chairman acknowledging May as the Older American Month. May was designated as Older American Month by the President in recognition of the contributions older Americans have made and continue to make to this country.

To follow-up on these successes, the CAD has the following recommendations:

During the March EEO Commission briefing (SECY-00-0064 dated March 13, 2000), we recommended that substantive criteria need to be established for senior managers to evaluate the EEO performance of supervisors and low-level managers. As noted above, the SES Standards and Elements have been revised to add a subelement to emphasize EEO performance. We recommend that this revision be applied to all supervisors.

Another item from the March meeting was the need for the EDO to send a memo to managers and supervisors advising them of low ratings in appraisals for older male scientists and engineers. Management needs to be sensitized to ensure realistic and fair evaluations. SBCR has indicated that a memorandum on performance appraisals will be issued annually by the EDO, reminding managers of their obligation to fairly evaluate all employees.

The Office of Personnel (OP) should provide Committees with sanitized (no names or SSN #s) data bases on performance appraisals, as was done four years ago. Currently requests for data must be processed through various offices. The former practice was changed, supposedly due to privacy issue concerns. However, we feel that sufficient safeguards exist to eliminate this concern.

The NRC should provide a web page that includes important EEO-related links. CAD and other committees will identify specific links that can be included on the web page. This would make EEO information readily available to all employees. Examples: www.eeoc.gov and www.aoa.dhhs.gov.

Our draft yellow announcement originally had such links but they were removed due to lack of space.

It is time for renewed training for members of all the EEO committees. This would provide an update of EEO rules and regulations, and any changes in NRC or government-wide policy.

While some progress has been made since the last briefing, CAD believes that more progress can and should be made. We feel that attention to aging issues will enhance the NRC's productivity, and effectiveness in managing outcomes. By taking a lead in dealing with aging issues, the NRC can only enhance its reputation with its stakeholders and its workforce.

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 2001 EEO BRIEFING STATEMENT

The Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee (APAAC) appreciates the opportunity to share with you our suggestions in enhancing EEO awareness and mutual understanding.

In past EEO briefings, we identified and brought to your attention a few EEO-related issues, such as the limited representation of APAs in the management positions, the longer-than-average time-in-grade issue, adverse impacts to APAs during the last agency-wide reorganization, and the selection process for the SES Candidate Development Program. We also recognize that the recent reorganization resulted in reductions in a number of supervisory positions and opportunities for career growth. It also resulted in a large drain in “corporate” knowledge and created challenges in retaining people with experiences. We put forward a set of recommendations to not only help enhancing EEO objectives but to ensure the diversity and viability of the agency and to encourage all employees to be part of the process. These recommendations have thus far been shared with NRR management for consideration. They focus on three areas:

(a) RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- Encourage employees to network with selected universities/colleges and attend professional conferences and job fairs to attract potential employees.
- Accelerate the time between identification of potential employees and transmittal of an offer letter.
- Encourage employees to mentor interns and new employees to provide them assistance and guidance.
- Provide incentives and management support to enhance employee career growth, such as developmental and rotational assignments, mentoring, and career counseling.
- Recognize employees’ technical and high quality performances in contribution to the mission of the agency.

(b) SUCCESSION PLAN

- Recognize highly qualified and talented individuals with potential leadership and management skills.
- Encourage employees to participate in formal/informal career development programs and accept rotational and developmental assignments.

(c) OPEN COMMUNICATION

- Identify mechanisms to clearly convey management beliefs, commitments, and expectations for diversity.
- Encourage employees to identify potential work-related EEO concerns and bring them to the attention of management before they become problems.

FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 2001 EEO BRIEFING STATEMENT

FWPAC once again appreciates the opportunity to address the Commission on EEO-related issues that affect women in the NRC, both in Rockville and in the Regions. Our focus will remain in supporting efforts to maintain the current trend in enhancing the representation of women in management and senior level positions.

We encourage continued support and commitment in managing a diversified workforce at the NRC. We recognize that there is great potential in all employees which must be appreciated and maximized to successfully carry out the Agency's objectives.

FWPAC would like to focus on two major issues over the next year or so. The first issue is the plight of secretarial and support staff in the agency. FWPAC recommends that the agency support and encourage secretaries to meet their potential and to advance in their profession or assist them in obtaining training to move into other career tracks. The second issue is the number of woman securing awards.

Secretary Goal

Since the majority of secretaries in the agency are women, FWPAC would like to focus attention on identifying methods of assisting those secretaries who would be interested in enhancing their careers through educational opportunities or other training. Many secretaries do not see a career ladder that they can follow beyond the lower grades and find it disheartening. Too often, the training that they could use to expand their horizons are considered too time consuming or costly, even when they are much less costly or time-consuming than the typical training regularly taken by technical staff.

To accomplish career goals, secretaries need some of the same career planning tools that technical staff are expected to have. Long-term training plans which lead to a future career goal and short-term training plans which allow secretaries to identify 1-2 year educational needs and assure support from their management, are needed. These training plans must be signed by the secretaries and their managers and time must be allotted to allow secretaries to take those classes. Too often, FWPAC has been informed, secretaries are permitted to sign up for classes but not allowed to take them due to understaffing. If secretaries were treated like valued staff, a backup plan would be in place in order to allow them to take the classes they sign up for and to enable them to sign up for the most appropriate training to enhance their careers. The NRC should evaluate support staff capabilities, especially secretaries, to discover and develop ways to give them choices in the work environment.

Specifically, FWPAC will encourage and assist in the development of the following career tools:

- Secretary rotational opportunities
- Endorse the Upward Mobility Program for secretaries
- Encourage secretaries to enter the mentoring program
- Individual Development Plans for secretaries
- Training Plans with substantive courses to enable an enhancement of knowledge

FWPAC would like to take this opportunity to thank NRR, RES, and NMSS management for indicating their support of this initiative and providing access to those managers who can assist in developing training plans and making support staff positions more rewarding.

Awards

Recently, the NRC Presidential Awards were announced. Although FWPAC does not wish to undermine the sterling attributes of those winners of the awards, it was noted that not a single woman was identified by this agency. Two questions arise from this: (1) Are there too few women in the SES ranks in NRC, and (2) Are women employees not appropriately considered for awards? FWPAC will be requesting data to track and monitor the proportions of awards at to women in the agency. In addition, FWPAC will continue to support initiatives that enhance representation of women in supervisory, management, and executive positions.

FWPAC strongly supports the agency efforts to increase the number of women in supervisory positions. NRC should continue those efforts. FWPAC would like to see similar efforts in enhancing promotions of non-technical women and in rewarding technical and non-technical women employees performance.

HISPANIC EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 2001 EEO BRIEFING STATEMENT

The Agency has enhanced its targeted recruitment program to increase the representation of Hispanics. HEPAC commends the Office of the Executive Director for Operations for their proactive brainstorming sessions on ways to increase the Hispanic representation in the Agency. Recently, the Office of Human Resources has launched new, innovative ways of recruiting, which involves participation by senior NRC managers, on-the-spot offers during recruitment trips, more preparation work prior to and following recruitment trips, and a renewed level of interest by NRC managers. HEPAC consistently assisted both offices on these efforts, and continues to identify good prospects from every Hispanic-oriented recruitment trip.

In the past, the agency has generally not followed through with potential candidates after recruitment trips. Considering that management's recent efforts have the potential to make a notable increase in the Hispanic representation in the Agency, HEPAC encourages the use of a Communications Plan to have a coordinated process for following up with these new recruits.

HEPAC strongly believes that more can, and should, be done to assist Hispanics in the NRC in realizing their full employment potential, so that they are better represented at the highest levels within the Agency. We need management support in providing visibility for Hispanics, through such opportunities as rotations to the EDO's and the Commissioners' Offices, assignments on high profile projects, future SES Candidate Development Programs, and future Supervisory Development Programs. In the past eight years, only two Hispanics have been promoted to GG-15. Even longer and more crucial, it has been almost seventeen years since an Hispanic has been selected for the SES. At this rate, it could be another decade before the next Hispanic is selected into the SES. Lack of advancement into senior level positions is one reason young Hispanics seek more rewarding and challenging career options outside the Agency.

The Agency needs to focus on the retention and career advancement of Hispanics that already exist at the NRC. Otherwise, the outcome of the Agency's recent successful recruitment efforts could have little or no long-term impact on the retention and upward mobility of Hispanics in the NRC.

JOINT LABOR-MANAGEMENT EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 2001 EEO BRIEFING STATEMENT

The Joint Labor-Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee (JLMEEOC) was established by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the National Treasury Employees Union (NRC/NTEU) to advise the NRC on matters regarding equal employment opportunity (EEO). The Committee is currently chaired by Rateb (Boby) Abu-Eid and co-chaired by Cheryl A. Trottier. The current members include Frank Akstulewicz, Frederick Combs, Lisa Clark, Sam Pettijohn, Maria Schwartz, and King Stablein. We thank the Commission and NRC management for the opportunity to present the Committee's observations and views.

As the NRC moves into the new millennium, the JLMEEOC believes that continued Agency commitment to EEO and affirmative actions is critical to the creation of a work environment free of discrimination, which effectively and equitably utilizes Agency resources. In the last Commission EEO briefing (SECY-00-0064), the JLMEEOC presented several EEO standing issues and recommendations for creating such an environment.

At this time, the JLMEEOC would like to recognize the Agency's progress in certain EEO areas. At the same time, this Committee notes that there is still a great deal of work to be done if the NRC wishes to meet its EEO performance objectives, and would like to identify issues that the Agency should consider priorities in reaching those objectives.

The JLMEEOC is aware that the Agency has made substantive efforts to address diversity issues. The JLMEEOC views, for example, the efforts of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights' (SBCR) in addressing diversity through Agency-wide training provided to most staff and managers, as an indicator of achievement towards improving diversity awareness and enhancing communications within the NRC at large. The special attention of the NRC's Office Directors and Administrators to affirmative actions, through dialogues and meetings with SBCR and EEO advisory Committees, is another indicator of improved management responsiveness to EEO issues. Development of an independent EEO sub-element in the appraisal standards and elements of SES managers is an improvement in the implementation of the affirmative action policies and guidelines.

The JLMEEOC believes that the Agency should continue to address EEO issues, implement affirmative action, and steadfastly to pursue the Agency's goal of a discrimination-free work environment. In this regard, the JLMEEOC recommends that the Agency focus on the following EEO issues:

- Expand the pool of women and minorities for supervisory, management, executive, and senior level positions.
- Provide more opportunities for career enhancement and upward mobility of women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and specific age groups to reduce current anomalies in the time-in-grade of some demographic data.
- Enhance efforts for recruitment, development, and retention of women, minorities, and disadvantaged groups.
- Develop specific criteria to evaluate and monitor EEO performance of managers, supervisors, and specific organizational units.

- Continue to improve communications within the NRC to spread awareness regarding affirmative actions and cultural diversity and to minimize unjustified perceptions.
- Enhance the current mentoring program and policies to expand participation of women, minorities, and disadvantaged groups in such a program.
- Establish effective means to enhance participation of women and minorities in the SES Candidate Development program.
- Develop and enhance opportunities for rotational and visible assignments for women and minorities.
- Optimize effectiveness of the current “Affirmative Action Employment Plan” and establish an independent vehicle to monitor EEO progress and identify standing affirmative action issues.
- Continue to enhance employee welfare/family-friendly initiatives and flexible working environment.

The JLMEEOC is encouraged by the recent progress made in certain EEO areas and believes that the Agency goals and policies regarding Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity, and Affirmative Action should continue to be vigorously pursued and implemented. The JLMEEOC believes that implementing EEO policies and goals would help the NRC to tap the full potentials of all staff and maximize the performance and productivity of the Agency at large.