

POLICY ISSUE INFORMATION

January 31, 2001

SECY-01-0012

FOR: The Commissioners

FROM: William D. Travers
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: ACTION PLAN FOR MAINTAINING CORE COMPETENCE

PURPOSE:

To provide the Commission a plan of action for maintaining the core scientific, engineering, and technical competencies needed to perform NRC's technically-based functions. Staff has begun a phased implementation of the plan as discussed below.

BACKGROUND:

In a memorandum dated October 24, 2000, Chairman Meserve requested that a plan of action be prepared to address the issue of maintaining the core scientific, engineering, and technical competencies needed to perform NRC's technically-based functions. The staff was requested to develop a plan of action and submit it to the Commission by the end of January 2001.

DISCUSSION:

In its FY 2000 Strategic Plan, the staff adopted four corporate management strategies, one of which was to "sustain a high-performing, diverse workforce." In support of that strategy, the staff committed to base its human resource decisions on sound workforce planning and analysis, and to recruit and retain a high quality, diverse workforce with the skills needed to achieve its mission and goals. Under its corporate strategies, the staff further indicated that it will use a human resource planning process to identify current and future inventory skill needs and gaps for the agency.

The Chairman's request is consistent with the NRC's corporate strategies listed in the Strategic Plan and provides added impetus for the implementation of those strategies.

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As required by the Strategic Plan and consistent with the Chairman's request, the staff has developed a comprehensive plan for implementing a systematic strategic workforce planning process at NRC to address core competency issues. The enclosed plan of action is designed to complement existing human resource planning initiatives. The primary purpose of Strategic Workforce Planning is to support human resources allocation decisions around the Commission's Planning, Budgeting, and Performance Management process. The process will identify core competency requirements and the strategies necessary to meet the agency's programmatic strategic human resources needs. The approach for carrying out this process is described in detail in the enclosed plan of action. The plan includes methods to be used for:

- performing an assessment of current technical capacity
- identifying competencies (e.g., knowledge and skills) needed to achieve mission requirements
- designing workforce strategies to address the gaps between current capacity and projected needs

The process includes discussions of workforce planning with professional organizations and with other government agencies that are currently engaged in the process. Staff members from the Office of Human Resources have held preliminary discussions with program offices regarding the approach outlined in this plan. Offices have, over the years, identified several technical areas for which specific efforts to retain the competencies will be necessary. These include digital instrumentation and control, criticality safety, risk assessment, and information technology, among others. In areas such as these, where offices have already identified potential gaps in skills and competencies, strategic workforce planning gap closure efforts have been underway and will continue.

Consistent with their performance goals and strategies, the offices are prepared to begin the implementation of the plan, on a small scale, starting with identification of those critical skills that might be more difficult to fill. The staff also intends to merge this effort to coincide with the PBPM cycle in order to benefit from decisions made regarding planning assumptions, prioritization, and budgeting. Once the effectiveness of the SWP process and the usefulness of the resulting information have been demonstrated, the effort will be extended to a larger number of positions and skills. Details of the process are outlined in the attached action plan.

The time frame for the conduct of the initial phase is February 1, 2001 through September 30, 2001. The details of the schedule for the follow-on phased implementation will be developed following an assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the process along the lines described below in Section 8, Performance Standards.

Although exact funding requirements have not been determined at this time, our preliminary estimate for the Strategic Workforce Plan of Action during FY 2001 - FY 2005 is \$2.4 million, with the initial phase expected to be \$650,000 for FY 2001. Total staff time commitment is expected to range from 24 to 28 FTE across the agency, of which 2.5 FTE is for the initial phase. Any additional funding needed in FY 2001 will be addressed during the Midyear Review Process. Funding needs for FY 2002 and beyond will be evaluated and addressed using the Planning, Budgeting, and Program Management (PBPM) process.

The Office of the Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this Commission paper for resource implications and has no objections.

/RA/

William D. Travers
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for Operations

Enclosure:
Strategic Workforce Planning
Plan of Action

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