

May 25, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: William D. Travers */RA by William F. Kane/*
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: STAFF REQUIREMENTS MEMORANDUM (SRM M010109) FOLLOWING
THE EEO COMMISSION BRIEFING

In response to the Staff Requirements Memorandum (Attachment 1), the staff is providing the following information:

1. Expand EEO training for new supervisors (including training on the complaint process and the Alternate Dispute Resolution Process), to all managers.

The Office of Human Resources (HR) and the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) are updating our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) course, *EEO and Sexual Harassment Prevention for Managers and Supervisors*, to respond to changes in law, regulation, and processes at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). This two-day course is required for new supervisors. The revisions will include a discussion on Managing Diversity and on use of alternative dispute resolution to resolve EEO complaints. The objective is to give supervisors the tools they need to successfully manage a diverse workforce and respond to issues that give rise to EEO complaints. All supervisors and managers will be encouraged to take this course within the next three years.

2. Develop a process to improve the availability of opportunities, especially upward mobility opportunities, for eligible women, minorities, those with disabilities, and persons over 40.

The process to improve availability of opportunities for NRC employees includes several strategies. Our goal is to focus on the strategies that provide good results. The formal upward mobility program is one strategy. It is designed to move a person from a non-professional to a para-professional or professional position. Use of this Program requires a very structured approach that incorporates use of extensive training plans. During FY 2001, two positions were filled under this Program. However, using a slightly different strategy, 23 employees competed and were selected for positions that offered upward mobility in the form of promotions or lateral reassignments to paraprofessional and professional positions. This approach gives managers more flexibility in staffing the positions, and broadens the pool of potential applicants. HR

representatives continue to encourage selecting officials to redesign certain administrative positions (e.g., management analyst, budget analyst, personnel management specialist) to broaden the pool of clerical and support staff that might qualify and apply for these positions.

The Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee recently formed a subcommittee to assist secretaries and support staff in developing career strategies for the future. Two general career planning sessions were held in April 2001 and one in May 2001. Strategies, such as developing a useful IDP, working with a mentor, and preparing clear and persuasive application packages, were discussed. Participants were offered an opportunity to followup with individual career counseling sessions.

The *Leadership Potential Program* is being offered for employees at grade levels GG 13-15. The purpose of this program is to (1) prepare high-performing individuals for positions requiring supervisory, managerial, or leadership skills and abilities; thereby creating a more diverse supervisory and managerial team within the agency. The program will begin in June 2001, and will include individual needs assessments, group training, and developmental assignments. Each participant selects a senior advisor to assist the participant, provide guidance, review the IDP, and participate in program activities. When the participants successfully complete the program they may be non-competitively assigned to a supervisory position at their current grade level.

The Graduate School, *USDA 2002 Executive Leadership Program* (formerly the Executive Leadership Program for Mid-Level Employees) is designed for employees at grade levels GG-11-12 who have demonstrated supervisory or management potential. NRC fully supports participation in this program and expects to select three to five candidates for the program.

3. Continue creative initiatives to support diversity in the workplace.

The staff is committed to continuing the use of several initiatives implemented over the past few years to support diversity in the workplace. The Office of Small Business & Civil Rights (SBCR) has conducted managing diversity sessions for all employees and supervisors. SBCR has also facilitated follow-up action with some offices to develop office-specific goals consistent with agency goals for managing a diverse workforce.

The Agency continues to promote diversity in the workplace in its recruiting program. Approximately 50% of the NRC's recruitment events this year were specifically targeted to institutions with a diverse applicant pool. Beginning in fiscal year 2001, the Agency began using new recruitment strategies, including making on-the-spot job offers.

Elements of the University of Puerto Rico recruitment initiative have been used at the University of Maryland, Howard University, Clemson University and Pennsylvania State University, including reviewing applications prior to on-campus visits. Following an initial interview some on-the-spot offers have been made for positions in headquarters and the regions. We have also begun to use several pay incentives in order to be more competitive in the job market. Recruitment bonuses have been used this fiscal year, and student loan repayments should become available later this year or early in fiscal year 2002.

The Office of Human Resources is proposing the use of an automated vacancy announcement system called QuickHire. This web-based system supports online applications, electronically

pre-screens candidates, and employs user-specified criteria to rank applicants. QuickHire could streamline the process for preparing vacancies, processing application, rating, ranking, and selecting applicants. This system could increase the number of applicants as well as the diversity of applicants by enhancing our ability to process application and make selections more swiftly.

4. Ensure that these initiatives are effectively communicated to all employees.

Staff is ensuring that information regarding new and continuing initiatives is communicated timely and clearly to employees. Recent examples of effective communications include:

- The Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee (FWPAC) issued a Network Announcement on March 22, 2001, explaining that FWPAC had formed a subcommittee to assist secretaries and support staff in becoming more competitive for higher-level positions. The announcement identified the members of the subcommittee, invited secretaries and support staff to provide input to their representative, and announced the career planning sessions.
- HR issued a Network Announcement on March 23, 2001, describing the purpose of the *Career Planning Sessions for Secretaries*, the schedule for the sessions (April 17, 2001 and April 24, 2000, 10 a.m. to noon), the process for enrolling, and the individual to contact for additional information.
- HR issued Yellow Announcement No. 009 on February 5, 2001, describing the purpose of the *Leadership Potential Program*, the audience for the training, the application process, and the individuals to contact for additional information. An amended announcement was issued to clarify that this program was open to employees at GG-13, 14 and 15 grade levels.
- HR issued a Yellow Announcement No. 008 on February 1, 2001, describing the purpose of the *2002 Executive Leadership Program*, the targeted audience, the application process, and the individual to contact for additional information.
- All vacancies, including vacancies for upward mobility positions, are announced on the HR internal web-page. In FY 2001, one formal upward mobility position was advertised.
- SBCR issued a network announcement describing the purpose of the managing diversity sessions, coordinated the schedules for all offices and regions, and the individual to contact for additional information. Participant handbooks were prepared for use in these sessions.

5. Assist current employees in enhancing their careers at the NRC.

The Office of Human Resources provides professional career counseling to any employee who wishes to develop career strategies for the future. Employees may explore career-related issues and strategies in a confidential manner during five, one-hour private sessions with a career counselor. Career counseling is tailored to meet the individual's specific counseling needs and to:

- Heighten employee awareness of qualifications for positions of interest, including experience and education, and the ability to communicate them to others.
- Provide information and resources related to career and occupational planning and job requirements for the position an individual holds or aspires to attain.
- Assist employees in understanding career opportunities and limitations at the NRC, other Federal agencies, and in the private sector.
- Provide employees with the knowledge and skill to prepare a resume and participate in an interview.
- Assist employees in establishing short-term and long-term goals to achieve optimum career and personal growth.
- Assist employees in increasing their knowledge of job search techniques.
- Provide assistance and guidance in developing an Individual Development Plan.

SBCR continues to provide career guidance and assist in brokering rotational opportunities for interested employees.

6. Implement the education pay-back program and discuss at the next briefing.

The Office of Human Resources has developed a policy in Management Directive 10.49 (currently in comment/concurrence circulation) to implement the Student Loan Repayment Program for current and new employees. Under the proposed policy, certain types of federally-insured student loans could be repaid by the agency if needed to facilitate recruitment and retention of highly or uniquely qualified employees, or employees with essential skills. A potential employee could be authorized a loan repayment as an incentive to accept NRC employment; or a current employee could be authorized a loan repayment as an incentive to remain with the NRC if the employee possessed skills needed by the NRC for mission-critical work. The maximum allowable amount of a student loan repayment is \$6,000 per employee per year, and there is a lifetime maximum of \$40,000. A loan repayment of any amount obligates the employee to three years of continued government service.

The NRC will authorize student loan repayments as necessary to attract and retain highly qualified applicants and employees. However, as funds for this incentive may be limited, student loan repayments will be made judiciously and in the context of the agency's overall strategic human capital framework.

7. Expedite contract support that would facilitate employees attending scheduled training and/or participate in rotational assignments.

HR has initiated a procurement to provide Secretarial and Office Assistant support to offices on an as needed basis, and as provided in applicable regulations. The contract will be administered by HR and will be "pay-as-you-go" by individual offices. It will be available for short-term needs. It is expected that the contract will be awarded in fiscal year 2001.

Attachment: As stated

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