

## **POLICY ISSUE INFORMATION**

**January 15, 2002**

**SECY-02-0011**

**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 February 6, 2002, the staff will discuss some of the successful initiatives that are now among the Agency's "best practices" in advancing the four guiding principles of the NRC's 5-Year Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP). The four guiding principles are: (1) create a discrimination-free work environment; (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; (3) employ a competent, highly skilled and diverse workforce in a positive work environment; and (4) recognize and value diversity, thereby demonstrating trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the Agency. The Paper will also address issues and challenges that may continue to impact EEO and the diversity program.

Following the last briefing on August 15, 2001, the Commission requested, through a Staff Requirements Memorandum (SRM) dated September 5, 2001, that the staff respond to four issues: 1) explore the feasibility of providing funding to students and faculty at historically black colleges in NRC-funded work being conducted at the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses at the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas; 2) ensure that disabled employees are aware of DOD's Computer Electronic Accommodations Program; 3) provide opportunities for upward mobility; 4) provide future recruitment activities that encompass a

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range of entry level positions to high level positions to ensure that the NRC's workforce is highly qualified and diverse. These issues were addressed in our response dated November 19, 2001. A copy of the SRM and our response are provided in Attachment 1.

This report includes a statement by Martin J. Virgilio on the implementation of the EEO program within the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (Attachment 2). Also included are EEO complaint data and workforce profile data by grade, ethnicity, gender, occupation, and age for FY 1997 - FY 2001 (Attachment 3); and a joint EEO committee statement from the five EEO Advisory Committees (Attachment 4). Attachment 4 also includes individual committee statements from the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee, the Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee, the Committee on Age Discrimination, the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee, and the Advisory Committee for African Americans.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **1. Best Practices**

At the semi-annual EEO Commission briefings in recent years, individual NRC Office Directors and Regional Administrators have shared their experiences and unique approaches to managing diversity and promoting EEO within their organizations. Additionally, several Office Directors have been meeting periodically with members of the EEO Advisory Committees to explore office-specific issues and initiatives. Due in part to this dialogue and feedback between the EEO Advisory Committee representatives and NRC senior management, a number of successful office-level practices were identified, including several that had potential for broader, agency-wide application. With support and assistance from the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) and the Office of Human Resources (HR), many of these "best practices" have been developed and implemented throughout the Agency and have resulted in notable progress in managing diversity and advancing the guiding principles of the NRC's 5-Year Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP). The following highlights several of these "best practices."

#### (a) The Merit Selection Process.

The EEO Advisory Committees, SBCR, and HR worked together to develop a checklist for merit selection vacancies which is in use throughout the Agency. The checklist provides guidance to Agency managers on implementing the merit selection process fairly and equitably, and in a manner that will promote employee confidence in the process. The checklist serves as a procedural reminder to encourage selecting officials to include broad rating factors, to consider posting positions at lower grade levels to provide upward mobility, and to interview all internal candidates on the "best qualified list" for competitive vacancies. In another key area, concerted efforts are uniformly made throughout the Agency to establish rating panels with diverse memberships to help ensure broad and balanced perspectives in evaluating and rating candidates for competitive selections.

#### (b) Integrated Team Approach to Recruitment.

In the past eighteen months, the Agency has achieved notable progress in recruiting highly qualified minority science and engineering candidates for the new Nuclear Safety Intern Program and entry-level technical positions. Under the leadership of the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services (DEDM), the staff effectively established a wide array of new recruitment tools and techniques, including on-the-spot offers, recruitment bonuses, and aggressive post-offer follow-up, to attract highly qualified minority science and engineering graduates to careers at the NRC. Suggestions from representatives of the

EEO Advisory Committees, NRC managers, and staff working in special-focus task groups were factored into the new initiatives.

Recruiting for entry-level candidates and the second class of Nuclear Safety Interns has been aggressive. In October 2001, teams of SES managers, HR representatives, and NRC staff returned to the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez to interview science and engineering students. In the fall of 2001, a similar effort was undertaken at three Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Tuskegee Institute, North Carolina A&T University, and Florida A&M University. The teams made a total of 22 offers to promising minority candidates and invited them for a follow-up visit at Headquarters in November 2001.

During the November follow-up visit at Headquarters hosted by HR, the Executive Director for Operations, DEDM, Office Directors from NRR, NMSS, RES, and OSTP, and the Regional Administrator from RIV, participated in a panel discussion regarding their respective areas of responsibility. In addition, representatives from the current class of Nuclear Safety Interns met with the candidates to share their insights on working for the NRC, and members of the EEO Advisory Committees and SBCR were on hand to assist HR in answering questions. Similar programs were held in Regions II and III. The success of the teams' recruitment effort stems from agency-wide collaboration and dedicated participation of HR representatives, senior managers at Headquarters, regional offices, SBCR, and the EEO Advisory Committees.

Another recruitment team visited California State and San Diego State campuses to attract highly qualified Asian Pacific American applicants enrolled in science and engineering programs. The NRC has received well over 600 applications from exceptional job seekers. By end of December, 90 written offers had been extended to a diverse group of candidates, including 39 Hispanics, 25 Whites, 23 African Americans, and 3 Asian-Pacific Americans. By mid-December, we had received acceptances from 16 Hispanics, 2 Whites, 5 African Americans, and 1 Asian Pacific American.

The Student Loan Repayment Program, which has been established in Management Directive 10.49, is an additional recruitment tool. The program authorizes the Agency to repay portions of a potential employee's Federally insured student loan, if necessary, to attract the individual to accept a position which the agency would encounter difficulty in filling with a highly qualified candidate. The program is funded for FY 2002 and implementation in the NRC will be determined by recruitment needs, skills requirements, and related workforce demands.

(c) Employee Development Programs.

To ensure a steady source and appropriate representation of women and minorities in NRC's key skills and knowledge base, the Agency has revitalized its specialized development programs for entry level employees, first-level supervisors, and Senior Executive Service (SES) managers.

The Agency established the Nuclear Safety Intern Program for outstanding individuals who are finishing or have recently received their degrees in the engineering, scientific, administrative, legal, or other applicable disciplines. An extensive two-year training program has been developed for interns which includes "core" courses and specialized technical training designed to meet specific program office needs. Special programs in writing and speaking have been added to help interns, whose native language is not English, to enhance their communication skills. In addition, at the suggestion of the

Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee, the Agency has recently acquired Spanish-to-English tapes to assist new employees who are interested in self-paced English language studies.

The first group of interns was officially welcomed to the NRC this fall and consists of 29 engineers, health physicists, and other scientists, and 13 legal and professional administrative interns. All technical program offices, as well as ADM, HR, and OGC, and the regional offices, are actively participating in the Nuclear Safety Intern Program. The demographics of this class are 45 percent Hispanic, 45 percent White, 5 percent African American, and 5 percent Asian.

The Leadership Potential Program (LPP) is aimed at developing leadership potential of full-time, permanent non-supervisory employees at grade levels GG-13 through GG-15. Employees must apply for the LPP, be accepted, and participate in the program's developmental activities. The LPP began in June 2001 and will conclude in May 2002. It is composed of two classes, totaling 41 participants (12 administrative personnel and 29 technical personnel) and includes a diverse mix of employees. LPP participants have completed individual assessments, identified their senior advisors, and attended six out of the ten courses in the core LLP curriculum. A *Coaching and Mentoring Workshop* was presented at Headquarters for all supervisors and senior advisors of LPP participants.

The SES Candidate Development Program (CDP) is an 18-month, part-time program for participants to engage in developmental assignments and formal training activities to enhance their executive competencies, increase their awareness of public policy, and prepare them to enter into the SES corps. A group of 23 participants completed the SES CDP in May 2001. To date, 17 have been placed in SES positions, including 2 minority males, 1 minority female, and 4 white women. A new session of the SES CDP was announced on October 12, 2001. Two information sessions were held in October for interested employees to explain the SES CDP and answer questions about the application process. One hundred forty-seven NRC employees submitted applications for this latest session of the SES CDP which is scheduled to begin in April 2002 and end October 2003.

Senior management mentors are an integral part of the Nuclear Safety Intern Program, LPP, and SES CDP to ensure that participants receive the individualized attention and guidance needed to support their success in these programs. SBCR is working with HR to enhance the mentoring process in these programs and throughout the Agency.

(d) Strategic Planning for an Aging Workforce.

A major challenge facing the NRC, and the Federal workforce as a whole, is the prospect that a significant segment of our workforce, who will become eligible for retirement over the next few years, may leave the Agency. To respond to this challenge, the Commission has authorized the implementation of a series of human capital initiatives, including "overhiring" to promote knowledge transfer. For certain critical or specialized areas of technical expertise, offices may be authorized to double-encumber positions in anticipation of the departure of an incumbent for retirement, resignation, reassignment, or promotion.

(e) Integrated, Uniform Accountability for EEO and Diversity.

Accountability is critical to an effective EEO process. Beginning last year, performance plans for SES managers included a separate sub-element clarifying and enhancing accountability for management support of the Agency's EEO and diversity goals. Similar

requirements have been added to the elements and standards for non-SES supervisors for the rating period starting in October 2001. This initiative further enhances the integrated and uniform approach to implementing the Agency's EEO responsibilities.

## **2. Challenges**

As discussed above, the Agency has made steady progress in several key areas affecting the advancement of EEO/managing diversity and the guiding principles of the AEP. Building on the constructive dialogue and teamwork that has fostered this progress, we must continue to direct our attention and energy to the challenges that could impact EEO and diversity management at the NRC:

### **(a) Effective Feedback and Communications with the Staff.**

Two areas of communication that continue to impact employee development and work force diversity are: (1) the employee performance appraisal process, and (2) feedback to employees about non-selection for competitive vacancies. Candid and constructive dialogue between managers and staff is critical to employee development, job satisfaction, and long-term employee retention. To promote improvement in this area, the new EEO sub-element for non-SES managers requires supervisors to "provide constructive feedback" to staff. Accordingly, senior managers will be required to evaluate their subordinate supervisors on how well they provide feedback to employees regarding the employees' performance. In addition, efforts are now underway in several offices to enhance employees' understanding of the performance appraisal process.

To address the recurring area of concern about feedback to employees regarding non-selection for competitive vacancies, HR is revising the course on "Effective Management Participation in Merit Staffing." In addition, the DEDM convened a brainstorming session with African American employees to discuss issues that could impact diversity in the workforce. As an outcome of that meeting, HR conducted four focus group sessions to gather feedback and explore initiatives to promote effective communication and creative approaches to EEO and diversity issues. This initiative is ongoing.

(b) Staff Retention and Career Development.

Training, career development, and growth opportunities will continue to be a high priority for the staff and a key element in promoting retention. Accordingly, the Agency must maintain its focus on ensuring diversity in the pipeline for both senior staff and management positions. The pipeline for future supervisory and managerial selections is becoming more diverse as 41 percent of the employees in the Leadership Potential Program are minorities and 32 percent are women, including minority women.

At the end of FY 2001, the overall demographic makeup of the NRC was 23 percent minorities and 38 percent women, including minority women. As a result of entry-level hiring over the past year, 44 professional entry-level employees have entered into NRC's workforce. These new employees include 22 minorities, 12 white women, and 10 white men.

The Agency must also continue its long-standing commitment to providing training and career development opportunities, including rotational assignments, for the staff. A continuing challenge, as often noted by the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee, has been providing upward mobility and rotational opportunities for secretarial and administrative staff. To provide flexibility and to facilitate developmental opportunities for the administrative staff, the NRC will use newly hired temporary secretaries from the secretarial pre-assignment center as well as temporary contract secretaries, where permitted. This support will be available to assist in the administrative support area when permanent personnel are out of the office for a variety of reasons, including rotational assignments. In particular, this initiative may allow more of the agency secretarial and clerical staff to participate in developmental assignments.

(c) Worker-Friendly Culture.

Recent studies and surveys have again confirmed the importance of the quality of the work environment to worker satisfaction. Factors affecting the quality of NRC's work environment -- including flexible and part-time work schedules, credit hours, flexiplace, the Headquarters Fitness Center, the on-site day care, and the day-care tuition subsidies -- are important considerations for both established employees and potential candidates who are considering careers at the NRC. To be competitive in attracting diverse, highly-skilled new applicants, and to succeed in retaining our talent, the NRC must keep its stride in implementing innovative worker-friendly policies. In addition, as our workforce becomes more diverse, we must continue our emphasis on the managing diversity process to provide tools for our managers in resolving issues that could lead to employee dissatisfaction and complaints. A managing diversity contract was recently awarded to provide continuing assistance to offices in their efforts to identify and address office-specific diversity management issues. SBCR will continue to facilitate contractor support for offices which have implemented initial strategies to address their specific concerns.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusion

Implementation of the “best practices” described above, coupled with enhanced efforts to improve outcomes of existing initiatives, contributed to the advancement of the four guiding principles of NRC’s Affirmative Employment Plan:

- Implementation of EEO accountability for all agency managers and supervisors will help sustain a discrimination free workplace.
- Improvements to the merit selection process, and implementation of new employee development initiatives such as the Agency’s new Nuclear Safety Intern Program, the SES Candidate Development Program, and the Leadership Potential Program will further promote employee career enhancement and advancement.
- Targeted recruitment, the effective use of new recruitment tools and incentives, and the active support of staff and managers throughout the Agency will enable us to continue to attract a competent, highly skilled and diverse group of entry level employees.
- Continued emphasis on the managing diversity process helps to demonstrate our commitment to recognize and value diversity, and thereby demonstrate trust, respect and concern for the welfare of all employees within the Agency.

The ongoing and enhanced dialogue among SBCR, HR, the EEO Advisory Committees, and NRC office directors continues to refresh the Agency’s approach to many of its challenges. While we celebrate our successes, we must also renew our commitment to achieve progress in the areas that continue to impact EEO and the diversity management throughout the NRC.

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William D. Travers  
Executive Director for Operations

Attachments:

1. SRM & Staff Response
2. Statement by Martin J. Virgilio, Director, NMSS
3. Equal Employment Opportunity Workforce Profile Data
4. EEO Advisory Committees Joint Statement

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**Staff Requirements Memorandum (M010815A)  
September 5, 2001**

**and**

**Staff Requirements Response  
November 19, 2001**

**Attachment 1**

**Statement by Martin J. Virgilio, Director  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards**

**Attachment 2**

## EEO PROGRAM POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE IN NMSS

**Martin J. Virgilio, Director**

### I. Introduction

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide the Commission an overview of NMSS's approach and activities regarding EEO and Diversity. First, I want to underscore that NMSS is fully committed to the Agency's EEO and Diversity policies and the associated goals of maintaining a healthy work environment free of discrimination, promoting inclusiveness and teamwork. I would like to acknowledge the NMSS management and staff efforts in this area, in particular those members of the NMSS Diversity Panel. I would also like to acknowledge SBCR management and staff who have been supportive of our diversity initiative, including those aspects that go beyond traditional EEO.

We believe managing diversity requires organizational and cultural changes, and that the keys to making successful cultural change are: a) alignment of the change with organizational goals and values; b) a committed leadership that is willing and able to model the desired change, that provides clear expectations, and provides the requisite resources; c) staff input; d) establishment of an infrastructure of policies, procedures and practices that reinforce the change, including personal accountability; e) effective and ongoing communication; and f) formal measurement/assessment of the effectiveness of the change.

For this presentation, I will briefly delineate the evolution of the diversity concept in NMSS, and I will describe components of our diversity initiative, and accomplishments to date.

The current focus of 'diversity' in NMSS has evolved from emphasizing workforce demographics, to understanding and appreciating employee differences, to managing diversity. Managing diversity places emphasis on creating and maintaining a positive work environment that fully supports the potential of all employees within the scope of our mission, thereby enhancing regulatory excellence within the agency.

The specific goals we expect to achieve include the following:

- Enhanced recruitment, development and retention of a high quality diverse workforce
- Healthier work environment and relationships among the staff
- Improved quality (including innovativeness), quantity and timeliness of our organizational products, rendering us more responsive and competitive.
- Enhanced public confidence through effective management of a diverse workforce.

The operating framework of NMSS' diversity initiative and accomplishments are described below:

### 1. Alignment with Goals and Values

We have established organizational values, visions, and expectations for NMSS consistent with those of the Agency, including an emphasis on the value of successfully managing a diverse workforce. We expect our managers, supervisors, and staff to adopt standards consistent with these goals.

### 2. NMSS Leadership Commitment

NMSS's Executive and Leadership teams meet weekly to develop and monitor NMSS organizational initiatives, including managing diversity. A senior management contact has been designated for NMSS members of each of EEO Advisory committee. The manager meets, at least quarterly, to exchange views on office-wide concerns, practices or initiatives that require attention. A designated "change agent" monitors our diversity actions and other organizational and human resource management initiatives. A part-time diversity consultant worked with our Diversity Panel, to design, administer and interpret our diversity survey which was used to obtain feedback from the staff regarding their perceptions of the NMSS organization. The consultant also provided diversity training, and group and individual coaching to improve management performance in this area.

### 3. Staff Input

Staff input was obtained from an NMSS-wide survey conducted in April 2001. Input is continuously obtained from the staff through the Diversity panel, and through management discussions with NMSS members of EEO Advisory Committee members. Based on the survey results we concluded that we need to do the following:

- Establish a clear and more inclusive definition of diversity management
- Improve communication between management and staff regarding diversity management
- Enhance perceived fairness/equity across subgroups in NMSS regarding human resource management policies, procedures and practices (especially those involving development, recognition/awards, and promotion)
- Clarify responsibilities and accountability regarding managing diversity--especially pertaining to management
- Establish a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of NMSS managing diversity initiatives

The NMSS Diversity Panel serves as a focal point for recommending improvements regarding diversity-related issues. The Panel consists of 12 employees who were randomly selected from NMSS personnel, and is representative of the demographics of the office. SBCR and a union representative have standing invitations to attend Panel meetings. The Panel's charter is to develop recommendations addressing five areas: 1) Definition of diversity; 2) Goals and/or approach(es) to diversity that merit focus; 3) Concepts and techniques for fostering appropriate use of diversity, including accountability; 4) Methods for fostering diversity within NMSS policies, procedures and practices, especially those pertaining to performance management (including succession planning, recruitment, hiring, orientation, development and training, work assignments, appraisals, recognition/awards, retention, promotions, exit), and 5) Method(s) for measuring the effectiveness of diversity.

#### 4. Infrastructure and Accountability

We have made some changes in this area such as the revision of the performance elements for managers to emphasize the importance of managing diversity. The Diversity Panel has made recommendations regarding policies, procedures and practices related to human resource management, including greater emphasis on mutual responsibility of management and staff.

#### 5. Effective and Ongoing Communication

Several communication mechanisms have been established. As previously mentioned, NMSS members of each EEO Advisory Committee have a senior management contact. The diversity panel has established a web page to improve communication within NMSS on diversity issues. The web page includes a Monthly Update and staff are invited to use the web page to provide comments on the Panel's recommendations and other management issues. The Panel has also established "comment boxes" throughout NMSS work areas for staff to provide comments and make recommendations regarding diversity. Further, employee "subgroup" meetings have been encouraged. Thus far, eight meetings have been held. They included a diverse group of staff, and provided constructive staff input.

#### 6. Measuring Effectiveness

Management is considering a three-pronged measurement approach: (1) follow up survey (2) diversity activities and interventions assessment, and (3) review of statistical data regarding workforce subgroups. We believe that the most reasonable point at which measurable results should be assessed is around Summer 2002. At that point, the diversity survey may be re-administered, input assessed, and other measures taken. While we believe that many positive actions are taking place in NMSS, we also believe that employee and management perceptions of those actions is critical.

#### NMSS Workforce Demographics, Hiring and Awards

As of September 30 2001, NMSS had a total of 347 permanent employees. Nineteen percent of the staff are minorities and 34% are female. While these percentages are essentially the same as at the end of FY 2000, NMSS has been able to maintain its diverse staffing levels in light of high attrition. The table below depicts NMSS's workforce by race/ethnicity and gender:

NMSS Staff by Race/Ethnicity and Gender (As of 9/30/01)						
Race/Ethnicity	Female		Male		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	22	6%	5	1%	27	7%
Asian Pacific American	8	2%	19	6%	27	8%
Hispanic	6	2%	4	1%	10	3%
Native American	0	0%	3	1%	3	1%
White, not of Hispanic origin	82	24%	198	57%	280	81%
Totals	118	34%	229	66%	347	100%

NMSS's recruitment emphasis has been twofold: (1) attracting and maintaining the critical skills needed for our current and future licensing responsibilities, and (2) enhancing NMSS's workforce racial/ethnic and gender diversity. We have fully supported the Agency initiative to establish ongoing and effective relationships with targeted colleges and universities that provide the greatest potential for attracting highly qualified, diverse applicants. Specifically, NMSS managers and staff participated in recruitment at the University of Puerto Rico, North Carolina A&T University, Tuskegee Institute and Florida A&M University to attract highly qualified engineers and scientists needed for current and future licensing responsibilities, and to enhance minority representation, particularly for African American and Hispanic staff.

We have also established cooperative education agreements with nine colleges and universities. Further, we have used the summer hire program to attract both cooperative education students and entry level candidates. Through the use of this three-pronged approach - recruitment efforts at colleges and universities, establishment of cooperative education agreements and an active summer hire program - NMSS has greatly increased its ability to attract and ultimately hire new staff. One example is an Asian American male who was an FY 2000 summer hire employee, and subsequently was hired into the Nuclear Safety Intern Program during FY 2001.

During FY 2001, NMSS filled 31 positions, of which 16 were technical hires. Six (38%) of the technical hires were at the GG-5 through GG-11 entry-level: 1 Asian American male, 1 Hispanic female, 1 Hispanic male, 2 white female and 1 white male. The remaining hires include: 4 minorities, 13 white women, and 8 white men. On-going and aggressive recruitment efforts should result in an increase of entry-level hires during FY 2002.

During FY 2001, we had a total of 5 cooperative education students, 3 from the University of Maryland, 1 from Georgia Tech, and 1 from Pennsylvania State University. Additionally, we had a total of 7 summer hire employees, 2 of whom had also been FY 2000 summer hire employees.

One of the continuing challenges in NMSS is our historically high attrition rate. During FY 2001, NMSS's attrition rate of 12.6% was significantly higher than the Agency's attrition rate of 9%. We are attempting to assess the reason(s) for the high attrition rate and identify appropriate strategies to reduce the attrition rate.

NMSS has implemented an ongoing awards program which recognizes employees for exceptional performance throughout the year, culminating in an annual award ceremony at the end of the appraisal period. In addition, the Employee of the Month Award (EOM) provides another opportunity for staff recognition. During FY 2001, 12 employees received the EOM award: 1 African American female, 1 Hispanic female, 2 Asian males, 4 white females, and 4 white males. Four employees received the Meritorious or Distinguished Service Awards: 1 African American male, 2 white females and 1 white male. In addition, NMSS presented a total of 228 awards, of which 226 were Performance Awards and 2 were High Quality Increases. The chart below shows the race/ethnicity and gender of the staff who received awards during FY 2001:

FY 2001 Performance Awards and High Quality Increases						
Race/Ethnicity	Female		Male		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	11	5%	4	2%	15	7%
Asian Pacific American	4	2%	12	5%	16	7%
Hispanic	2	1%	3	1%	5	2%
Native American	0	0%	3	1%	3	1%
White, not of Hispanic origin	59	26%	130	57%	189	83%
Totals	76	34%	152	66%	228	100%

Also during FY 2001, NMSS presented 47 Instant Cash awards. The chart below shows the race/ethnicity and gender of the staff who received the Instant Cash awards during FY 2001:

FY 2001 Instant Cash Awards						
Race/Ethnicity	Female		Male		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American	6	13%	1	2%	7	15%
Asian Pacific American	0	0%	2	4%	2	4%
Hispanic	0	0%	1	2%	1	2%
Native American	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
White, not of Hispanic origin	<u>10</u>	21%	27	58%	37	79%
Totals	16	34%	31	66%	47	100%

Summarizing the preceding data, NMSS has maintained a constant level of staff diversity during FY 2000-2001, despite our historically high attrition rate. Additionally, the distribution of awards is closely related to the ethnicity and gender percentages of the on-board staff. Nonetheless, NMSS will strive for continued improvement.

It should be noted that the preceding data reflects on the traditional (sub)groups that have been examined as part of the affirmative action/EEO focus of diversity. In the future, we may also provide other data and relevant information that would provide additional insights on progress made in managing diversity.

## 7. Conclusion

We are proud of the course that we have undertaken regarding managing diversity. We acknowledge that anticipated (e.g., resistance) and unanticipated events (e.g., resource cutbacks) may provide temporary stumbling blocks to full completion of our course. But we remain steadfast in our belief that because of the importance of managing diversity, such stumbling blocks will not deter us from reaching our final destination: to recruit and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce whose diversity is increasingly valued and utilized to achieve our organizational goals. We welcome your support and feedback.

**Equal Employment Opportunity Workforce Profile Data**

**Joint Statement by:  
The Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees**

## **EEO Joint Statement February 2002 Briefing**

The NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan (AEP) contains guiding principles for establishing a framework for NRC's EEO program and diversity management process. Listed under each guiding principle is a set of goals and objectives needed to successfully reach the guiding principles in the NRC's AEP. The goals and objectives contained in the plan address the areas needed for a successful EEO program and diversity management process at the NRC. Because the AEP is the NRC's strategic framework for (1) identifying and pursuing EEO goals and (2) supports the NRC's managing diversity initiatives, the EEO advisory committees have decided to provide its comments on EEO and diversity at the NRC within the context of the NRC's AEP.

One guiding principle of the AEP is to employ a competent and highly skilled workforce, representative at all levels of America's diversity; and enable employees to accomplish the NRC's mission by providing support, tools, and a positive work environment. The NRC's EEO advisory committees encourage the NRC to continue with its visible and concerted emphasis on meeting the goals and objectives under this guiding principle, namely:

1. Enhance opportunities for advancement of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities in the professional positions, through
  - a. Targeted recruitment of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities in the applicant pool for professional positions
  - b. Encourage minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities to participate in rotational assignments.
  - c. Encourage minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities in formal development programs.
  - d. Ensure that fair and equal consideration for advancement is given to women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities.
2. Expand the pool of minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities for supervisory, management, executive, and senior level positions.

The AEP does not explicitly include employees older than 50 in the two guiding principles listed above. However, the EEO advisory committees believes that the two guiding principles listed above should be equally applicable to employees older than 50.

During the current and last years recruitment season, the NRC has adopted practices to increase the chance of successfully recruiting highly qualified minorities for entry level positions and the Nuclear Safety Intern Program. The EEO advisory committees encourage the NRC to continue those practices which included: on-the-spot offers and establishing relationships with university professors. If the make-up of the current Leadership Potential Program is a reflection of NRC's commitment to diversity, the EEO advisory committees are confident that diversity will be given due consideration during the selection of qualified candidates to participate in the upcoming Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

A guiding principle of the AEP is to ensure that NRC policies, processes, and procedures provide all employees the opportunity to participate in mission accomplishments, and to compete fairly and equitably for career enhancement and advancement. The NRC's advisory committees encourage

the NRC to significantly increase its commitment to the goals and objectives under this principle, namely:

3. Establish management policies and practices that support the EEO initiatives of the NRC.
  - a. Conduct periodic reviews of the Merit Selection Process to ensure that current procedures and practices are consistent with goals and objectives.

Another guiding principle of the AEP is to recognize, appreciate, and value diversity, thereby demonstrating trust, respect, and concern for the welfare of all employees within the NRC. The NRC's advisory committees encourage the NRC to significantly increase its commitment to the goals and objectives under this principle, namely:

1. Encourage management to create and maintain a work environment that fosters open communication, mutual trust, and respect.
  - a) Encourage management to include employees in deliberations and decisions making processes, as appropriate, to create opportunities for employees' views to be heard and valued.
  - b) Provide honest and timely feedback on employees' performance and other concerns.
2. Demonstrate, through its actions, that management is concerned for employee welfare, morale, and recognition.
  - a) Continue family-friendly policies and practices such as work-at-home, part-time work schedules, and job sharing.

The NRC has already started addressing some of these goals. As part of the internal communication effort, the EDO and some of the Offices have encouraged honest, frank feedback on employee performance. The EDO and HR have held focus group meetings with minority employees to identify aspects of the Merit Selection Process that may need attention.

The NRC's goals and objectives for EEO and diversity should be treated as a key message. Many of us that serve on the individual EEO advisory committees are well-aware of the efforts of the EDO, HR, SBCR, and some of the Offices/Regions to enhance diversity at the NRC and strengthen its commitment to EEO. However, it appears that many of the ongoing initiatives have not been effectively communicated to NRC employees and supervisors. Even though it is not included as a goal or objective in the NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan, NRC managers should more frequently communicate their commitment and expectations for the EEO program and diversity management process at the EDO, Office/Region, Division, Branch, and Section levels of management as part of the communication infrastructure recommended in the Communication is Key report dated May 2001.

On the whole, the EEO advisory committees are satisfied with the recent efforts the NRC has made with regard to the EEO program and diversity management, but would like to see more visible progress. Each of the EEO advisory committees looks forward to working with SBCR, HR, and NRC management to ensure visible progress is made toward fully implementing the goals and objectives identified in the NRC's Affirmative Employment Plan.

## **Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

The Hispanic Employment Program Advisory Committee (HEPAC) appreciates this opportunity to address the Commission on EEO-related issues that impact the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Since HEPAC's creation, nine years ago, we have always stressed that NRC management needs to address four main issues:

1. Recruitment and hiring of Hispanics;
2. Retention of Hispanics;
3. Support promotions and career development for Hispanics; and
4. Provide high visibility rotations for Hispanics to, for example, Commission and EDO offices.

This past year has been good for the Hispanics at NRC. The Agency has excelled in recruiting and hiring entry-level Hispanics. The new hires hold much promise for the future and currently provide each of their offices with an enhanced level of diversity. HEPAC recognizes the recent efforts are a good start to addressing the under-representation of Hispanics in the agency relative to their representation in the civilian labor force. However, HEPAC believes that to achieve diversity at NRC that is reflective of society's diversity will require a sustained Agency effort to recruit and hire Hispanics.

Retention has not been a problem because NRC has also addressed the other issues. The Agency's efforts to support promotion and career development of Hispanics have been visible. NRC promoted three Hispanics to GG-15, one Hispanic to a supervisor, and selected three Hispanics for the Leadership Potential Program. HEPAC encourages the Agency to ensure that selection of qualified candidates to the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program reflects the diversity recently achieved in the Leadership Potential Program. On rotational assignments, three Hispanics had rotations to the Commission Offices (Chairman's and Commissioner Dicus' office) within the same year. These rotational opportunities are significant because they provide visibility for employees that may have otherwise not been afforded certain opportunities. For instance, one Hispanic was promoted to a GG-15 and was selected for the Leadership Potential Program after rotating through a Commissioner's office.

All four issues of concern to HEPAC are equally important to the success of Hispanics at NRC. HEPAC would like to commend the Agency for all the efforts recruiting and hiring entry-level Hispanics. HEPAC would caution, however, that addressing only one issue at the expense of the others will diminish any positive impact and may even hamper any progress in other areas. For example if management solely focuses on increasing the entry-level hires to address the EEO-issues for Hispanics, retention is likely to suffer, which will undoubtedly decrease the success of the recruitment efforts. HEPAC encourages the Agency to strive for the same success in retention, promotion, career development, and creation of rotational opportunities, as has been achieved in recruiting and hiring of entry-level employees.

HEPAC appreciates management support this past year and praises their efforts.

**The Asian/Pacific American Advisory Committee (APAAC)**  
**February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

In the last EEO Briefing, we expressed a concern that the number of Asian/Pacific Americans (APAs) in management positions, including SES ranks, remained historically low compared with the available pool of highly qualified APAs. Specifically, the APA group was the most adversely impacted group during a series of Office reorganizations in the past. The under-representation of APAs in management and SES positions is evident from the Workforce Profile Data included in this briefing package. We would like to reemphasize our concern and continue urging greater management focus on the issue of advancement of APA employees to management positions.

Again, we recommend management focus in the following areas:

- a) Improve APA representation in management assignments, including SES.
- b) Encourage active participation in formal and informal sponsorships between SES managers and APA employees to enhance developing APA employees' career advancement potentials.
- c) Broaden APA employees' experience and participation in leadership and management assignments, including various career developmental programs.
- d) Participate actively by all Program Offices and Regions in targeted recruitment and in career development of APA employees.

We recognize the selection of five APAs in the NRC Leadership Potential Program and 2002 Executive Leadership Program as a positive step in developing feeder groups for management positions. However, the continuing under-representation of APAs in senior level management positions critically undermines the Agency's diversity goals. We emphatically urge that Agency management effectively address these recommendations.

**Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD)**  
**February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

The Committee on Age Discrimination (CAD) 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). We actively campaigned for new members and we were successful in adding an additional three members.

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 40. The full and productive use of the NRC's older employees is in the best interest of NRC staff, managers, and the goals of the agency. 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, and society as a whole.

We have met with the NRR and NMSS liaisons to discuss issues of concerns to the committee and we intend to use the NRR and NMSS liaisons as a means to achieve the long term CAD goals of an age discrimination-free organization and the transfer of the knowledge and experience of the older NRC workforce to the younger workforce.

We would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention one area of continuing interest to CAD:

Continuing CAD concerns are fair performance appraisals, rotational assignments, and promotions for staff age 50 and above. Past briefings have identified low ratings in appraisals, few rotational assignments, and few promotions for older scientists and engineers. These same issues still exist. CAD highly recommends that management continue to be sensitized to ensure fair evaluations of staff age 50 and above. To address these issues, CAD recommended to SBCR that a seminar be held to reinforce, expand, and refine employees' and managers' knowledge and skills related to effectively participating in NRC's performance appraisal process. SBCR is working with HR to explore ways to implement CAD's proposal.

Again, we thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission on aging issues and look forward to our continued interaction with other EEO committees and the SBCR.

**Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee  
February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

FWPAC's goal for FY 2002 is to enhance opportunity for women to advance at NRC through (1) the development of additional upward mobility positions, and (2) increased rotational opportunities.

FWPAC would like to highlight some recent progress toward these goals in the development of a new upward mobility position in Region IV. FWPAC further recommends the Commission establish the goal of one new upward mobility position in each of the other three regions and 3-4 new upward mobility positions in Headquarters.

FWPAC is continuing to track progress on last year's goals that have not been included into this year's objectives:

- Career planning training that targets clerical and administrative support staff similar to the Career Planning Sessions sponsored by FWPAC, HR, and SBCR.
- Review and update secretarial positions descriptions consistent with the actual work performed. Reclassify, as necessary, jobs to reflect accurate position titles, series, and grades.
- "Family-friendly" work arrangements such as Flexiplace.

The issue of flexiplace has been addressed with the new telecommuting policy negotiated between NRC and the union (Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 54). This article provides for both fixed schedule and project-based telecommuting. This agreement will benefit all employees, not only women.

## **Advisory Committee for African Americans February 2002 EEO Briefing Statement**

The Advisory Committee for African Americans (ACAA) welcomes the opportunity to address the Commission on equal employment opportunity (EEO) related issues that impact African American employees and the Agency. During the past year, the NRC has taken a number of positive steps to strengthen the NRC's EEO program and diversity management process.

In FY 2001, a group of African American employees from the various Offices and Regions met with the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services (DEDMS) to discuss workplace issues that impact career development and advancement of African Americans. As a result, an action plan was developed to address concerns raised during those meetings. These include recruitment, retention, sponsorship, and feedback. Also, staff from the Office of Human Resources coordinated facilitated focus groups of African American employees to discuss the merit selection process.

To address targeted recruitment concerns, the NRC implemented recruitment strategies for Historically Black Colleges and Universities similar to those used so successfully at the University of Puerto Rico.

As outlined in the Joint EEO Statement, ACAA's focus continues to be:

- Increase the number of African Americans in supervisory, management, senior executive service, and senior level positions.
- Increase the number of African Americans in the feeder groups (Grades GG 13-15) for supervisory, management, senior executive service, and senior level positions.
- Increase the number of entry-level and experienced African American new hires.

ACAA will continue working with the Deputy Executive Director for Management Services, Office of Human Resources, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, and program offices to strengthen the NRC's EEO program and diversity management process.