

# NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY BRIEFING

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PUBLIC MEETING

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Nuclear Regulatory Commission

One White Flint North

Rockville, Maryland

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Wednesday

February 6, 2002

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

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1 STAFF AND PRESENTERS SEATED AT THE COMMISSION TABLE:  
2 ANDREW BATES, Secretary  
3 KAREN D. CYR, General Counsel  
4 WILLIAM TRAVERS, EDO  
5 PATRICIA NORRY, DEDM  
6 IRENE LITTLE, SBCR  
7 PAUL BIRD, HR  
8 MARTIN VIRGILIO, NMSS  
9 MICHAEL MARSHALL, ACCAA  
10 JESSIE DELGADO, HEPAC  
11 MICHAEL CULLINGFORD, APAAC  
12 JANE GUNN, FWPAC  
13 BUCK IBRAHIM, CAD  
14 FRANK AKSTULEWIORZ, JLMEEOC  
15 DALE YIELDING, NTEU  
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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(9:35 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The Commission meets today to discuss the status of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Program.

This is the first of two meetings that will be held this year on this subject, reflecting not only our implementation of the requirements of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, but also our continuing commitment to foster equal opportunity for all NRC employees. And as I think most of you know, the achievement of our EEO objectives is one of the Commission's highest priorities.

Despite the progress in a number of areas in recent decades, EEO matters must remain at the forefront of the Commission's agenda. We need to ensure that our procedures and practices are as fair and equitable as possible for all of our current employees so that they may reach their maximum potential. At the same time, we must seek to attract new employees, many of whom will be minorities and women, with the skills and abilities necessary to take on the task of protecting the public health and safety in the next decades.

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1           These two objectives are complicated by  
2           three other factors -- the NRC's aging workforce,  
3           developments in nuclear energy external to the NRC and  
4           beyond our direct control, and workforce restructuring  
5           plans that are now being developed and implemented in  
6           part to address these external changes.    These  
7           additional factors could take us in a number of new  
8           directions at anytime.    As a result, we are at a  
9           crossroads in the Agency's history where the progress  
10          we make in the EEO area will have an extraordinary  
11          impact on the NRC of tomorrow.   It is, therefore, with  
12          great interest that the Commission looks forward to  
13          today's briefing.

14                    Dr. Travers, you may proceed.

15                    MR. TRAVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We  
16                    usually have a pretty good turnout for these meetings,  
17                    but I think we may have the best turnout today that  
18                    we've ever had.    So, it's good to see everyone, and  
19                    good morning.

20                    We, as you have indicated, in fact, are  
21                    pleased to be here to report to you on the status of  
22                    our ongoing progress in the Agency's Equal Employment  
23                    Opportunity Program.    As is the custom, let me  
24                    introduce the people at the table here and the people  
25                    in the back row.

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1 Starting at my left, Michael Marshall is  
2 the Chair of the Advisory Committee for African  
3 Americans, and Mike is going to provide a perspective  
4 on employee issues.

5 Marty Virgilio, of course, you know is the  
6 Director of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and  
7 Safeguards, and Marty is going to discuss  
8 implementation of our EEO Program in his office.

9 Pat Norry, of course, is my Deputy for  
10 Management Services.

11 Irene Little, of course, is here  
12 representing the Office of Small Business and Civil  
13 Rights.

14 And Paul Bird is our Director of Human  
15 Resources.

16 Also participating in our briefing today  
17 and seated in the first row behind me are Jessie  
18 Delgado, who is the Co-Chair of the Hispanic Program  
19 Employment Advisory Committee; Michael Cullingford,  
20 who is the Co-Chair of the Asian/Pacific American  
21 Advisory Committee; Jane Gunn, who is the Chair of the  
22 Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee, and Buck  
23 Ibrahim, Co-Chair of the Committee on Age  
24 Discrimination. Seated next to Buck is Frank  
25 Akstulewicz, who is the Co-Chair of the Joint

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1 Labor/Management EEO Committee. Also joining us today  
2 is Dale Yielding of the National Treasury Employees  
3 Union.

4 I should point out that someone asked me  
5 if I knew how to pronounce Frank's name before the  
6 briefing. And I said I've known Frank Akstulewiorz  
7 for a long time and, when it gets hard, a lot of us  
8 just say Frank A-to-Z. I'm glad to see Frank back  
9 there.

10 I'll begin my report by noting that we  
11 are, as you've mentioned, Chairman, continuing to  
12 focus on our Agency's EEO and diversity goals. As  
13 we've discussed in previous briefings, one of the four  
14 corporate management strategies that we have included  
15 in our strategic plan is to sustain a high-performing  
16 and diverse workforce, and it's obvious to me that to  
17 this end we are going to have to remain committed and  
18 diligent in our efforts to advance the principles of  
19 the Agency's affirmative employment plan.

20 We have, as you've indicated, continued to  
21 make steady, if somewhat slow, progress, and we have  
22 implemented several EEO and diversity management  
23 initiatives of late. Our written report to you  
24 describes some of the "best practices" that we have  
25 implemented throughout the Agency, and some of these

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1 initiatives of course will be highlighted in this  
2 morning's presentations.

3 I want to briefly just take a minute to  
4 highlight three areas that are significant, I think,  
5 in our efforts. Those are management accountability,  
6 internal communications, and some discussion of the  
7 progress we've made in our entry level hiring  
8 initiatives.

9 As you may recall in fiscal '01, we  
10 developed performance plans for SES managers that  
11 included a separate subelement which clarifies and  
12 enhances accountability for management support of the  
13 Agency's EEO and diversity goals. In order to  
14 complete that process and re-emphasize the importance  
15 of these issues to our management team, I've observed  
16 a similar requirement for non-SES supervisors to be  
17 effective for the 2002 performance appraisal cycle.  
18 In this, of course, we are seeking a more uniform  
19 Agency-wide approach to establish consistent  
20 expectation for EEO and diversity management  
21 performance.

22 Our communication efforts, like internal  
23 communication efforts, are also ongoing. I  
24 personally, and many of our management team, are  
25 seeking initiatives to more broadly communicate with

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1 the workforce using different techniques to help  
2 foster internal communications. One initiative that  
3 I think is quite important that I'd like to mention is  
4 an initiative that I kicked off to emphasize the  
5 importance of constructive and honest feedback in the  
6 appraisal process.

7 One thing I think we have over the years  
8 not been particularly good at is providing employees  
9 with a good benchmark of where they stand in their  
10 career enhancement. And if you don't do that, I think  
11 it's a loser from a number of perspectives, but we are  
12 in the process of making additional efforts to make  
13 sure that in the appraisal process in any given year  
14 -- and not just once a year, but throughout the year  
15 -- we are emphasizing to our employees what they are  
16 doing well and what they are not doing so well at, and  
17 where constructively they might seek some additional  
18 enhancement in their career objectives. So, that's an  
19 issue that I think is quite important.

20 Let me mention another initiative, entry  
21 level hiring, which I believe is also significant to  
22 increasing our workforce diversity. In March of 2000,  
23 I established a goal to hire at least 25 percent of  
24 our professional employees at the entry level, and I  
25 am glad to report that during 2001 we have somewhat

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1 exceeded that. Of the 124 professional hires, 34, or  
2 27 percent, were at the entry level, and included 17  
3 minorities and ten white women.

4 So, while I am pleased with some of that  
5 progress and some of what you'll hear this morning, we  
6 don't stand here, by any means, satisfied with those  
7 efforts. We've made this challenge one that we think  
8 needs to be one that is a continuing one, and we  
9 intend to address it throughout the year.

10 We plan to discuss with you several other  
11 initiatives which are, we believe, helping us to meet  
12 these challenges, and to begin the process of  
13 discussing this with you, I'll turn to Pat Norry.

14 MS. NORRY: Thank you, Bill. I'd like to  
15 echo what Bill said, that we have made some positive  
16 strides but, as we discuss the things we are doing,  
17 some of them are going to be of a nature that will  
18 take longer in terms of what you see in positive  
19 results, but I think we have a lot -- we've already  
20 achieved some results, and we have a lot ongoing which  
21 should put us in good stead for the future.

22 I'd like to talk about three areas. In  
23 succession planning, we have several strategies to get  
24 women and minorities in a position to be able to move  
25 into higher level jobs in the future. Largely, the

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1 formal programs to support this are the Leadership  
2 Development Program and the SES Candidate Program,  
3 with which you are familiar.

4 The SES Candidate Program, of the 2001  
5 graduates, has currently placed 17 out of the 23  
6 graduates in SES positions. So that has been a  
7 positive force, and not waiting for that to finish out  
8 totally, we've started another program, and we have  
9 147 applications for that program, and these represent  
10 a diverse pool of candidates. And it also represents,  
11 I think, an interest on the part of Agency managers to  
12 move into SES positions, which is good.

13 The Leadership Potential Program, which we  
14 did for the first time -- it started in June of last  
15 year -- and we had a good, diverse pool of candidates  
16 selected -- nine African Americans, four Asians, three  
17 Hispanics, one Native American, 11 white women and 14  
18 white men. And as you know, this program will provide  
19 high performing employees the opportunity to get ready  
20 for positions that require supervisory and managerial  
21 skills. That will conclude in May, and I expect that  
22 that's a program that we are also going to want to  
23 continue as we do the SES Candidate Program.

24 The second challenge I'd like to talk  
25 about is the need for candid, constructive and timely

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1 feedback to employees. This is an ongoing challenge  
2 which we are addressing in part by re-emphasizing the  
3 requirement that managers provide candid and  
4 constructive feedback to staff, and that is included  
5 in this new EEO subelement that Bill mentioned  
6 earlier, the one for all managers.

7 But to help managers be able to provide  
8 this feedback, we have revised our course -- HR has  
9 revised their course on effective management  
10 participation in merit staffing to include  
11 specifically some skills on how you do this, how you  
12 provide feedback. And all supervisors are recommended  
13 to take that course.

14 I want to emphasize something here which  
15 I think is important. Feedback is not just an EEO  
16 issue, although it feeds into a lot of the EEO  
17 concerns. It is something that is important for every  
18 stage of career development, and it is a management  
19 responsibility. And we are going to re-emphasize  
20 that. Every employee has a right to expect feedback  
21 on how they are doing, and it's not just checking some  
22 blocks once a year on a performance appraisal, it's  
23 got to be more than that.

24 Since the last time we met with you on  
25 this briefing, I had a brainstorming session with a

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1 small group of the African American community in the  
2 Agency, to hear what their perspectives were on  
3 enhancing diversity. And the recurring themes, as you  
4 might expect, were recruitment, retention, feedback  
5 and sponsorship. Now, by sponsorship -- it might not  
6 be immediately apparent what that means -- it means  
7 someone who is willing to look after the career of a  
8 person and, you know, provide perhaps even informal  
9 support.

10 So, as a result of this input, we  
11 developed an action plan to address these issues  
12 across the Agency that results in some actions, such  
13 as building relationships with campus officials so  
14 that our recruitment efforts are enhanced; evaluating  
15 student course work and other factors, in addition to  
16 the GPA, where these factors might suggest high  
17 potential for successful intern candidates as opposed  
18 to just looking at the GPA; encouraging honesty back  
19 from supervisors and rating panels, as I mentioned  
20 before; and enhancing management awareness of the  
21 skills and competencies of those who seek career  
22 advancement.

23 We also convened some facilitated focus  
24 groups, with small groups to talk about their  
25 perceptions regarding fairness and equity in the merit

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1 selection process, and recommendations arising from  
2 those focus groups were: we need to enhance staff  
3 awareness and understanding of how merit selection  
4 panels are formed; what is the feedback process if one  
5 is not selected, and also there was concern about the  
6 use of temporary promotions. So, those discussions  
7 are ongoing, and how we address those issues is going  
8 to be something that, of course, will involve the  
9 entire Agency.

10 Recently, I also met with a group of  
11 Asian/Pacific American employees to begin a dialogue  
12 about how to more effectively address some of their  
13 issues related to career enhancement. I think it was  
14 a productive beginning which will require more  
15 followup regarding the number of Asians in supervisory  
16 and management positions, time-in-grade concerns, and  
17 recruitment. So, now HR and SBCR are going to focus  
18 on those issues as we develop specific actions to  
19 address it.

20 I need to stress here that the issues that  
21 have been raised by these groups -- and earlier we had  
22 similar meetings with Hispanic groups which were  
23 largely focused on recruitment and retention -- these  
24 issues have wide applicability, and when we devise  
25 strategies to address them, they will be applicable to

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1 the entire Agency.

2 Finally, one of the biggest challenges we  
3 face as an Agency, as the Chairman referred to in his  
4 opening remarks, is the aging workforce and the  
5 potential loss of corporate knowledge as a result of  
6 attrition, and how do we facilitate transfer of that  
7 knowledge to mitigate the loss.

8 So, we, of course, as you know, when we  
9 briefed you last on human capital, we have some things  
10 that we are using to promote this. For example,  
11 managers are authorized to double-encumber certain  
12 positions where a loss is going to occur in a critical  
13 area, so that hiring or selection of a person to  
14 replace that person could take place in time to allow  
15 that knowledge transfer to take place.

16 We also have, as you know, waivers on the  
17 ban on dual compensation in some areas, so that if  
18 people have retired we can bring them back, where they  
19 represent critical skills.

20 So, implementation of these and other  
21 initiatives will help to ensure that we continue to be  
22 a viable competitor in the job market and a desirable  
23 workplace for employees and for applicants.

24 Finally, as an overarching principle for  
25 all of this, we must consistently communicate to our

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1 employees our willingness to be fair and to empower  
2 them to excel in a positive work environment. That's  
3 basically what sums up everything.

4 Irene will now highlight some of the  
5 Agency's "best practices" in advancing EEO and  
6 diversity. Irene.

7 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Pat. Before I  
8 proceed, I will ask Mike Marshall if he would like to  
9 make a statement on behalf of the EEO Advisory  
10 Committees. Mike?

11 MR. MARSHALL: Thank you. Good morning.  
12 I have the privilege to present the views of the EEO  
13 Advisory Committees on the NRC's EEO program and  
14 diversity management process.

15 The Advisory Committees have collectively  
16 agreed to focus on five areas, and we would like to  
17 acknowledge that the NRC management has already been  
18 actively addressing these areas, as Pat mentioned and  
19 Irene will continue later.

20 Many of us on mandatory on the Advisory  
21 Committees are well aware of the efforts of the EDO,  
22 in particular Ms. Norry, SBCR, HR, and the offices and  
23 regions, to address these focus areas. The committees  
24 have worked with NRC management to identify issues  
25 that need attention, and to develop approaches to

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1 address those issues, and our Advisory Committees  
2 would like to encourage NRC management to continue  
3 their efforts.

4 The five areas the Advisory Committees  
5 have selected to focus on are, first, enhance  
6 opportunities for advancement of minorities, women and  
7 employees over 50, and individuals with disabilities  
8 in professional positions. And NRC has taken steps in  
9 this with regards to their targeted recruitment  
10 efforts to address the underrepresentation of  
11 Hispanics in the workforce.

12 Also, the NRC has begun targeted  
13 recruitment of African Americans. And one thing that  
14 the committees are interested in for new hires and the  
15 current employees is that it is vigilant to ensure  
16 that all are fairly and equally considered for  
17 advancement and development once they are onboard and  
18 they are working here.

19 Second, expand the pool of minorities,  
20 women, employees over 50, and individuals with  
21 disabilities for supervisory and management and senior  
22 level positions. In the individual statements of most  
23 of the committees, you will notice that the Leadership  
24 Potential Program is singled out here as a great mark  
25 or good step that we all recognize as the Agency's

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1 commitment to diversity. And we also look forward to  
2 the SES Candidate Development Program as another  
3 effective tool for addressing this area.

4 Another important aspect of the  
5 development of this is the development of minorities  
6 to ensure minorities, women, individuals with  
7 disabilities are prepared to compete for slots in  
8 these development programs and for promotions.

9 Third, conduct periodic reviews of the  
10 merit selection process to ensure that the current  
11 procedures and practices are consistent with the goals  
12 and objectives of the EEO program and diversity  
13 process -- and Ms. Norry touched on this with  
14 addressing the need to ensure appearance of fairness  
15 to all employees.

16 Fourth, demonstrate through its action  
17 that management is concerned for employee welfare,  
18 morale and recognition.

19 Fifth and very importantly, encourage  
20 management to create and maintain a work environment  
21 that fosters open communication, mutual trust and  
22 respect, and most of us consider feedback under this,  
23 which Bill addressed earlier, as being very important  
24 as far as employee development.

25 The committees also encourage inclusion of

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1 employees in decisionmaking processes to ensure their  
2 views are considered, and involvement of the  
3 committees recently in addressing and strengthening  
4 the EEO program is another fine example of that. Not  
5 only do we meet here twice a year, but in between  
6 these meetings we have a number of separate meetings  
7 with SBCR, with the EDO, with Ms. Norry, with the  
8 individual office managers, and a whole host of folks,  
9 to make sure these issues are continually addressed  
10 throughout the year.

11 And the Advisory Committees look forward  
12 to working with NRC management to implement the EEO  
13 program in its diversity process. For example, we  
14 will be continuing to talk about the ratings of older  
15 employees, and the time-in-grade with Asian Americans,  
16 and issues of relevance to the women and African  
17 Americans and the different groups that the Advisory  
18 Committees represent.

19 One final point we'd like to make is that  
20 both the EEO Advisory Committees and NRC management  
21 need to provide more frequent and effective  
22 communication with our fellow employees so that NRC  
23 efforts to strengthen EEO and enhance diversity.

24 The NRC goals and objectives for EEO and  
25 diversity should be treated as key messages, and the

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1 progress that NRC makes towards those goals, the  
2 outcomes that are achieved, should be treated as key  
3 messages. Thank you.

4 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Mike. Mike  
5 referenced several issues are areas of concern that  
6 the committees have worked very closely with us on and  
7 are continuing to work on.

8 I want to take a moment just to say thank  
9 you to the EEO Advisory Committees. They are working  
10 with us as a team. We are not always a great big  
11 happy team, but we believe we are an effective team,  
12 and I want to say thank you to the committees for that  
13 team effort.

14 This morning, I will highlight some of the  
15 strategies or "best practices" that we've put in place  
16 to continue to help us enhance diversity in the  
17 workplace and effectively manage our diverse  
18 workforce.

19 The first strategy is the Agency's  
20 integrated recruitment team approach. This approach  
21 includes managers and Human Resource representatives,  
22 staff and members of the EEO Advisory Committees in a  
23 team approach to attract highly qualified science,  
24 engineering and administrative candidates for entry  
25 level positions.

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1           This recruitment approach includes up-  
2 front contacts made with colleges and universities.  
3 It includes a review of resumes prior to the  
4 recruitment trip, and on-the-spot offers are made and  
5 sometimes recruitment bonuses are offered to attract  
6 highly qualified applicants.

7           Another critical aspect of this  
8 recruitment model is aggressive post-offer followup  
9 with the applicants. Using this model, we have been  
10 able to attract a significant number of highly  
11 qualified, diverse applicants. For example, in Fiscal  
12 Year 2002, over 100 written offers have been extended,  
13 and 39 offers have been accepted. This represents  
14 success in the number of offers that have been made in  
15 a relatively short period of time, and in the  
16 diversity of the candidates, and in the number of  
17 acceptances. We think we know how to do effective  
18 focus recruitment at this point.

19           A second "best practice" that the Agency  
20 has put in place is the Alternate Dispute Resolution  
21 process for resolving allegations of discrimination.  
22 As required by EEOC, in January 2000 the Agency put an  
23 Alternate Dispute Resolution process in place to  
24 encourage early resolution of allegations of  
25 discrimination.

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1           The ADR process provides a neutral  
2 environment to facilitate discussion and resolution of  
3 EEO issues. This process also encourages open  
4 communication between management and the employee or  
5 applicant who makes the allegation. Our experience  
6 has shown that ADR is the most cost-effective and  
7 efficient process for resolving EEO issues. And even  
8 in cases where the final resolution is not reached and  
9 a settlement agreement signed, generally both parties  
10 provide positive feedback on the process.

11           Since January 2000, we have had 13  
12 requests for the Alternate Dispute Resolution process,  
13 and nine of those resulted in a settlement or a  
14 closure. We believe that use of the ADR process has  
15 had a positive impact on the participating employees  
16 and managers because ADR preempts what could be a long  
17 and somewhat protracted complaint process.

18           Our EEO counselors continue to be  
19 effective in working with managers and employees to  
20 resolve allegations of discrimination at the informal  
21 level. In addition to the 13 ADR cases, 27  
22 allegations of discrimination were handled by our  
23 counseling staff and, at the end of FY 2001, only six  
24 informal cases were pending.

25           The status of formal complaints in the

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1 Agency is as follows: We carried over 19 formal  
2 complaints from Fiscal Year 2000. During Fiscal Year  
3 2001, 15 new formal complaints were filed. That's  
4 down by one from the former year. Sixteen formal  
5 complaints were filed in 2000.

6 During Fiscal Year 2001, 13 formal  
7 complaints were closed and, at the end of the year, 21  
8 formal complaints were pending. We track the number  
9 of complaints filed, not as a yardstick for success,  
10 we do it in order to determine if an unusual number of  
11 complaints are filed in a particular office, division  
12 or section because the number of complaints alone is  
13 not a good measure of EEO success in an organization.

14 A better measure of success is how  
15 effectively managers are working to resolve issues  
16 early in the process, and whether they are using  
17 lessons learned to eliminate the bases for valid  
18 complaints.

19 There has been no significant change in  
20 the number of complaints filed over the past three  
21 years, and the number of formal complaints filed  
22 within NRC is small in comparison to other agencies of  
23 similar size.

24 The third strategy I'd like to discuss is  
25 the use of a merit staffing checklist. This practice

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1 was put in place by the Human Resources staff, and its  
2 purpose is to be used by the Human Resource Specialist  
3 to serve as a guide for managers when posting vacant  
4 positions, to remind them to use broad rating factors  
5 when possible, and to consider posting jobs at a level  
6 lower than the full performance level to facilitate  
7 upward mobility.

8 The checklist also serves as a reminder to  
9 managers to establish rating panels that include  
10 diverse members, and to interview all internal  
11 applicants that make the best qualified list. The  
12 overall purpose of the checklist is to increase  
13 uniformity and enhance the perception of equal  
14 opportunity in the merit selection process.

15 More needs to be done to educate and  
16 inform our employees about the merit selection process  
17 so that they are better equipped to effectively and  
18 fairly compete for career advancement.

19 We believe that the Agency's managing  
20 diversity initiative is another best practice. In  
21 Fiscal Year 1999, the Office of Small Business and  
22 Civil Rights took the lead in implementing a managing  
23 diversity process within the Agency. The goal of this  
24 process is to assist managers in understanding and  
25 leveraging workplace diversity to enhance individual

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1 and organizational performance.

2 We completed the first step of the  
3 process, which was to provide orientation to managers  
4 and employees to make them aware of the value of  
5 diversity in the workplace. The principles of  
6 managing a diverse workforce includes employee  
7 participation in the planning and decisionmaking  
8 process that affects them. It includes open  
9 communication up and down the management chain, and  
10 candid, timely and constructive feedback to all  
11 employees on issues that impact the workplace and  
12 their careers.

13 In the second phase of the managing  
14 diversity process, my staff is working with some of  
15 the Program Offices to assist managers in achieving  
16 two broad goals: to identify and address processes,  
17 procedures, perceptions, and behaviors that could  
18 adversely impact employee morale and productivity, and  
19 the second broad objective is to institutionalize  
20 actions that create a positive work environment where  
21 all employees are afforded the opportunity to develop  
22 their full potential in contributing to the mission of  
23 the Agency and in building a successful career.

24 Later in this briefing, Mr. Virgilio will  
25 discuss the diversity initiative that is ongoing in

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1 the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.  
2 Even though the Agency has experienced downsizing and  
3 realignment, and each year a significant number of  
4 employees have exercised their option to retire, we  
5 have continued to make incremental progress in  
6 increasing the representation of women and minorities  
7 in the NRC workforce.

8 For example, in 1999 minorities  
9 represented 22 percent of the NRC workforce. Today,  
10 minorities represent 27 percent of the workforce.  
11 During this same period, the number of white women in  
12 SES positions increased from 15 to 17, and the number  
13 of minorities also increased from 15 to 17.  
14 Minorities in senior level positions increased from 5  
15 to 6, and white women in senior level positions  
16 increased from 9 to 11.

17 Additionally in Fiscal Year 1999, NRC  
18 hired 102 employees. Twenty-two were minority and 36  
19 were women. In Fiscal Year 2001, the Agency hired 158  
20 employees, 54 were minorities and 42 were women.  
21 While this represents some progress -- and we are  
22 proud of that progress -- there is still much that  
23 needs to be done. Our challenge continues to be  
24 providing timely, candid and effective feedback to  
25 staff, and fostering a work environment of mutual

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1 trust and respect.

2 I believe we are on the right path and  
3 will continue to see improvement in our outcomes  
4 provided we don't put too much emphasis on the  
5 processes and not focus on the outcomes that we are  
6 after. We will continue to make progress as long as  
7 our strategies support our declaration that our  
8 employees are indeed our most valuable resource.  
9 Thank you, Pat.

10 MS. NORRY: Thank you. Martin?

11 MR. VIRGILIO: Thank you, Pat. I am  
12 pleased to have the opportunity to provide the  
13 Commission an overview of NMSS' approach to activities  
14 regarding EEO and diversity. First, I'd like to  
15 acknowledge that nothing would happen without the  
16 support of the NMSS management and staff in this area,  
17 particularly the 12 members of the Diversity Panel I'm  
18 going to talk about in a few minutes. I'd also like  
19 to acknowledge the support that we've gotten from SBCR  
20 management, Irene and staff, and particularly Barbara  
21 Williams, for all their efforts in supporting our  
22 diversity initiatives in NMSS.

23 We believe that managing diversity  
24 requires organization and cultural changes, and that,  
25 for us, we identified six keys in making a successful

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1 cultural change. I'm going to outline the six, and  
2 then I'll give you some examples of what we've done in  
3 each of those six areas.

4 First, there's the alignment of the change  
5 with our organizational goals and values. Second, a  
6 committed leadership that's willing and able to model  
7 the desired change. Third, staff input. Fourth, the  
8 establishment of an infrastructure of policies,  
9 procedures and practices that reinforce the change  
10 that you're striving to achieve. Fifth, effective and  
11 ongoing communication. And, sixth, a measurement and  
12 assessment process so that you know where you are with  
13 respect to these changes.

14 The specific goals that we hope to achieve  
15 through our efforts in managing diversity include the  
16 following: First, enhance recruitment and development  
17 and retention of a high quality, diverse workforce.  
18 Second, a healthy work environment and relationship  
19 amongst the staff within the organization. And,  
20 third, improve quality, including innovativeness and  
21 quality and timeliness of our organizational products.

22 I'll quickly review now what NMSS has done  
23 in each of these six areas. First, with respect to  
24 the alignment with our goals and values, we first  
25 established organizational values, visions and

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1 expectations in NMSS consistent and complementary with  
2 the Agency-based system, including an emphasis on the  
3 value of successfully managing a diverse workforce.

4 We have linked our diversity strategies to  
5 our core business strategies, which I think is very  
6 important, and we expect our managers, supervisors and  
7 staff to adopt behaviors consistent with the values  
8 that we've laid out.

9 Trust is a key to any healthy human  
10 relationship, of course, and in the workplace it is  
11 especially important as we look to promoting  
12 diversity. Trust can be achieved and maintained only  
13 when a number of conditions are met. People need to  
14 know what to expect. People need to know that the  
15 expectations are fair and equitable, and that the  
16 actions that surround those expectations are clear and  
17 consistent with the expectations.

18 So, we felt it was critical to share our  
19 organizational values, clarify our boundaries and,  
20 most importantly, that we all talk the walk in this  
21 area.

22 The second has to do with NMSS leadership  
23 commitment. The NMSS executive team and leadership  
24 team meet frequently to develop and monitor our NMSS  
25 organizational initiatives, including our initiatives

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1 around managing diversity. A senior management  
2 contact has been designated for the NMSS members in  
3 each of the EEO Advisory Committees. The managers  
4 meet at least quarterly to exchange views on office-  
5 wide concerns and practices that require additional  
6 attention. A designated change agent within NMSS  
7 monitors our diversity actions, and other  
8 organizational and Human Resource management  
9 initiatives.

10 We've also employed a part-time diversity  
11 consultant to work with our Diversity Panel to design,  
12 administer and interpret our diversity survey which  
13 was of use to obtain feedback from the staff regarding  
14 their perceptions of diversity management within NMSS.  
15 The consultants also provided us diversity training,  
16 group and individual coaching to help improve our  
17 performance in this area.

18 The third area is staff input. Staff  
19 input was obtained from an NMSS-wide survey conducted  
20 in April 2001. As a result of careful planning to  
21 maximize the response, we used data collection  
22 strategies that resulted in approximately 75 percent  
23 response rate from all of NMSS, and approximately 65  
24 percent from representative and reasonably size  
25 subgroups within NMSS. And when you think about that,

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1 the typical overall response rate is on the order of  
2 40 to 50 percent. So we think that 75 percent was  
3 very good.

4 Now, what we got out of that survey was  
5 the interpretation of the information told us that we  
6 need to establish clear and more definitive  
7 definitions of diversity management in the staff,  
8 communicate between management and staff regarding  
9 diversity management within NMSS, and enhance  
10 perceived fairness and equity across subgroups in NMSS  
11 regarding Human Resource management policies,  
12 procedures and practices, especially those involving  
13 development and recognition rewards and promotions.

14 Another item from the survey was that we  
15 needed to clarify responsibilities and accountability  
16 regarding managing diversity, especially with regard  
17 to managers and supervisors. And, most importantly,  
18 we needed to establish a mechanism to measure the  
19 effectiveness of NMSS management diversity  
20 initiatives.

21 I mentioned earlier the NMSS Diversity  
22 Panel. This is a panel that was established as a  
23 result of the survey and some of the other things that  
24 we were learning about diversity, and it serves as a  
25 focal point for recommending improvements regarding

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1 diversity-related issues to the management team.

2 The panel consists of 12 employees who  
3 were randomly selected from the NMSS personnel and is  
4 representative of the demographics in our office.  
5 SBCR and a union representative have standing  
6 invitations to all the panel meetings.

7 First, we developed a charter, and the  
8 panel charter was to develop recommendations in five  
9 specific areas -- defining diversity, goals and  
10 approaches to diversity that merit focus;  
11 concepts/techniques for fostering an appropriate use  
12 of diversity including accountability; methods for  
13 fostering diversity within NMSS policies, procedures  
14 and practices, particularly focused on succession  
15 planning, recruitment, hiring, orientation, training,  
16 work assignments, appraisals, and a recognition and  
17 award system; and, finally, methods for measuring the  
18 effectiveness of diversity.

19 With regard to the fourth area,  
20 infrastructure and accountability, we've made some  
21 changes in this area -- for example, a revision of our  
22 performance elements for managers that was emphasized  
23 earlier, ensuring that we stress the importance of  
24 managing diversity in the organization.

25 The Diversity Panel has made some

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1 recommendations regarding policies, procedures and  
2 practices related to Human Resource management,  
3 including greater emphasis on mutual responsibility of  
4 management and staff.

5 It may sound programmatic, but I think our  
6 policies and procedures must align with our desired  
7 diversity outcomes. So, it's not just a matter of  
8 developing programs, I think we need that foundation  
9 in order to achieve our goals.

10 The fifth area is effective and ongoing  
11 communication, and I think you can't underestimate how  
12 much you need to communicate and communicate and  
13 communicate around the issues. We've established  
14 several communications mechanisms in this area. As  
15 previously mentioned, we've got the NMSS members of  
16 each EEO Advisory Committee now have a senior  
17 management contact, and we have periodic meetings.

18 The Diversity Panel has established a Web  
19 Page to include communication within NMSS on diversity  
20 issues, and I invite you all to log on to that Web  
21 Page. It's got a lot of good information about what  
22 we're doing inside NMSS. It includes monthly updates,  
23 and staff are invited to use the Web Page to provide  
24 comments on the panel's recommendations to management  
25 in these areas.

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1           The Diversity Panel has also established  
2 communication boxes throughout NMSS work areas. This  
3 allows staff an opportunity to make recommendations  
4 regarding diversity. So, through these mechanisms, we  
5 seek open and honest dialogue around diversity  
6 management.

7           The sixth area is measuring effectiveness,  
8 and NMSS management is currently looking at a three-  
9 pronged approach that has been proposed to us by the  
10 Diversity Panel. One would be a followup survey that  
11 would build on what we learned from our survey this  
12 time last year, and a test to see if the initiatives  
13 are making progress.

14           The second piece would be specific  
15 diversity activities and intervention assessments. If  
16 we make a change in one area, how do we know whether  
17 that change was effective? So, we would focus on  
18 gathering data about that one particular change.

19           And the third is the review of statistical  
20 data regarding workforce subgroups. While we believe  
21 that many positive actions are taking place in NMSS,  
22 we also need to measure progress in the same way we  
23 measure other bottom-line organizational initiatives.

24           Now, with respect to the NMSS' workforce  
25 demographics hiring and awards, as of the end of

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1 September of this year, we had a total of 347  
2 permanent onboard employees. Nineteen percent of the  
3 staff are minorities, 34 percent are female. That  
4 compares overall to NRC's 23 percent minorities and 38  
5 percent female population.

6 While these percentages are essentially  
7 the same at the end as they were at of 2002, we've  
8 been able to maintain diverse staffing levels in the  
9 face of very high attrition rates. The tables in the  
10 Commission Paper depict NMSS' workforce by race,  
11 ethnicity and gender.

12 NMSS' recruitment efforts have been  
13 twofold. We look at attracting and maintaining  
14 critical skills needed for our current and future  
15 licensing responsibilities and, second, ensure that we  
16 are enhancing NMSS' workforce racial, ethnic and  
17 gender diversity.

18 We fully supported the Agency's initiative  
19 to establish ongoing and effective relationships with  
20 targeted colleges and universities, and we believe  
21 this provides great potential for attracting high  
22 quality, diverse applicants. We've also established  
23 cooperative education agreements with nine colleges  
24 and universities.

25 During 2001, NMSS filled 31 positions, of

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1 which 16 were technical hires. Six, or 38 percent, of  
2 the technical hires were at the GG-5 through GG-11  
3 entry level. Stepping back, of the 31 positions that  
4 I talked about that were filled, 7 were filled with  
5 minority candidates, 15 with white females, and 9  
6 white male hires.

7 NMSS has implemented the traditional  
8 awards program which recognizes employees for  
9 exceptional performance. As an addition, we've  
10 implemented the Employee of the Month program which  
11 provides us another opportunity for recognizing good  
12 staff performance.

13 If you look at the statistics within NMSS,  
14 you find that the distribution of awards closely  
15 follows the ethnicity and general percentages of the  
16 NMSS onboard staff.

17 In summarizing the data, I think NMSS has  
18 maintained a constant level of staff diversity through  
19 2000 and 2001, despite our high attrition rate.  
20 Nonetheless, as everybody at the table has mentioned,  
21 we will continue to strive for continued improvement  
22 in this area.

23 In conclusion, I'd like to say that we're  
24 proud of the course that we've undertaken in NMSS  
25 regarding managing diversity. We acknowledge issues

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1 such as the high attrition rates provide temporary  
2 stumbling blocks to success, but we remain steadfast  
3 in our commitments and belief that the importance of  
4 managing diversity is worthy of pursuit, and we  
5 welcome your support and feedback. Thank you.

6 MR. TRAVERS: Mr. chairman, that concludes  
7 our presentation this morning.

8 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you very much.  
9 I much appreciate the thoughtful presentations that  
10 all of you have made. I believe it is Commissioner  
11 Dicus' opportunity to go first this morning.

12 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you, Mr.  
13 Chairman. First of all, the first question goes to  
14 the intern program, which I'm pleased to know is being  
15 successful and certainly support. I hated to see it  
16 go away in the first place.

17 What kind of -- could you elaborate a  
18 little bit more on the feedback from the managers, how  
19 well the interns are doing, and then maybe what  
20 feedback you're getting from the interns themselves?

21 MR. BIRD: I could comment on that, and  
22 this is anecdotal feedback. I think, overall, it's  
23 very positive from the managers' perspective. I think  
24 they, as a body, are impressed with the credentials  
25 and the abilities of the people that have come in so

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1 far. I think they are equally as impressed with the  
2 credentials of those who will be coming during the  
3 next few months, and that's a fairly large number of  
4 new, additional interns that are coming in.

5 I get feedback from the Technical Training  
6 Center in Chattanooga that complements that feedback.  
7 The groups that have been down there have been  
8 successful overall. Again, I think the staff at the  
9 TTC has been impressed with the ability of the people  
10 that are coming in for the intern program and going on  
11 to Chattanooga. So, I think it really, overall, bodes  
12 very well. I have not had negative feedback. We  
13 haven't been in a position of addressing probationary  
14 removals or anything of that nature, which one might  
15 expect with the intake of new employees.

16 At this time, again, in my opinion based  
17 on the feedback that we're getting from various  
18 offices -- and Marty might speak to that -- I think  
19 it's a very, very positive sign on entry level hiring  
20 being successful.

21 MS. LITTLE: If I could just add one  
22 comment on that, I'm sure there are a lot of examples,  
23 but I'm aware of one particular example from Region I  
24 where they have a formal program to welcome and help  
25 to orient their interns. They actually have a meeting

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1 with the Regional Administrator. There's a  
2 coordinator that has been identified at the Regional  
3 level to work with the interns to try to get them  
4 incorporated into the workforce, not just from a work  
5 perspective but a little bit from a social  
6 perspective, and I think that's important when you're  
7 bringing in new employees, younger people, to a  
8 workforce that is pretty much Baby Boomers. So, I  
9 think some of the offices, Region I notably, has put  
10 together a process to make that happen.

11 MR. VIRGILIO: I would just like to  
12 underscore what Irene just said. That's really  
13 important, we can go out and hire the interns, but if  
14 we don't indoctrinate them, orient them, they'll get  
15 lost in the system, and it's important that we  
16 particularly pay attention to them as they move  
17 forward through the system.

18 COMMISSIONER DICUS: I would agree. In  
19 effect, what's happening in Region I -- and regional  
20 offices are not as large, obviously, as we are here at  
21 Headquarters. So, what are we doing at Headquarters  
22 to be sure they don't get lost in the system?

23 MR. BIRD: I think, again, that the  
24 offices overall have embraced this. They work with my  
25 staff and with SBCR sort of continuously on what we

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1 can do to improve. We've got some very good  
2 suggestions from staff involvement with that.

3 One of the things that's always a  
4 challenge with someone coming is housing. We're  
5 working harder on trying to work with that issues.  
6 The expense of the area and how you can get people  
7 together to share apartments and that sort of thing,  
8 again, that's something we need to continue to work  
9 on, is the transition from the colleges to this area  
10 and getting the housing and the fundamentals sort of  
11 settled so that they can become productive employees  
12 rather quickly. And that's an ongoing challenge.  
13 Again, the feedback that we get is the informal part,  
14 in some respects, at the beginning, is as important as  
15 the formal part of what we're offering them in terms  
16 of job opportunities and training and so forth. And  
17 so I totally agree with what's being said here, with  
18 the effort that goes into the orientation and trying  
19 to make people feel comfortable and to be introduced  
20 to others in their same age group.

21 We had a recent group of interns that came  
22 in that our current interns spoke to, and I thought  
23 that was an extremely productive session. And it was  
24 followed by an opportunity for a social event where I  
25 think many of the people that came joined the people

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1 that were here and went out for the evening. Again,  
2 I think that built a lot of informal dialogue and  
3 connections that was invaluable in this process, and  
4 that's something we need to continue to focus on.

5 MS. LITTLE: There are two other examples  
6 that are going on in Headquarters. One is the EEO  
7 Advisory Committees. The Hispanic Committee has been  
8 very active. The Asian Committee, African American --  
9 the committees have made a commitment to do some  
10 personal mentoring to new people that are coming in,  
11 and that really works well.

12 Our facilitated mentoring program is  
13 available also, to help employees find mentors with  
14 the help of their supervisors, so that they have a  
15 mentor that they can talk to and consult with in case  
16 they have issues they need to informally resolve.

17 I'm sure we can do more, but some things  
18 are being done.

19 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you. I  
20 note you have recently hired a contractor to help with  
21 diversity management, or to look at diversity issues  
22 that might exist. I know it's rather recent. Is it  
23 too soon to have any feedback on what the contractor  
24 is doing or coming up with? And if it is, I'll ask  
25 the question again in six months.

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1 MS. LITTLE: The answer to your question  
2 is yes, it's too soon, but we do have an idea what to  
3 expect. We've put together a very comprehensive  
4 Statement of Work. We worked with NMSS in getting the  
5 contractor that they have so that we do know exactly  
6 what we expect. We can't address what the outcome  
7 will be, but the element of a good managing diversity  
8 process, you've got to have leadership from the top.  
9 And so we want to work specifically with the office  
10 directors to do some specific things in their offices,  
11 and there's got to be training, and the contractor can  
12 provide training and other tools and interventions --  
13 is what the contract referred to it as -- to assist  
14 managers in identifying things that need to be  
15 changed, and giving them tools for making that change.  
16 Accountability -- those are the things that Marty  
17 talked about. Employees need to know who is  
18 accountable for what, and what to expect. And there  
19 needs to be some proactive efforts on our part as the  
20 leaders of EEO in the Agency, and I think we're doing  
21 that. Hopefully we can provide some more specific  
22 outcomes as we experience what the contractors will be  
23 doing.

24 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you. With  
25 regard to the attrition rate in NMSS, I know that you

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1 are looking at why you have the high attrition rate.  
2 Again, maybe I'm asking too soon, but if you have  
3 completed that evaluation or if you have any  
4 preliminary ideas why this is the case, or do you want  
5 to study it further and get back with us later?

6 MR. VIRGILIO: We have been monitoring it  
7 for the last several years, so I can give you some  
8 perception as to what's going on. On an Agency-wide  
9 basis, I think the attrition rate is running around 9  
10 percent. What we're seeing in NMSS is anywhere from  
11 12 to 14 percent. It's a significant turnover for us  
12 that turns out to be on the order of maybe 40 to 45  
13 people per year.

14 So, we've looked at the statistics around  
15 that, and the driver of the largest, the dominant, it  
16 tends to be that movement outside of NMSS but within  
17 NRC. So, it's roughly 50-some-odd percent of our  
18 staff turnover is to other offices within NRC, and we  
19 think that's a good thing. We are encouraging people  
20 to get out, to broaden themselves, to seek other  
21 opportunities. It's a small organization, we'll be  
22 back together again, is what I usually tell people as  
23 they move out -- either I'll move or they'll move --  
24 and it's a good thing.

25 The next largest contributor tends to be

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1 retirements. So, we're seeing on the order of 20  
2 percent. That's, I think -- and Paul can correct me  
3 -- I think what we're seeing is less retirements in  
4 NMSS than some of the other offices, just the  
5 demographics. We tend to have a younger crowd in  
6 NMSS.

7 And then the third tends to be people  
8 moving out of NRC. That's roughly 15 percent. So,  
9 it's 50, 20 and 15 percent. That 15 percent is  
10 tending to move out for promotions outside and to go  
11 into other industries. The other thing we have, I  
12 think, is a very marketable workforce. People inside  
13 NMSS are marketable outside of the NRC, and so that's  
14 a contributor to our losses.

15 MR. BIRD: If I could just comment on  
16 that, external attrition is different than internal  
17 attrition, and basically what Marty is talking about  
18 is the impact of both those affect an individual  
19 office. In NMSS' case, their external attrition is  
20 around, last year in 2001, was close to -- a little  
21 under 7 percent whereas the Agency's overall external  
22 attrition was right about 6 percent. So, there is a  
23 little bit of differential there. But then they had  
24 the largest number of people who moved from their  
25 office to another office. And that, of course, was

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1 offset by people moving from other offices to NMSS,  
2 and that's not in this data, so we're going to try to  
3 look at that as well because we believe that the  
4 movement internally is very good for the organization,  
5 and we want to encourage that and not have it  
6 misconstrued as a loss to the Agency when someone  
7 moves from one office to the other.

8 COMMISSIONER DICUS: It's just a loss to  
9 that particular office.

10 MR. TRAVERS: We'd like to actually even  
11 encourage people who are leaving the Agency to think  
12 of us later in their career, and we actually have been  
13 quite successful in hiring some people back. I hired  
14 back Drew Persinko from a job that he had, back into  
15 the Agency. So, there are a number of examples of  
16 that as well.

17 COMMISSIONER DICUS: I just have a couple  
18 more -- I'm about to use up my fair share of time  
19 here. I know that we are -- the term, I guess, is  
20 "outsourcing" some of our jobs based upon OMB's sort  
21 of requirements that you identify positions that could  
22 be done by the private sector, and to what extent we  
23 might be doing that in terms of when we are looking at  
24 positions that might be handled by the private sector  
25 and making an evaluation of that position, is it

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1 included in that evaluation any impacts having that  
2 particular position or activity done in the private  
3 sector, looked at as what it might do with our EEO  
4 diversity?

5 MS. NORRY: Well, we'll have to look at  
6 that, but right now we're still at the beginning  
7 stages of this. We are required by OMB to have 5  
8 percent of our positions that -- we've already  
9 identified the positions that can be commercial in  
10 nature. We've already done that. And that resulted  
11 in a certain number for the entire Agency. We're  
12 required to have 5 percent of those that are actually  
13 contracted out or subject to a competition between  
14 Federal and private sector in 2002.

15 In 2003, that doubles. So, we'll have  
16 more of a challenge as we go on. Obviously, we'll  
17 have to look at EEO impacts along with a lot of other  
18 impacts as we pursue this.

19 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Final  
20 question. I have the opportunity to be corrected, but  
21 it's my understanding, in a vague way actually, that  
22 in order to be considered for an SES position, you  
23 have to have gone through the SES program. Is that  
24 true or not?

25 MR. TRAVERS: Let me address that. What

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1 we have done --

2 COMMISSIONER DICUS: And I don't have an  
3 opinion one way or the other, I'm just trying to get  
4 some information.

5 MR. TRAVERS: The short answer is no.  
6 That's the short answer. The longer answer is what we  
7 have done in establishing this program is suggest to  
8 the management team who are responsible for vetting  
9 people into the program is that we need to do a good  
10 job at the front-end of that process, and there should  
11 be an expectation that if we do that good job at the  
12 front end, that we should have a corollary pool of  
13 good candidates when they graduate, so that our first  
14 look for filling new positions or positions that are  
15 coming open within the SES should be, in my  
16 expectation to the management team is that they will,  
17 in fact, look first to that qualified pool of  
18 individuals who have already been vetted through a  
19 formal process of the Agency. It doesn't mean that  
20 there's a 100 percent lock that if we have to fill  
21 each position that comes up, but as a minimum the  
22 first thing that's going to occur and the first thing  
23 that has occurred is that we've looked to that pool  
24 for the first identification of qualified people who  
25 could fill the jobs.

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1           And to talk about results, I can tell you  
2           that I don't know of a single -- you can correct me --  
3           of a single instance where we have filled a job in  
4           recent months, or perhaps the last year, year and a  
5           half or so, that hasn't been filled with a qualified  
6           graduate of our SES Candidate Development Program, and  
7           I think that's a good thing because it emphasizes a  
8           whole host of things that we expect in the conduct of  
9           that program.

10           MS. NORRY: And we're not going to get  
11           good people to apply for this program and to go  
12           through the year and a half of training for this  
13           program, if we don't make that kind of a commitment.  
14           And so all of the senior management of the Agency  
15           participated in making that commitment, which is  
16           basically you've got to prove to me why you're not  
17           putting one of those candidates in the job. And then  
18           if you get it by me, you've got to prove it to Bill.  
19           I mean, I think you have to make that kind of a  
20           commitment in order to make these programs really  
21           work.

22           MS. LITTLE: If I can make one comment, I  
23           think this is an example where we learn from our past  
24           mistakes. When this was not the case and there were  
25           certified people in the SES program that could have

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1 been selected and we went outside and posted, it adds  
2 to the perception of preselection or not giving  
3 minorities an opportunity to get selected for these  
4 jobs, especially when persons that are certified are,  
5 indeed, minorities. So, this is a good thing from an  
6 EEO perspective.

7 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. And I don't  
8 disagree with the comments that you've made, I want to  
9 make that clear. I'm not criticizing this particular  
10 situation because I think it makes sense that if a  
11 person is going to devote their time to the program  
12 and if the Agency is going to support the program, it  
13 should have some meaning on the other end of the  
14 program. So, I don't necessarily disagree with that  
15 at all.

16 I would only say, as a closing comment,  
17 that that being the case, and since I've surfaced it,  
18 at least those here and those listening are realizing  
19 it, but we make it clear across-the-board to our  
20 entire staff that that is a good way to get an SES  
21 position, a good pathway to take, and that everyone is  
22 aware of that. I think that would be very important.  
23 Thank you.

24 MR. TRAVERS: I agree, and I think it  
25 should be an advertisement for the broadest possible

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1 sort of interest being expressed by employees that are  
2 interested in going in that direction because this is  
3 our intent, to work the program in just that way.

4 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you, Mr.  
5 Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Commissioner Diaz.

7 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Chairman. Let me start by thanking Mr. Marshall for  
9 his comments, and especially for singling out people  
10 over 50. I have a vested interest in the fact that  
11 there is a small probability -- I must say small --  
12 that I will ever reach that area, but it's there.

13 I debated whether to go at the performance  
14 measures or to actually take a broader look, and  
15 normally I decided to take a broader look at what has  
16 happened, so let me just make a couple of comments --  
17 and this isn't new, I've said it before, as a person  
18 that was involved with programs very actively -- for  
19 years I directed minority programs as a sideline,  
20 although they became more than a sideline -- is that  
21 this program really essentially exists to eliminate  
22 the reasons of its existence. The long goal is that  
23 we don't need them anymore, and I think that is a  
24 vital principle that must rule what we do.

25 Eventually, the effectiveness of this

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1 program is eventually, not at any one time, is  
2 determined by the decreasing need for action,  
3 decreasing need for activity, decreasing need for  
4 achievement, decreasing number of challenges, and I  
5 think that's something that we must realize, that  
6 really if we are doing good, then we don't need to do  
7 that much anymore.

8 The ultimate goal, of course, is to make  
9 sure that the dignity of each person, and the dignity  
10 of the diversity is so valued that race, ethnicity,  
11 national origin or religion disappears in the  
12 background. It's not something that you need to deal  
13 with, but it's something that really slowly, but  
14 surely, gets overwhelmed by the performance of the  
15 individual, by his work ethics, by all the things that  
16 he does.

17 So, I always get concerned that programs  
18 getting more effective or large, and that might be an  
19 indication that awareness is permeating the structures  
20 and, therefore, there are more things to do. On the  
21 other hand, progress should be measured in the fact  
22 that really sometime -- and I don't know when that  
23 time is, and that will be the question -- that these  
24 programs eventually should be carried out in a way  
25 that slowly there won't be that much need for it.

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1 Having been here now on this side of the table -- this  
2 is my sixth time -- where are we? Is there more need  
3 for the EEO programs of five years ago? Does that  
4 mean that the awareness of the management, everybody  
5 in the Agency has increased and therefore that  
6 increases the need for activities? Is it level  
7 enough? Is it coming down? Where are we?

8 MS. LITTLE: That's a big question, but  
9 I'm going to take a stab at it. We certainly still  
10 need in the EEO program the measures of progress  
11 sometimes attenuate to change. If I could go back to  
12 the '70s -- I wasn't here, but I was the EEO Director  
13 at the Environmental Protection Agency -- there were  
14 basically quotas. And so the success was in pure  
15 numbers. And so that was successful. When the quotas  
16 went away and we moved to affirmative action, we  
17 looked at actions. The emphasis was on efforts and  
18 actions. And that was the case for a while. And  
19 someone looked around and said, "We've got a lot of  
20 processes in place, but we don't have much outcome".

21 The newest thing is what are the outcomes?  
22 And what we are trying to do here today, we are  
23 talking about managing diversity. We want to  
24 institutionalize a way of thinking so that whoever  
25 sits on that side of the table, whoever sits in my

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1 chair, whoever sits as the EDO, will not have to start  
2 over again with their own personal philosophy and  
3 commitment. It will be institutionalized within the  
4 Agency. And we believe that if we can pursue a  
5 managing diversity process so that the culture in the  
6 Agency does exactly what you suggest -- places  
7 religion, race, ethnicity in the background and merit  
8 and employee development and contributions to the  
9 mission up front, we have then succeeded. Now,  
10 whether the bar will change in five years, don't know.  
11 But that's where we are trying to get.

12 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: That's an excellent  
13 answer. I really appreciate it. I'm impressed.  
14 Excellent answer. So, now going down to the bottom  
15 line, is the number of activities that you have to  
16 conduct increasing?

17 MS. LITTLE: Could you clarify  
18 "activities"?

19 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Everything you do, the  
20 amount of effort, resources, the amount of time that  
21 people are putting. It's not bad, by the way, it  
22 might very well be that you will be successful, that  
23 people are realizing what needs to be done and  
24 therefore you need to do more. Is it getting larger  
25 and, if so, why? And are you being successful at

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1 institutionalizing diversity in a manner that you are  
2 getting to the point where there is a program that is  
3 now steady and addressing the issues -- because I  
4 applaud the efforts in hiring, which is half of the  
5 battle -- maybe not half, maybe 30 percent of the  
6 battle -- and efforts that are being made to make sure  
7 that our employees have the right opportunities when  
8 they are here, and they are not only treated fairly,  
9 but they feel they are treated fairly because that is  
10 important. There's that cultural issue, am I being  
11 treated fairly? So, the issue is are we getting to a  
12 point where the number, the quality, the intensity of  
13 activities that are devoted, is it flat? Is it  
14 increasing or decreasing, and why?

15 MS. LITTLE: I will again take a stab at  
16 it. That's a big issue, a big question. If I were to  
17 react to whether employees believe today that the  
18 system is fairer and that the perception of unfairness  
19 is decreasing, I would have to tell you that answer is  
20 no. I do not believe that employees today believe  
21 that the system is fair.

22 On the other hand, I believe the system,  
23 if you look at the managers and the processes and what  
24 we are doing, I believe we are doing a lot to make the  
25 system fairer. We are not communicating it well

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1 enough because employees do not believe in the system,  
2 as a whole. We don't have a survey, we haven't had a  
3 broad survey asking that question for a while, but the  
4 anecdotal information, the issues that play out in our  
5 space, from the EEO Advisory Committees, the employees  
6 believe that a lot more needs to be done to ensure  
7 that every subgroup in this workforce is treated  
8 fairly, it's not that way.

9 What are we doing? Some of the things we  
10 are doing in my office -- we spent a lot of time  
11 planning special emphasis programs, and I think you  
12 all participated in the decision that says "let's not  
13 spend 40 percent of our time planning and executing  
14 five to six special emphasis programs, let's do a  
15 diversity day. Let's take those resources and spend  
16 them on something else like managing diversity".

17 I do know that all the office directors in  
18 this Agency, for the most part, have identified things  
19 that they are specifically and personally doing to  
20 help the process work. NRR, NMSS, the Regions,  
21 Research, a lot of the office -- OGC, Admin -- they  
22 have programs that say "I'm aware of what I need to be  
23 doing", and I think a lot more of that is happening.  
24 We need to communicate it better.

25 There is still a lot that needs to be done

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1 because employees' belief and trust in the system is  
2 key to whether we have an effective program.

3 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Thank you. Let me  
4 just make one comment and then go back to the  
5 questions. I really believe, because I have  
6 experienced it, that any improvement that is effected  
7 on any one group actually benefits all the groups  
8 because it is the issue of how those efforts permeate  
9 the structures. So, improvement for African Americans  
10 benefit Hispanics, improvement for Hispanics benefit  
11 Asian and African Americans. I think it is very  
12 important that that be clear. It is never an effort  
13 for any group, it is an effort for everybody, and  
14 everybody of course includes this group that we call  
15 "white" that are sometimes very preponderant, but they  
16 are part of us, they are part of what we do, and they  
17 actually need to be considered also.

18 Having that said, and I listened  
19 attentively to you, occasionally the Commission can do  
20 a little more if we are brought up with the issue. Is  
21 there anything that the Commission could do to  
22 actually to affect things that are maybe taking too  
23 long or are not clearly understood, and maybe that  
24 should be directed to the EDO, or eventually, since  
25 the buck stops there, that you eventually will go that

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1 way. But is there anything that really should come to  
2 the Commission, that the Commission should consider  
3 this, because I know my fellow Commissioners are as  
4 worried as I am that this programs really go forth,  
5 and that eventually, you know, by the time  
6 Commissioner McGaffigan goes out of here in his fourth  
7 term, we will actually sit in here and say this is  
8 really going well and it is time now to move into  
9 something else.

10 MS. LITTLE: I'm sure the EDO and my boss,  
11 Pat, probably want to say something about this as  
12 well, but my response to that is I'm sure there are a  
13 lot of things that we can ask you to do to help us  
14 with the program. I would like to think about that  
15 and respond to that in a much more comprehensive and  
16 well thought out manner than here. If I say something  
17 here, it may not be the most important thing.

18 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: I hope you do.

19 MS. NORRY: I would just say that I'm sure  
20 the Commissioners can do a lot in the communication  
21 phase of this. One of the things that -- if you say  
22 we're having increased activities, we are. But a lot  
23 of it relates to how well we're communicating, and  
24 that goes across the Agency, of course. We're trying  
25 to do a much better job in general of communicating,

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1 so obviously the Commissioners have a role in that as  
2 well.

3 MR. TRAVERS: Pat actually stole my  
4 answer, but communication, as an example -- walking  
5 the walk, talking the talk -- I think the Commission  
6 is actually engaged in that. I mean, several examples  
7 that I think of are opportunities that you  
8 periodically make on your staffs for rotational  
9 assignments and the like are opportunities for a  
10 diverse group of employees to gain a better insight  
11 into the higher level workings of the Commission.

12 But, by example, I think in the sorts of  
13 comments that Pat made, by communicating the  
14 expectations that the Commission has of us in carrying  
15 out this program, I think that's a principal means  
16 that I see as you are positively impacting the end  
17 result that you would like to see occur.

18 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Thank you. I look  
19 forward to finding out what Ms. Little and you  
20 actually believe that could be added to our tasks.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Commissioner  
23 McGaffigan.

24 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Thank you, Mr.  
25 Chairman. I'm going to ask one question -- I probably

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1 should have told you it was coming, but I didn't know  
2 it was coming until I sat down here, because it's  
3 probably technical. But in response to the last  
4 Commission meeting, one of the issues we had raised  
5 was whether the Center in San Antonio could be more  
6 involved in the HBCU program, and the answer we got  
7 back is we can involve them, but not with Nuclear  
8 Waste Fund monies, which is most of what their monies  
9 are, and there's a statutory impediment apparently to  
10 using Nuclear Waste Fund monies for HBCU purposes.  
11 And, honestly, as I read that, I found that  
12 surprising, given my previous experience with Senator  
13 Bingaman and Senator Domenici, where we routinely  
14 pressured the laboratories to engage in minority  
15 activities with our universities, trying to recruit  
16 Hispanics, African Americans, et cetera. And nobody  
17 ever said to me funds prevent us from doing that.

18 So, what is the statutory impediment and,  
19 if there is one, is it one we could remove?

20 MS. LITTLE: I don't know if we can remove  
21 it. We talked to the lawyers and they indicated to us  
22 that, No. 1, the funds cannot be augmented because we  
23 have monies -- we have monies that we have in our HBCU  
24 program and we wanted to place the students and  
25 faculty from the HCBU colleges at the Center, but they

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1 cannot do that because they would be augmenting the  
2 fund, and we couldn't do that. I do not know the  
3 legal reasons for that.

4 MS. CYR: It's a question of augmenting  
5 our appropriations for nuclear waste because we get a  
6 specific appropriation for nuclear waste activities.  
7 To the extent that I took General Funds and was trying  
8 to augment work on nuclear waste to do that -- so if  
9 you took SBCR funds --

10 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Why can't I just  
11 have some of the Nuclear Waste Fund go to -- along  
12 with the General Fund, and mix them. I mean, is there  
13 any prohibition to giving this Oak Ridge group that  
14 runs the HBCU program for us some Nuclear Waste Fund  
15 monies, so you wouldn't be augmenting the Nuclear  
16 Waste Fund with General Fund, you'd be using Nuclear  
17 Waste Fund money just like we use General Fund money  
18 to work with Historically Black Colleges and  
19 Universities.

20 MS. CYR: The question would be whether  
21 that would be being spent on nuclear waste activities.  
22 I mean, because you have to spend on nuclear waste  
23 activities whether depending on how that money was --  
24 purposes and what the individual was doing and how you  
25 were spending that money, whether that would be

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1 construed -- I mean, I guess that is our concern in  
2 terms of how you set that up, whether in fact what you  
3 were doing was, in fact, spending it on nuclear waste  
4 activity.

5 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I would hope  
6 that if we had somebody at the Center from an  
7 Historically Black College and University working on  
8 something in nuclear waste activity, it would be  
9 regarded as a nuclear waste activity, it wouldn't be  
10 -- I certainly hope all this activity in the HBCU  
11 program is not make-work, that it really is work that  
12 helps advance our programs and has a programmatic  
13 goal.

14 MS. LITTLE: Let me respond to that. We  
15 actually match up the students and faculty with NRC  
16 projects so they are working on specific NRC projects  
17 at the Labs.

18 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I don't want to  
19 belabor this and use all my time. I think you need to  
20 take a second look at this, to be -- Commissioner  
21 Merrifield?

22 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: I think when we  
23 asked that question, it wasn't so narrowly focused to  
24 say having those folks work just on issues associated  
25 with the economic project, there's a notion of can

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1 they work at the Southwest Center on other activities  
2 utilizing those monies. But I think the answer that  
3 was -- the question that was answered by OGC was a  
4 narrower question rather than the more expansive one  
5 that the Commission was looking at.

6 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: The answer that  
7 we got from the EDO on November 19th said we could  
8 only use these monies apparently because the money  
9 that goes to RIs -- now that I understand it, the  
10 money that goes to Oak Ridge comes from the General  
11 Fund, therefore, we have activities at the Center,  
12 things like West Valley or whatever that are General  
13 Fund activities, and the determination was made that  
14 we could place people if they wanted to work on those  
15 sorts of projects, but we couldn't place them working  
16 on Nuclear Waste Fund projects because we weren't  
17 using any Nuclear Waste Fund money to fund RIs. It  
18 strikes me that you could mix in some Nuclear Waste  
19 Fund money to the extent that we thought there were  
20 useful activities that an HCBU professor or student  
21 could do, and then you could use that money at the  
22 Center and it would tax the Nuclear Waste Fund in a  
23 very small way, I suspect, but it's something I just  
24 think we should consider.

25 The other thing -- I've mentioned it

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1 previously, and I'm aware of it because it applies to  
2 the Department of Defense -- but there are also  
3 incentives in law to work with Hispanic-serving  
4 universities similar to the HCBU program, that apply  
5 to the Department of Defense. I know we don't have  
6 that authority here, but have we ever thought about  
7 seeking that authority, because I, again, think that  
8 the relationships you forge at the student and with  
9 universities can help in the recruitment in the longer  
10 term. So, again, I'd just raise the issue as to in  
11 the future in our legislative programs, should we  
12 proactively look at the DOD language and see whether  
13 that language could be applied to us. These are very  
14 small taxes. I know that programs tend to regard them  
15 as taxes, but if they are properly expended, they can  
16 be -- that the taxes can bring a profit, unlike most  
17 taxes, unlike the taxes that we pay to the IRS, I  
18 suppose, but whatever. So, I just throw that out as  
19 a suggestion.

20 One of the other things I saw, looking at  
21 the data, I know we're going to have an opportunity to  
22 fix this because we, for the first time in years, are  
23 going to be growing in terms of our FTEs this year and  
24 next, if Congress supports our FY 2003 budget, but the  
25 table on page 2 of whichever annex, showing the age

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1 profile of this Agency, we've gone from when  
2 Commissioner Diaz and I showed up and Commissioner  
3 Dicus -- she was here, I think, in '96 -- I showed up  
4 at the end of FY96 and the start of '97 -- we went  
5 from 24 percent of our workforce being 39 and under,  
6 to 19 percent of our workforce being 39 and under,  
7 from 741 people in '97 to 539 in '01. Now, there's a  
8 lot of 36-year-olds or 40-year-olds who managed to  
9 bump themselves up to the next category during that  
10 period, but we really are still -- we don't have,  
11 based on this data, a very happy age profile and, from  
12 the point of view of having this Agency be  
13 reinvigorated over a 10- or 20-year period, from the  
14 point of view of being one of the 539, you know, your  
15 odds of being EDO are probably never better 20 years  
16 from now, but I think we need to think about it. I  
17 mean, I know it's going to be addressed, but I think  
18 we need to look very hard at how we -- you know, at  
19 getting this percentage back up at least to the '97  
20 level. And I know why the decline, we weren't hiring  
21 a lot of people, we were hiring just to replace and we  
22 weren't always fully hiring for replacement because  
23 our FTE numbers were going down. We have a real  
24 opportunity to fix this, and I just urge us to take  
25 it.

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1           MR. TRAVERS: You're right, I think we do  
2           have an opportunity, and part of that opportunity lies  
3           in the fact that we are growing, as you mentioned, for  
4           a number of reasons. The target that I laid out in  
5           March of '01 of 25 percent entry level was in part --  
6           not entirely, but in part -- intended to help overcome  
7           of the statistic, and recognize that going forward  
8           we've got to put ourselves in a position where we're  
9           not vulnerable to a great deal of our expertise  
10          walking out the door on any given day of the week.

11                 We've actually exceeded those, as I  
12          mentioned early in my presentation. In fact, I think  
13          last quarter we were up to 40-some-odd percent entry  
14          level hires. So, it's a continuing challenge. It's  
15          not going to be turned around in any given quarter, or  
16          perhaps any given year, but it's one that we're going  
17          to have to continue to be conscious of and direct our  
18          efforts to overcoming.

19                 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I agree, it's  
20          something -- there's another table in here -- you  
21          know, you look at these statistics and they tell  
22          stories. In the 56-plus range of managers and  
23          supervisors, we went from 65 in '00 to 75 in '01.  
24          Now, there are a fair number of retirements during  
25          that period, so we have a heck of a lot of 56-year-old

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1 managers who are 56 in '01 in this Agency, because I  
2 don't think we hired anybody from the outside into  
3 that, and we have obviously a heck of a lot of people  
4 over that age. If you are 56-plus today, your chances  
5 -- unless you are a saint -- of being here a decade  
6 from now are not high. So, that's 75 people that  
7 we're probably going to have to replace certainly in  
8 the next decade, and many of them sooner. So, there's  
9 just going to be an enormous turnover in this place in  
10 the next few years, is what this data is telling us.

11 MR. TRAVERS: We use that factoid to  
12 attract new people to come into the Agency, and  
13 suggest that there are going to be opportunities at  
14 NRC in upcoming --

15 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: I think that  
16 should be part of our communication strategy, you  
17 know, there are a lot of upward mobility potential in  
18 this Agency.

19 Are we trying to -- in terms of retention  
20 of these younger people, are we trying to track, say,  
21 at the three-year point, whether we've retained the  
22 people that we hired? Do you have any tool looking at  
23 retention of people we're hiring so that we know where  
24 we stand and whether we're keeping them?

25 MR. BIRD: That's exactly the benchmark

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1 that we've established for looking at this, and we  
2 have begun tracking it. And we haven't had the three  
3 years to measure whether we were successful or not,  
4 but if you look at the Green Book, in the back, I  
5 think that is represented there. We are --

6 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: You're going to  
7 have a performance measure on three-year retentions?

8 MR. TRAVERS: Yes, but it's numbers and  
9 basis. In other words, individually, as people leave  
10 the Agency, we have exit interviews where we seek to  
11 elicit what it is that's the reason.

12 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I think that's  
13 important. It was mentioned that you are trying, in  
14 recruiting people, you're looking at course work in  
15 addition to their GPAs. That could be for two reasons,  
16 I hope it's for the good reason. When I look at grade  
17 inflation that's happening in the campuses -- you  
18 know, that the new President of Harvard is taking on  
19 his faculty because I think over 50 percent of the  
20 grades given there are As nowadays, which makes it  
21 hard to tell one student from another, and apparently  
22 that's happened elsewhere. There was an article in  
23 the paper the other day about a fellow not getting  
24 tenure because he was a hard-ass about giving out Bs  
25 and Cs, and they basically wouldn't retain him at that

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1 university -- at least that's the allegation that he  
2 made.

3 So, if everybody has got 4.0s or 3.9s or  
4 3.5s, you have to look at the course work to make sure  
5 that this isn't somebody that's just being passed on  
6 to us by a bunch of university professors not willing  
7 to do their jobs, or is it -- the alternative theory  
8 is that, you know, we're trying to justify taking  
9 people with 2.5 or 2.0 GPAs based on taking a peek at  
10 their course work and seeing whether they might still  
11 be good enough for us.

12 MS. NORRY: The focus of this is -- and I  
13 don't think this is something that's going to end up  
14 being widespread because, when we established the  
15 requirements for the intern program, we did so with an  
16 idea that we wanted to maintain standards at a certain  
17 level, and that's what we have. But we were getting  
18 feedback from program officials who interviewed  
19 people, who said, "You know, this person -- there  
20 could be various reasons why their GPA was not up  
21 where the level should be", but they looked at other  
22 factors, and they wanted to have some flexibility to  
23 be able to occasionally bring someone like that  
24 onboard. And so we thought that was a good thing.

25 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I'll just tell

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1 you, I haven't done a lot of hiring in recent years,  
2 but in Senator Bingaman's office, we had to hire  
3 people to be mostly legislative correspondents. And  
4 they had to be able to write. And I was turning down  
5 people from major law schools who had good GPAs at the  
6 law schools, who could not -- we had to institute a  
7 writing test in order -- which we would give them on-  
8 the-spot -- here's a letter, take a crack at answering  
9 it -- in order to figure out who could write and who  
10 couldn't write simple declarative sentences.

11 MR. TRAVERS: We hope you don't give that  
12 standard to the current NRC staff.

13 (Laughter and simultaneous discussion.)

14 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: I'm not real  
15 big, as you can tell, on our university system at the  
16 moment because I'm not sure it's doing its job.  
17 Obviously, some very, very good people get through it  
18 and do well, and some people get passed through it who  
19 really aren't very competent because the professors  
20 won't do their job and actually give out Bs and Cs and  
21 Ds. I'm sure Professor Diaz was not one of them, but  
22 I think with that I'll leave.

23 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Commissioner  
24 Merrifield.

25 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: I'll play off

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1 that comment in going back to the answer that Irene  
2 gave to Commissioner Diaz' first question in which he  
3 mentioned it was an excellent answer. We have enough  
4 people in this Agency who have been students of  
5 Commissioner Diaz who can attest to the fact that he's  
6 not an easy grader, so I think you should take that as  
7 quite a compliment.

8 As we go through this, I think that the  
9 questions that have preceded mine talked to the issue  
10 of balance, and that is we have had a notable success  
11 in our ability to bring in new entry level people, and  
12 I think it goes without question that so far that has  
13 gone very well.

14 Keeping those people and making sure that  
15 we have people coming in at the mid-levels to fulfill  
16 all of our needs is important, too. And on the  
17 balance issue, I'm reminded of an old example of what  
18 happened in the former Soviet Union. There was an  
19 instruction, a five-year plan to make glass. And in  
20 the first five-year plan, they said we want to have a  
21 certain number of meters of glass, and that  
22 prescription was made, but they found out that the  
23 glass was very, very thin and kept breaking. So, in  
24 the second five-year plan they said we're going to  
25 require our glass to be manufactured, and they put a

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1 tonnage weight on it, and they found out that they had  
2 very thick glass that didn't meet the requirements as  
3 well. And meeting that sort of "sweet spot" in the  
4 middle, I think, is something that we're going to have  
5 to continue to try to achieve in order to get the  
6 vision that I think Commissioner Diaz has laid out of  
7 a sustainability in our programs where we can meet our  
8 goals and do it in a way that is holistic of where we  
9 want to go as an Agency.

10 All that having been said, one of the  
11 questions was directed towards Mr. Bird related to  
12 some of the new hires and whether there was a comfort  
13 level of them on coming to the Agency. You seem to  
14 have a fairly optimistic statement in that regard, and  
15 overall I think that may be the case.

16 I have had occasion to talk to a number of  
17 the new hires, and I would say -- and this, again, is  
18 an isolated example -- I think there is some level of  
19 concern out there. I don't think all is roses and red  
20 wine, so to speak.

21 My question is this: Do we believe that  
22 some of the management folks within the Agency, who  
23 really have to care and nurture for these folks, are  
24 doing all that they can do to make sure that we are  
25 going to be able to retain them down the line and not

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1 add to our attrition rate down the road?

2 MR. BIRD: I think certainly that's mixed.  
3 Some managers are doing an outstanding job in this  
4 regard, others for various reasons, in my opinion, are  
5 not having the time to devote to this, are not  
6 committing the time to devote to the nurturing that's  
7 necessary here for a new employee, to get them fully  
8 integrated, to try to work with them on retention  
9 issues, to show them how we do business. In the  
10 Leadership Development Program, one of the groups is  
11 focused on this and is trying to work around that to  
12 provide some supplementary sources of nurturing, if  
13 you will, and certainly Irene's staff and others are  
14 trying to do the same thing and pick that up. And I  
15 do think there is some concern about that, that if the  
16 people that are coming are not challenged with  
17 meaningful jobs and meaningful feedback and some means  
18 of going to someone who will help them see how we do  
19 business and understand our processes, we could have  
20 a shortfall there.

21 One of the things this group, this  
22 Leadership Development Group, is doing is offering  
23 their own time to help fill that void and to work with  
24 new employees as peers. They are basically looking to  
25 them as peers, and I think this is a very valuable

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1 thing in the Agency for that to happen. And you will  
2 see some of that start to materialize as this group  
3 works to the end of their project here. But I don't  
4 disagree with you, and it is mixed. Some are working  
5 very hard at this and doing a very, very good job, and  
6 others aren't devoting as much time to that nurturing.

7 MR. TRAVERS: I should comment, though,  
8 that in an age or an era when there are a lot of  
9 challenges for the management team at NRC, this is  
10 another one, and it's significant. We ought to do  
11 well. But I do recognize the limitations on what we  
12 ask of the management team.

13 We need to continue to emphasize this and  
14 work with them, and make sure that we understand all  
15 of what it is we are asking the management team to do  
16 as we struggle with a host of important issues, and  
17 where we need to help, from the senior level, whether  
18 it be via resources to help in this arena, or some  
19 other factor, I think we've got to remain aware of the  
20 overall challenge that we ask so that they can, in  
21 fact, be successful in all of the areas where we  
22 expect success. I'm not sure we've always done as  
23 good a job, from my level, in making sure that the  
24 expectations of our management team are reasonable,  
25 but we're working hard to try to do that now, and

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1 we're going to continue to keep our eye on that.

2 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Well, it's a  
3 fair point. Again, I think it's one worth spending  
4 some time. You know, the old adage is you can go out  
5 and you can purchase very good seeds, but if you don't  
6 water them and nurture them appropriately, they will  
7 not grow nor will they thrive, and that, I think, is  
8 part of where we are right now.

9 I'd be interested in maybe a followup  
10 later on of if we are appropriately capturing within  
11 the review process for our senior managers their  
12 commitment to these kind of efforts, in their yearly  
13 reviews.

14 Dr. Travers, over a year ago, at this  
15 point, you had an instruction to members of the SES  
16 Candidate Development pool to come up with a strategy  
17 on communications for the Agency, and they came up  
18 with a document called Communications is the Key.

19 I'm struck by one of the comments this  
20 morning about a seeming disparity between, as Irene  
21 mentioned, the feelings of senior management that we  
22 are doing the appropriate things to have a system that  
23 is fair, i.e., for hiring and for having people go  
24 through our system that is fair, yet a belief among  
25 many out there that it is not fair, that they are not

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1 being treated fairly.

2 One of the notions that Ms. Little talked  
3 about was a notion that communications plays a part in  
4 that. And so I'm wondering to what extent are we  
5 going to fix that, and how?

6 MR. TRAVERS: There are a number of means,  
7 and communication is a broad arena. The one that I  
8 think perhaps most directly applies to this issue is  
9 the one that I spoke to at the outset, and that is --  
10 the one that's in the paper -- and that is the  
11 obligation that we, as managers, have to our staff of  
12 fairly assessing their performance, giving them  
13 instructive feedback on where and how they might  
14 develop in areas where they are perhaps not as strong  
15 as they might be.

16 I think the disservice you can do by not  
17 providing that is multi-faceted. One of the  
18 disservices you do is you can provide to an employee  
19 who you are not giving that feedback to, where perhaps  
20 you as a manager don't feel comfortable providing  
21 critical feedback is you don't provide the opportunity  
22 for the employee to know where they stand and where  
23 they may need to focus their own efforts -- this is a  
24 two-way street -- in developing themselves to the  
25 point where they should be more strongly considered

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1 for advancement in the NRCc.

2 I think sometimes it's easier -- and  
3 perhaps it's easier with minority staff -- to not  
4 provide critical assessments, even if they're intended  
5 to be constructive, because of the concern that you're  
6 going to be viewed in a fashion that's not  
7 complimentary to you. I think that's just wrong, and  
8 there are certainly different styles for how you  
9 provide that feedback, and it ought to be positive and  
10 it ought to be constructive, but it ought not to  
11 always send glowing messages about performance. It  
12 ought to be balanced in terms of what you are doing  
13 well and where you need to improve your performance,  
14 so that you have the opportunity to understand where  
15 management perceives your capability to be at any  
16 point in time, thereby providing the employee an  
17 opportunity to do something about it.

18 That's not the only area, but I think it's  
19 a key one. I think the other areas of opportunity  
20 that we have are stressing the way we carry out some  
21 of our competitive selection processes into things  
22 like SES Candidate Development, by providing  
23 information about the rigor associated with those  
24 processes. And, frankly, I don't think you'll at  
25 anytime completely overcome, in some staff minds, the

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1 view that it's a system where people are earmarked for  
2 advancement. I think that's a natural sort of  
3 function of organizations, but having said that, I  
4 think we ought to do everything we can to provide the  
5 information that suggests otherwise in how we are  
6 conducting these sorts of selection processes, in how  
7 we are conducting appraisals, in how we are mentoring  
8 minority staff in the Agency, and other staff in the  
9 Agency.

10 So, there ought to be a fairly obvious to  
11 all staff -- there ought to be obvious information  
12 that suggests that we are, in fact, acting fairly on  
13 all fronts.

14 MR. BIRD: If I could just comment on  
15 that, there's a recent Merit System Protection Board  
16 study that has been released that suggests that this  
17 problem of a perception of process fairness is  
18 throughout government. I think the feedback, if I  
19 remember it, was that about 40 percent of the people  
20 who responded felt that the systems were fair and  
21 equitable, and that's a very low percentage, and OPM  
22 will certainly take on this challenge, and we are a  
23 part of that, and we need to take on the challenge as  
24 well because the perception, as you know, becomes  
25 reality in the minds of the people that we're

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1 interacting with, and I think that study might give us  
2 some insights as to how to begin to address that  
3 issue. And we need to do more in trying to  
4 communicate both here and throughout government.

5 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: I have two quick  
6 questions left. The first one, Ms. Little, when you  
7 talked about the success in the ADR process that  
8 you've had, which I have previously and continue to be  
9 very supportive of, despite that, however, there was,  
10 I think -- if I got it right -- you did have an  
11 increase in the backlog of some of those actions out  
12 there. And I'm wondering -- from FY 2000 and FY 2001  
13 -- and I'm wondering what you're doing to address some  
14 of that and narrow the period of time necessary that  
15 those are out there before they are addressed?

16 MS. LITTLE: We did not have an increase  
17 in the number of formal complaints that were filed.  
18 The number I mentioned --

19 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: No, not the  
20 number filed, the carryover.

21 MS. LITTLE: The 19 complaints that were  
22 carried over were from prior years, and some of those  
23 were already former. The 21 that carried over were  
24 some of those 19 that are still in courts. So we have  
25 to look below the figures. We are pretty pleased with

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1 new complaints that are coming in, at how we are  
2 dealing with those, but some of the carryover  
3 complaints are as old as '96, '97, '95, and they  
4 continue to be carried over. We are adding some to  
5 that list, but for the most part the new complaints we  
6 are resolving. So, yes, we added two to that number,  
7 but when we think about it, we had 40 incidents of  
8 counseling, 13 went to ADR, 27 were handled by the  
9 counselors, and 15 of those actually resulted in  
10 formal complaints. Yes, we added a couple, but that  
11 was it.

12 What are we doing? We're still  
13 encouraging people to use ADR. It is the  
14 complainant's choice. We cannot make that decision for  
15 them. So, ours is one of educating them about the  
16 process and the benefits of the process, and giving  
17 the employee the choice very early.

18 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: And I don't want  
19 to take away from success, I'm just saying that we, on  
20 this side of the table, frequently take the staff to  
21 task on backlog and, gee, are we getting this behind,  
22 and the amount of time they are backlogged and all  
23 that. I just wanted to get some sense -- typically,  
24 again, the practice on this side of the table, to make  
25 sure you focus on that, too, to get those out of

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1       there.

2                   Last question briefly to Mr. Bird, you  
3       talked about how we have -- I think it was a 6 percent  
4       internal attrition rate, I think that was the number  
5       you talked about. Obviously, there's a whole variety  
6       of factors in that, but I am concerned about the  
7       extent to which people are leaving the Agency to go to  
8       other Federal agencies or to -- out in the private  
9       sector. Are we concerned about that number, or do we  
10      have an understanding of how that breaks out, and what  
11      some of the reasons are for it and, most importantly,  
12      is there anything we can do to improve it?

13                   MR. BIRD: Well, we look at feedback we  
14      get from employees as they leave. Some leave us good  
15      feedback that we can draw some conclusions from,  
16      others just say "thank you", and don't really leave us  
17      a lot to work with.

18                   We, frankly, don't lose a lot to other  
19      agencies or to outside entities compared to the rest  
20      of the Federal Government. We have recently lost our  
21      share to retirement, and that tends to be the most  
22      common reason for leaving.

23                   I think our challenge is going to change  
24      there as, again, the younger population, the interns  
25      will have opportunities, and they are going to be

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1 looking for those opportunities. And that, to me,  
2 will make a difference in the future.

3 We do periodically go back and look at the  
4 statements that are made by the people that are  
5 leaving, and we break down those reasons, and they  
6 typically have been reasons of family moves and that  
7 sort of thing, more so than dissatisfaction with NRC  
8 as a good working environment, and we'll look at that  
9 again. I just don't have that with me.

10 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Thank you.  
11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Let me make an  
13 observation that would be my answer to Commissioner  
14 Diaz' question "where are we", which is obviously the  
15 fundamental reason we are here, and ask you whether  
16 you think I'm right.

17 As I read the paper and look at the  
18 statistics, I see a large number of very aggressive  
19 efforts that we're taking to deal with the situation  
20 we're confronted with. I know that they are sincere.  
21 I think they are well received, and I think they are  
22 proving to be effective. But as I look at the data,  
23 I see that we're not there yet, and we look at the  
24 percentage of managers, we look at some of the  
25 statistics in terms of the SES representation and the

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1 like, that we have a ways to go. And this is not  
2 something you can turn around on a dime, that you have  
3 to deal with the age profile problem, you have to  
4 constantly fight that issue, as an example, and  
5 bringing in and new recruiting and you're filling  
6 positions, that's something -- you have a few of those  
7 opportunities a year to be able to deal with it, so  
8 that one wouldn't expect to have success overnight on  
9 something like that.

10 But my sense of this is this is a problem  
11 we're working on. We're working on it aggressively.  
12 We aren't there yet. And as part of our candid  
13 evaluation process here that you've emphasized, I'd  
14 like to get your sense. Is my report card a fair one?

15 MR. TRAVERS: I think it is. I think, you  
16 know, anybody who has been here a while and has seen  
17 the Agency grapple with some of the statistics and  
18 some of the numbers, it's obviously one where we've  
19 made some progress, but it's slow. There are reasons  
20 for that. You have indicated we are a very highly  
21 technical organization in the main, so sometimes our  
22 ability to reach out and attract diversity in our  
23 workforce is somewhat limited. Our ability to pay  
24 people is somewhat limited.

25 But I think we have made -- the strides

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1 that we have made are notable. We have efforts in  
2 place to remedy some of the more obvious issues, like  
3 underrepresentation in specific areas. But it's  
4 pretty clear to me that it's going to continue to  
5 require concerted effort. It's going to continue to  
6 require that we explore additional activities.  
7 Commissioner Diaz asked a question about whether more  
8 activities are in play. I think today more activities  
9 are in play. Many of those activities are less  
10 focused -- we take credit for them in EEO diversity's  
11 face -- but if you look at them, communications and  
12 other forms of our efforts, are really, as Pat  
13 mentioned in her opening remarks, much more broadly  
14 applicable to the work environment that we have here  
15 at NRC. And I think that where we've perhaps made the  
16 greatest gain -- and some of what we've done is less  
17 quantitative, but more qualitative in the sense of the  
18 quality of the work environment, that we do have the  
19 diversity that we do enjoy here and those sort of  
20 things, but I think your assessment is fair. The  
21 numbers, if you look at them sort of coldly, in the  
22 main, haven't changed greatly over the years. They've  
23 improved some, and I think lately they've been  
24 improving at a little bit faster pace, but I wouldn't  
25 expect to see next time we meet, or even the next time

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1 we meet, to be dramatic gains in these numbers. I  
2 think it's going to take a concerted effort in all  
3 areas that we've been talking about today, to make the  
4 sort of improvement that I think you'll hold us  
5 accountable for making in the longer-term.

6 MS. NORRY: I would just say one thing,  
7 which is I agree with what Bill said, and I agree with  
8 your assessment, but one of the perhaps disadvantages  
9 of being around as long as I've been is that I tried  
10 to remind myself that the fact that we've made  
11 progress since the beginning is not something that we  
12 should talk about a lot and congratulate ourselves on,  
13 but we have, in fact, made progress, and I can only,  
14 just as one small example -- I remember we went  
15 through years and years and years where the number of  
16 women in SES positions was in single digits, and we --  
17 the big achievement was going to be if we could ever  
18 get it out of single digits. So, these things are  
19 measured, you know, by gradual progress and, as Bill  
20 said, it's not just the numbers. I think the  
21 awareness is what we have to keep looking at, the  
22 awareness and the communications.

23 MR. MARSHALL: Speaking for the  
24 committees, in addition to -- there's a lot of  
25 activity going on, but as we're working on this,

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1 instead of just focusing on the numbers, we're looking  
2 at broader measures of progress. You heard a lot of  
3 discussion of fairness of the system, a lot of  
4 discussion on feedback. Those aren't something we  
5 can't put on paper. We realize that those are much  
6 more important areas to work on to get outcomes that  
7 have longer benefits, that help with retention,  
8 because, like Commissioner Diaz said, about 30 percent  
9 is getting a whole new group through, it doesn't do a  
10 lot of good with regards to leadership positions if we  
11 lose that entire group after five years or after ten  
12 years. Along the way, you still won't see any change  
13 in the numbers themselves, but if there's a stronger  
14 sense that the development and progress, promotion  
15 that there's a sense of fairness, there's honest  
16 feedback on "I know where I stand, I know what I have  
17 to do to move through this organization", will  
18 increase the chances of retention and then hopefully  
19 we'll see better outcomes with those numbers.

20 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I just have two much  
21 less fundamental questions. You used the term "best  
22 practices" to describe the various things you're  
23 doing, and it's clear from the discussion that there  
24 has been substantial interaction with the various  
25 Advisory Committees and with managers and trying to

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1 think that problem through, and I endorse that, that's  
2 clearly the right thing to do.

3 I guess I do have the question, however,  
4 is the extent we look to other agencies or even the  
5 private sector to see whether there are some tools  
6 that they are using effectively that we might be able  
7 to adapt to our circumstances? I mean, it's very  
8 important to have something that builds on internal  
9 communications, but there are other things that we  
10 haven't thought of that we could learn from outside,  
11 and are we trying to get to that information?

12 MS. LITTLE: The short answer to that is  
13 yes. We interact -- I do -- with my counterparts to  
14 discuss with them the kinds of things they are doing.  
15 And managing diversity wasn't invented by us, we  
16 learned that that works from one of our fellow agency.  
17 NIH is doing some things there. So, yes, we do, we  
18 try to learn from that.

19 MR. VIRGILIO: The other thing I'd add to  
20 that, Irene, is the fact that we've got a new  
21 contractor coming onboard. Part of the selection  
22 process included looking at what their experience was,  
23 and part of our expectations for them is they'll take  
24 us to a new level based on what they've learned  
25 outside of NRC. So, we've got high expectations for

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1 that group to take advantage of the work experience  
2 they've had elsewhere and to translate that into NMSS.

3 The other thing I'd like to go back to,  
4 Mr. Chairman, if you'd let me, I think Mike's answer  
5 was a great answer to the question that you asked  
6 about managing diversity and where we're going. And  
7 "there" isn't about just changing the numbers, I think  
8 "there" is about increased performance capacity of our  
9 organization, about providing the people that we have  
10 onboard today work assignments, opportunities,  
11 development, and challenge. And I think that may be  
12 where "there" is for us right now, as in parallel,  
13 we'll work to change the number, changing the  
14 environment, changing the opportunities are really  
15 important to us, and I think in the end what we're  
16 going to see is an increased performance capacity of  
17 our organization through managing diversity.

18 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Just one  
19 quick last question. One of the great successes that  
20 you had described to us last time and again presented  
21 in the paper, is our recruitment in Hispanics,  
22 particularly in Puerto Rico, is usually successful.

23 It appears from reading the paper that you  
24 made a similar effort with regard to Asian Americans  
25 in California, but from the statistics we see, we

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1 didn't seem to get much in the way of applicants. Are  
2 there some lessons that we've learned from this about  
3 how to do this recruitment effort that gives a better  
4 yield?

5 MR. BIRD: I may be able to speak to that.  
6 I don't think you could quite characterize those as  
7 equal in terms of investment and the people  
8 participating, and particularly with regard to going  
9 there with jobs on the other end of the visit.  
10 Certainly, I think from some of the discussions that  
11 Pat has had with the committee, we want to pick up on  
12 that and go back to that with the same level of effort  
13 that we were addressing the other events that we had  
14 at North Carolina A&T, and certainly in Puerto Rico,  
15 to re-examine that and re-examine the jobs that are  
16 going to be available, and go there with the intent  
17 that we would make on-the-job offers. So, they were  
18 well intended, but they weren't quite parallel  
19 efforts, in my opinion.

20 MS. LITTLE: Let me make just one comment.  
21 There was another difference also. When you go to  
22 Puerto Rico, probably 90 to 99 percent of the students  
23 there are going to be Hispanic. When you go to  
24 Historical Black College, the same will be the case.  
25 When you go to the West Coast schools, you don't have

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1 that percentage of any single group represented there.

2 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Good. Well, thank you  
3 very much. We're to the point in our program where I  
4 want to give an opportunity for the representatives of  
5 the Advisory Committees and the Union to have a chance  
6 to make brief statements.

7 Mr. Marshall, would you like to make a  
8 statement on behalf of the Advisory Committee for  
9 African Americans?

10 MR. MARSHALL: Yes, I would, thank you.  
11 The Advisory Committee for African Americans again --  
12 we're concentrating on a subgroup of what all the  
13 committees are concentrating on -- that is,  
14 advancement of African Americans within NRC,  
15 increasing the numbers or advancement of African  
16 Americans or preparing them to advance, and to the  
17 SES, the FOS, and the supervisory positions, and  
18 increase helping the Agency be successful in  
19 recruiting African Americans into the Agency. And  
20 we're involved in ongoing dialogue and a working  
21 relationship especially Ms. Norry at the EDO level,  
22 HR, and SBCR, on putting together a framework in which  
23 to address that. And the interesting thing is, the  
24 framework we're going to tends to leave from increase-  
25 the-numbers to improve feedback, sponsorship, focusing

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1 on preparing people to be successful in this Agency,  
2 and I think that's where a lot of progress is being  
3 made that is not as visible as the recruitment  
4 efforts. The recruitment efforts are very visible,  
5 but these other areas we're working on -- which,  
6 again, I think are more as important with regards to  
7 feedback, working on the perception of fairness with  
8 the merit staffing process we're very active in, and  
9 we look forward to continuing working in those areas,  
10 and hopefully we will get some very positive outcomes  
11 in the near future. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Ms.  
13 Delgado?

14 MS. DELGADO: Good morning, everyone. I  
15 would like to thank everybody for giving me the  
16 opportunity to speak today, and on behalf of HEPAC, I  
17 would like to thank the Commission and all the offices  
18 involved for the outstanding recruitment effort this  
19 past year.

20 We sincerely hope these successes will  
21 continue as the Agency attempts to address the  
22 underrepresentation of Hispanics at the NRC. We also  
23 feel that it is important to focus additional  
24 attention on long-term retention of those we recruit.  
25 To do this, we encourage continued efforts in

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1 following up with current recruits to assist in  
2 facilitating an open and responsive workplace by  
3 establishing IDPs and mentoring, and in providing  
4 opportunities for technical and nontechnical Hispanics  
5 in highly visible and rotational assignments,  
6 including EDO, Commission, and Chairman offices.

7 HEPAC is committed to continue to be  
8 involved with recruiting and welcoming the Hispanics  
9 who are coming to the NRC. We will assist with the  
10 mentoring of new employees and making them feel a part  
11 of the Hispanic and NRC communities. Thank you.

12 I just wanted to address something that  
13 Commissioner Dicus said on feedback from the interns.  
14 HEPAC right now plans to conduct an informal feedback  
15 program with the interns over the next few months. We  
16 are conducting the process to assess factors that may  
17 affect the retention of these new employees. Thank  
18 you again.

19 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.  
20 Cullingford.

21 MR. CULLINGFORD: Thank you, Chairman and  
22 Commissioners. I am pleased today to represent the  
23 views of the Asian/Pacific Committee. I'm the Co-  
24 Chair. I would like to relate to you something that  
25 happened in December. On December 18th, we had a

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1 committee meeting which was to elect new officers and  
2 vote new members of the committee. And a problem that  
3 has arisen in the past arose at that time, and that  
4 was we did not have a quorum. So, the members present  
5 of the committee at that time started to discuss,  
6 well, why is this? And there were some views  
7 expressed at that time, one of them being that they  
8 felt that the management had not been addressing the  
9 issues that APAAC has raised, and there was sort of a  
10 disillusionment. So then the point was, well, is this  
11 just the views of one or two members of the committee,  
12 so they decided to poll the Asian/Pacific American  
13 members of the NRC staff and ask for their views. And  
14 what was to me a little surprising was that there was  
15 a lot of disenchantment, and the point was, well, it's  
16 business as usual, nothing has happened. We had the  
17 Commission briefing and, really, Commissioner Diaz, it  
18 addresses that question, and also Commissioner  
19 Merrifield, of balance, that nothing has happened and,  
20 to my surprise, the point was raised, well, why  
21 doesn't the Asian/Pacific American Committee just  
22 quit, why don't we just stop. And I and some others,  
23 quite a number, were opposed to this, of course,  
24 because that doesn't really solve anything.  
25 Nevertheless, the majority of the responses said we

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1 should quit, we should withdraw.

2 And so I started to look myself at some of  
3 this, and going back to the last year's briefing, we  
4 had raised the issue, one of the main issues, about  
5 the representation of Asian/Pacific Americans in  
6 management and supervisory positions. And you know  
7 statistics, you can get anything from statistics, but  
8 sometimes statistics are very simple, very clear. And  
9 so I always wonder, is this a few people sort of had  
10 an ax to grind, or they have something they want to  
11 say, but it's not real, but this is not just a  
12 perception, it seems the statistics show that.

13 What they show is that our committee, or  
14 our members, have over the last five years, the  
15 representation in the SES and supervisory positions  
16 has actually gone down whereas every other group has  
17 gone up. And if you look on Attachment 3 at page 4,  
18 you can just see that by looking at all the groups,  
19 that since 1997, just look at the percentages and you  
20 will see that our group is the only one where  
21 representation in management supervisory positions has  
22 gone down. And we realize, everybody realizes, that  
23 these things require constant attention and they don't  
24 change overnight, and nobody is trying to put people  
25 in jobs just because of their backgrounds, they have

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1 to be competent. However -- in other words, what are  
2 we asking, what does our committee, what do our  
3 members ask the Commission to do?

4 And we would like to ask and request that  
5 the Commission focus on this issue and try to take  
6 some actions to rectify this underrepresentation of  
7 Asian/Pacific Americans. Thank you for your time.

8 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you, Mr.  
9 Cullingford. Ms. Gunn.

10 MS. GUNN: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. At  
11 the last EEO briefing, FWPAC stated that we would  
12 concentrate on creating developmental and career  
13 advancement opportunities for women at NRC. In  
14 particular, in that time we've been working on a  
15 secretarial initiative as 84 percent of Grades 12 and  
16 under at NRC are women. We look to provide a report  
17 on that initiative to SBCR in the very near future.

18 FWPAC has also been working with program  
19 offices to address women's concerns. NMSS, in  
20 particular, has been actively working with FWPAC.  
21 Some of the recent actions they've taken have been  
22 hiring floaters for the secretarial staff, to give the  
23 secretarial staff an opportunity to take training, to  
24 take vacation, or to help out when the workload  
25 spikes.

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1           NMSS has also paid close attention to  
2 their developmental assignments. As an example, 40  
3 percent of NMSS employees on developmental assignments  
4 last year were women. This number is consistent  
5 pretty much with the overall percentage of women in  
6 the Agency.

7           FWPAC looks forward to continuing to work  
8 with you and all the program offices in the future.  
9 Thank you for your time and support.

10           CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.  
11 Ibrahim.

12           MR. IBRAHIM: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners,  
13 on behalf of the Committee on Age Discrimination, I  
14 would like to express my thanks to you for giving us  
15 the opportunity to address the Commission on age  
16 issues.

17           The Committee would like to bring some of  
18 their concerns to your attention. You will notice  
19 that our current statement has not markedly changed  
20 from previous statements presented to the Commission.  
21 What does that imply? It implies that not much  
22 progress has been made to resolve our concerns.

23           In the past, we have recommended that some  
24 actions be taken to inform and sensitize management to  
25 ensure fair and equitable promotions are present, and

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1 awards for other staff. So far, we have not seen much  
2 in the way of positive action regarding these  
3 concerns.

4 Staff 50 years old and above are the core  
5 of this Agency. They possess critical job skills and  
6 experience which are essential to the mission of the  
7 Agency. The Agency needs to recognize them and value  
8 their experience and facilitate its transfer to the  
9 younger staff. We hope in future briefings we can  
10 report to you that progress has been made regarding  
11 this issue.

12 And, finally, the committee would like to  
13 thank the EDO, Dr. Bill Travers, and Brian Sheron for  
14 meeting with us to discuss our concerns. In addition  
15 to that, we'd like to thank Ms. Irene Little and her  
16 staff for providing the data to analyze it and explain  
17 what kind of percentage regarding older employee and  
18 younger employee get promotion and how much can be  
19 accomplished from that. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.  
21 Akstulewiorz.

22 MR. AKSTULEWIORZ: Thank you, Mr.  
23 Chairman, Commissioners. On behalf of the Joint  
24 Labor/Management EEO Committee, I'd like to thank you  
25 all for the opportunity to speak to you today.

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1           Our committee is a little bit different in  
2           the sense that we don't sponsor any ethnic or gender  
3           group, but we are a committee comprised of members  
4           representing both the union and the management, and  
5           our function is to advise management on all matters  
6           concerning equal employment opportunities and to  
7           provide comments and advice regarding the content of  
8           EEO Action Plans and their implementation.

9           In our oversight role, our committee  
10          echoes many of the views expressed in the Joint  
11          Statement attached to the Commission Paper. We would  
12          like to recognize the many ongoing efforts to enhance  
13          the diversity of the Agency workforce at all levels of  
14          the organization.

15          We are encouraged by the initiative such  
16          as targeted recruitment in identifying and  
17          successfully hiring highly qualified minorities for  
18          entry level positions, and we are also encouraged by  
19          the Agency efforts to identify and select highly  
20          qualified minorities for succession planning programs  
21          such as the Leadership Potential Program.

22          We need to continue to build on these  
23          initial successes. Our ability to retain these new  
24          employees, to provide them with meaningful and  
25          challenging work, and to provide opportunities for

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1 advancement in the organization will be the only true  
2 measure of success of our EEO programs.

3 We should also strive as an Agency to find  
4 ways to provide meaningful and challenging work to  
5 those employees nearing retirement, to ensure that  
6 their collective institutional memory is not lost to  
7 the Agency upon their retirement.

8 The Agency might consider pairing both the  
9 new hires and the old group nearing retirement, to  
10 provide opportunities for both to be more fully  
11 engaged and to provide productive employees.

12 Our committee looks forward to monitoring  
13 the Agency efforts now and in the future, and to make  
14 recommendations for improvements in the EEO efforts as  
15 they may be necessary. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.  
17 Yielding.

18 MR. YIELDING: Thank you. The National  
19 Treasury Employees Union would like to thank the  
20 Commission for the opportunity to comment on the  
21 Agency's EEO progress and how the union has been  
22 involved to help this out.

23 I always try to keep my comments connected  
24 with the EEO Briefing Paper, and this time I find it  
25 quite easy because page 6 of the EEO Report addresses

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1 "worker-friendly" culture and how this will promote  
2 staff recruitment and retention.

3 I think everyone knows our Collective  
4 Bargaining Agreement and union involvement is always  
5 trying to improve the worker-friendly culture, and  
6 about every issue in the Collective Bargaining  
7 Agreement deals with that working culture.

8 I could probably speak for an hour on  
9 this, but I'm going to keep this brief and try to  
10 focus on the single most important contract change  
11 that we have in front of us, and that is work-at-home  
12 and how this can promote retention and recruitment.  
13 This is also referred to in the contract as "flexi-  
14 place" and "telecommuting".

15 The Agency and NTEU management reached  
16 agreement in June of last year, and the program for  
17 work-at-home has become effective with the new  
18 contract, which became effective in October, four  
19 months ago. Management is just now implementing this  
20 program in the Collective Bargaining Agreement by  
21 collecting applications from employees to get approval  
22 for work-at-home, and NTEU applauds this process even  
23 though we're not as expeditious and fast as the union  
24 had hoped.

25 We remain cautious that there is soon

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1 approaching some high participation goals. I just  
2 want to quote a couple of statistics. Congress  
3 enacted public law applying the "Work-at-Home Program"  
4 to 25 percent of the workforce, and that was due to be  
5 implemented last April of 2001. Of course, we missed  
6 that deadline because I was still at the negotiating  
7 table with management negotiating the contract.

8 The law further escalates the  
9 participation requirements for work-at-home to 50  
10 percent by April of this year, which is three months  
11 from now. The Agency has identified 1,000 positions  
12 that are eligible for work-at-home, and I think  
13 everybody here can do the math -- 50 percent of 1,000  
14 -- and realize that a slow, comfortable implementation  
15 will not achieve these high participation requirements  
16 set by Congress.

17 So, all we are asking for here is -- we  
18 realize that Work-at-Home is a documented positive  
19 recruitment tool, and we hope that the ball now is in  
20 the office directors' courts for hopefully  
21 expeditiously complying with these requirements and  
22 get people working at home.

23 And I guess our format here doesn't offer  
24 questions, but I'll always welcome questions from the  
25 Commission either in this meeting or off-line, if you

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1 would ever like to have comments from the union  
2 privately in your office. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you very much,  
4 Mr. Yielding.

5 Well, we come to the end of what I think  
6 all of us on the Commission view as a singularly  
7 important meeting we have periodically. The staff  
8 really is our most important resource in this Agency,  
9 and it is in the Commission's interest -- I must  
10 admit, in the Commission's selfish interest -- in  
11 assuring that there is equal opportunity here. That  
12 is the best way we have to assuring a high quality  
13 staff. So, this is a very important activity for us,  
14 as it is for you.

15 I would like to thank you all for some  
16 very helpful presentations this morning. And with  
17 that, we are adjourned.

18 (Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the Commission  
19 meeting was concluded.)

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