

January 17, 2006

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield
Commissioner Jaczko
Commissioner Lyons

FROM: Luis A. Reyes */RA/*
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO STAFF REQUIREMENTS MEMORANDUM ON
THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY BRIEFING
(M051130)

This memorandum responds to two items included in the subject Staff Requirement Memorandum (SRM) resulting from the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Briefing held on November 30, 2005.

The SRM requested that the staff provide the Commission with an analysis of the current backlog of EEO complaint cases as well as the reasons for any delay in the resolution of each case. As of January 11, 2006, the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR) had a caseload of 18 complaints of alleged discrimination at various stages of the complaint process. Four of the 18 complaints are considered backlogged because they exceeded the processing times established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). These delays in complaint processing resulted primarily from workload issues within SBCR and problems encountered with a particular contractor during the investigation phase of the process. In three cases, the contract investigator took longer than the required time to conduct the investigation and the investigation was incomplete. Also, in two cases the staff expended a significant number of days trying to resolve the matter prior to sending the case to investigation. In these cases, it appeared that all parties were interested in settling the matter, even though the settlement attempts were unsuccessful.

SBCR has been authorized additional FTE that will be used to improve the timeliness of complaint processing and the office is presently recruiting to fill these positions. Further, SBCR has removed from its contract investigator list the company that conducted the investigations referenced. SBCR will continue to track complaint processing timeliness against EEOC requirements.

The SRM also requested that the staff provide the Commission with a list of the agency's "best practices" to achieve EEO goals in recruiting, hiring, retention and upward mobility. During the November 2005 EEO Briefing, the staff advised the Commission of a number of strategies and practices it will use to enhance the agency's efforts to recruit, hire, and retain a substantial number of new employees over the next few years. I note that the staff will maintain a diversity focus as it implements these strategies and practices. These strategies and practices include:

- Identifying university champions for specific universities
- Expanding targeted recruitment to increase diversity of applicant pools
- Using pension offset waivers
- Continuing the relocation bonus program
- Crediting annual leave for non-federal and military experience
- Modifying vacancy announcement process with a single school focus
- Innovative recruitment of entry level hires (e.g., large group student invitations to NRC)
- Using outreach authorities provided by the Energy Policy Act including scholarships, fellowships, grants, expansion of minority serving institutions programs, etc.

Also, enclosed is a listing of “best practices” employed by NRC offices to make progress toward meeting their diversity objectives. The staff continues to assess agency practices and programs to identify new ways of meeting our goals in these areas.

Enclosure: Best Practices List

cc w/enclosure:

SECY

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DATE	1 /12 /06		1 /12 /06		1/12 /06		1/12/06		01/17/06	

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LIST OF BEST PRACTICES EMPLOYED BY NRC OFFICES

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

17. Used diverse panels to evaluate candidate for vacancies.
18. Established an applicant screening committee.
19. Office staff (managers and employees) attended targeted recruitment events (professional conferences and career fairs).
20. Designated an SES recruitment champion tasked with building and maintaining targeted liaisons with organizations and institutions. Responsibilities include providing information sessions, speaking to classes and students forums, and targeted professional organizations.
21. Management held weekly human capital meetings to discuss recruiting, staffing, awards, training, FTE utilization, etc., alignment target with succession planning.
22. Established a local Human Capital Planning Team composed of management, staff, HR, and the union. Responsibilities include developing strategies leadership development, competitive sourcing, secession planning, EEO and diversity management, staffing recruitment, training, and qualification and development.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

23. Established mandatory leadership and communication training. For example, "*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*" by Covey, "*Bringing Out the Best in People*" by Aubrey Daniels, and "*Enlightened Leadership*" by Ed Oakley Doug Krug. Senior level staff was rotated between HQ and the Regions, and to Acting Director positions.
24. Developed a Group Leader Pilot Program to develop leadership skills for non-supervisory and non-team leader GG-14 employees.
25. Established 24-hour required training for all employees.
26. Created opportunities for staff to brief senior management and participate in higher level assignments.
27. Encouraged participation in rotational opportunities.

Enclosure

MERIT PROCESS

28. Office Directors and Deputies reviewed all recommendations for promotion.
29. Senior management was briefed on all selections.

INCLUSION AND WORKFORCE CULTURE

30. Contracted with outside facilitator to help identify and prioritize improvement strategies in a variety of areas. Areas of improvement included defining roles and responsibilities, instilling a sense of accountability, enhancing divisional teamwork, employee involvement, communication, operating effectiveness, management and leadership, quality feedback related to accomplishments/appraisal/mentoring/coaching, clearer goals and expectations, increasing management availability, adequate staff resources, staff recognition; and use of celebrations such as Diversity Day, luncheons, picnics, and offsite outings as team building tools.
31. Established a Diversity Council responsible for recommending efficient, effective, fair, and equitable ways to manage a diverse workforce.
32. Held expanded management retreats to include RA, Division Directors and Branch Chiefs to enhance teamwork; and focused on role clarification, communication, efficiencies, staffing, and staff development.
33. Conducted periodic meetings between management and new hires to reinforce Agency values and solicit new employee perspectives.
34. Reinvigorated regional EEO/Diversity Committees.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

35. Established review teams (managers and HR) responsible for recommending award allocation to the Office Directors.
36. Acknowledged complimentary memos and emails regarding staff performance during staff meetings.

COMMUNICATION

37. Conducted an internal communication survey and developed action plans to address gaps.
38. Conducted communication workshops for all staff.
39. Office Directors issued a Policy and Procedures Guide for Internal Communications.

40. Established electronic newsletters to communicate current events, "Have I Got News For You." The newsletter includes a "talk back" feature where questions can be sent directly to the Office Director.
41. Held office/division review of the CDMP video.
42. Encouraged management support of EEO Advisory Committees.
43. Established a suggestion box for staff input and a portal on the office webpage.

ACTION TRACKING

44. Tracked ethnicity and gender of hires, promotions, awards, and training.
45. Tracked training hours to ensure fairness and equity.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENTS APPROACH - Contractor Support Activities

46. Utilized feedback from Gallop, administrative, communication, diversity, and OIG Safety Culture and Climate surveys individually and collectively to obtain a broad picture of where challenges are, and how best to begin improvement efforts.
47. Interviewed management and staff individually; established focus groups composed of management and staff, and utilized surveys.
48. Compared results to private sector best practices.
49. Looked at the organization as a system in a work environment composed of the following: Purpose, Structure, Rewards, Helpful Mechanisms/Technologies, and Relationship/People Interactions with Leadership responsible for balancing each of these systems. This process identified areas of greatest progress and greatest challenges.

Consultants used to support NRC offices include the following:

Gallop: Assessment of work environment

Ivy Planning Group, LLC: Diversity management and facilitation of the Task Force, communication and coaching/leadership workshops, facilitation of communication workgroups, diversity panels, and organizational effectiveness

USDA Graduate School: Communication surveys

CACI, Inc: Organizational effectiveness, communication, and organization culture

CACI, Inc/Computer Sciences: Administrative Process Initiative and organizational effectiveness

Resolution Dynamics Inc: Diversity survey and communications